

**'THE INVADERS' FEAR OF MEMORIES': RESISTING MEMORICIDE
THROUGH POETRY FROM GAZA**

Dorothea Reidenbach

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam

749893

749893dr@eur.nl

Master Thesis

10th June 2025

Supervisor Mohamadbagher Forough

Second Reader Natália da Silva Perez

Table of Contents

Abstract	4
Preface	5
1. Introduction	6
1.1 Concepts	11
1.2 Literature Review	14
1.3 Primary Sources	19
1.4 Source Criticism	21
1.5 Methodology	23
2. Production & Distribution of Poetry	25
2.1 Erasure of Education	25
2.2 Poetry in Gaza	26
2.3 Magazines & Websites	29
2.4 Translators & Collaborators	30
2.5 Social Media	31
2.6 Immediate Audiences & Social Dimension	33
2.7 Material & Infrastructural Dimension	34
2.8 Necropolitical Dimension	35
2.9 Conclusion	37
3. Content & Discourse of Poetry	39
3.1 Geography	40
3.2 Environment	44
3.3 Memory	47
3.4 Genocide	51
3.5 Resistance	53
3.6 Conclusion	54

4. Reception of Poetry & International Solidarity.....	55
4.1 Reception & Tributes	56
4.2 Censorship	57
4.3 Protests & Encampments & Cultural Events.....	58
4.4 Participation & Transitional Justice	61
4.5 Narratives	64
4.6 Sowing Hope.....	66
4.7 Conclusion.....	68
5. Conclusion	69
5.1 Beyond the Story	70
5.2 Future Research.....	72
5.3 Appendix	74
5.4 Bibliography.....	75

Abstract

In poetry, artistic and political struggles are intimately tied and voiced as interventions to dominant discourses and ideologies. In Gaza, like in other places where indigenous communities resist settler-colonial erasure and occupation, poetry challenges and resists memocide, historical amnesia, colonial narratives, knowledge production and policies, speaking truth to the occupying power. This project discusses Gaza's poetic culture as a mode of resistance against memocide and historical amnesia, focusing on its outburst since October 2023 in response to the ongoing genocide. The poetic culture, made up of its authors and poets, translators, publishers and other collaborators in Gaza and abroad is explored through the process of production, distribution and reception of poetry. The unwavering courage and determination required to produce poetry during a genocide enables Palestinian poets to resist Israel's campaigns of dispossession, de-historicization and erasure of memory, identity and history. Their poetry as mode of resistance against memocide and amnesia takes on the functions of memory, counternarrative, truth, knowledge, history, commemoration, remembrance, witness, protest, dissent, rebellion, memory, memorial, imagination, responsibility and liberation. With writing, reading, publishing and distributing poetry and collaborating with Palestinian poets, the intellectual blockade is lifted, imposed information voids are filled, relational histories are made available, vocabulary produced, and narratives reclaimed.

Keywords

Palestine, Gaza, Poetry, Genocide, Memory, Memocide, Amnesia, Resistance

Credits

Thank you to my supervisor, to Jürè, Payam, Andreas and Nour for their valuable help and feedback.

Preface

“Wherever you are, whatever sand you can throw on the gears of genocide, do it now.”¹

Until May 2025, 52.928² Palestinians have been killed by Israel. Universities, schools, libraries and hospitals have been destroyed, the infrastructure of the entire Gaza strip erased, an entire population with journalists, teachers, writers, doctors and humanitarian aid workers displaced, starved and murdered. Until April 2024 alone, 70.000 tons of explosives have been dropped on Gaza’s 365 square kilometers in addition to bulldozing operations.³ Children, women and men lie buried under rubble or in mass graves and the world is watching.

Dorothea Reidenbach

June 2025

Rotterdam

¹ Rasha Abdulhadi, *And Still We Write*, Introduction (Publishers for Palestine, 2024), 3. <https://publishersforpalestine.org/2024/11/19/launching-and-still-we-write-an-anthology-of-new-work-from-and-centering-gaza/>.

² “Reported Impact snapshot Gaza Strip (14 May 2025),” *OCHA*. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-14-may-2025>.

³ “200 days of military attack on Gaza: A horrific death toll amid intl. failure to stop Israel’s genocide of Palestinians”, *Euro-Med Humans Rights Monitor*, April 24, 2024. <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6282/200-days-of-military-attack-on-Gaza:-A-horrific-death-toll-amid-intl.-failure-to-stop-Israel%E2%80%99s-genocide-of-Palestinians>.

*"On this earth there is that which deserves life:
 the recurrence of April,
 the smell of bread at dawn,
 the opinion of a woman in men,
 the writings of Aeschylus,
 the beginning of love,
 moss on a stone,
 mothers standing on a flute's string,
 and the invaders' fear of memories. (...)"⁴*

1. Introduction

The historical, mysterious art of poetry accompanies us as since the emergence of our species and continues to hold a special, almost sacred function and status. As 'mimesis and katharsis', as the "major embodiment of culture"⁵ and "expression for the extreme stages that our lives have to offer,"⁶ poetry often steps in where other forms of art and communication fall silent. With its accessibility to the masses and as an artform that everyone can understand, poetry is often used as political tool and mode of resistance against imperial and colonial narratives. In poems, artistic and political struggles are intimately tied and voiced as interventions to dominant discourses and ideologies.

Where native populations face threats of elimination through imperial, settler-colonial, necropolitical and capitalist states, like in Kashmir, Western Sahara and Palestine, modes of resistance take many different forms and range from artistic to political and militarily efforts. To articulate the traumatic realities under occupation and genocide, many resort to poetry and narrate their experiences to themselves and the world. Poetry, showcasing the intimacy

⁴ (own conversion to bold) part of this poem was gratefully used as part of the title of this thesis.

Mahmoud Darwish, *On This Earth*, trans. Ashraf Osman (Archmemory, June 2012), <https://archmemory.blogspot.com/2012/06/blog-post.html>.

⁵ Johannes Willem Bertens, *Literary Theory: The Basics*, Third edition (Routledge, 2014,) 5.

⁶Brenda Hillman, "Cracks in the Oracle Bone: Teaching Certain Contemporary Poems", *Essay on Poetic Theory*, Poetry Foundation, August 16, 2010. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69568/cracks-in-the-oracle-bone-teaching-certain-contemporary-poems>

between artistic and political movements,⁷ offers itself as an archive for memory where all other sites of memory are expunged and builds new worlds where other places are destroyed. The poetic culture mirrors the resistance of its writers in the process of its production, distribution and reception. Their poetry confronts the narratives of their oppressors and reckons with historical injustices.

In Palestine, poetry is weaved in resistance efforts for as long as Israel's colonial violence has ruptured Palestinian existence and writing. It responds to and bears witness to the long story of Palestinian dispossession, to injustices taking place, to Palestinian suffering, dehumanization and resistance.⁸ Amid occupation and ethnic cleansing, poetry becomes a "right to a remembered presence,"⁹ witness, commemoration, survival, protest, dissent, rebellion, memory, history, reclamation, recovery of a collective memory, memorial, imagination, responsibility and resistance. Poetry challenges and resists memocide, historical amnesia, colonial narratives, knowledge production and policies, speaking truth to the occupying power.

In Gaza, Palestinians have been under Israeli military occupation since 1967, imposed blockade of land, air and sea since 2007, and the enclave has now become the primary stage for a total war of annihilation and ethnic cleansing,¹⁰ in the latest stage of an ongoing, now televised, "text-book case"¹¹ of genocide.¹² Even prior, under the British Mandate, the Balfour Declaration, the Nakba, the Naksa, first- and second Intifada, the building of Gaza's buffer zones, separation wall, Green Line, the failed 'peace process' of the Oslo Accords¹³ and the

⁷ Nadia Alahmed, "'Black Intifada': Black Arts Movement, Palestinian Poetry of Resistance and the Roots of Black and Palestinian Solidarity." (Phd diss., University of Massachusetts Libraries, 2019), 1. https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_2/1579.

⁸ Bashir Abu-Manneh, "'Under Suffering's Glow': Palestinian Writing after Oslo" in "Post-Millennial Palestine Literature, Memory, Resistance," *Liverpool University Press*, (2021): 4. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1hp5h85>.

⁹ Ather Zia, "Poetry as Dissent and Placemaking in Indian-Occupied Kashmir," *Asian Affairs* 53, no. 2 (2022): 417. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2022.2096782>.

¹⁰ Rory O'Neill, "Trump's plan for 'ethnic cleansing' in Gaza is illegal, says UN investigator," *Politico*, February 9, 2025. <https://www.politico.eu/article/trumps-plan-to-ethnically-cleanse-gaza-is-illegal-says-un-backed-judge/>.

¹¹ Raz Segal, "A Textbook Case of Genocide," *JewishCurrents*, October 13, 2023. <https://jewishcurrents.org/a-textbook-case-of-genocide>.

¹² C. Procter, "'My Grandmother Has Her Keys, Now I Have Mine': Building a Database to Preserve Testimonies of Genocide in Gaza," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (2025): 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0377919X.2025.2455363>.

E. Verdeja, "The Gaza Genocide in Five Crises," *Journal of Genocide Research*, (2025): 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2025.2452707>.

¹³ Rachel Gregory Fox and Ahmad Qabaha, *Post-Millennial Palestine Literature, Memory, Resistance* (Liverpool University Press, 2021), 10-15. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1hp5h85>.

expansion of settlements, Palestinians suffered and equally resisted their ongoing dispossession. “Over seven million displaced indigenous human inhabitants of historical Palestine are still fighting to be measured within the category ‘human’”¹⁴ and awaiting return and liberation of their home country. Over the last months, Gaza has been turned into the “ultimate death-space of sheer survival, horror and mass destruction.”¹⁵ People suffer from a “man-made starvation (...) (from the) systematic withholding of medical supplies, the repeated mass evictions of internally displaced persons and the AI-backed bombardment of residential areas and refugee camps,”¹⁶ resulting in the killing of 52.928¹⁷ Palestinians. *The Lancet* documents up to 186.000¹⁸ deaths, counting those unidentifiable, missing from Health Ministry reports, under the rubble or dying from diseases and future repercussions of the genocide. The Gazan population has been subjected, once again, to “mass bombings, starvation, disease, displacement, the razing of infrastructure, unrelenting psychological terror”¹⁹ and seizure of land,²⁰ justified by Israel’s ‘self-defense’ rhetoric and ideology of settler colonialism, Apartheid and religious dogmatism.²¹

“Our blood is the price of the colony’s sense of ‘security’.”²²

¹⁴ Hella Bloom Cohen, “Poetry, Palestine and Posthumanism,” *Postcolonial Studies* 25, no. 3 (2022): 362. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2021.1979742>.

¹⁵ Khalid Dader, et al, “Topologies of scholasticide in Gaza: education in spaces of elimination,” *Fennia-International Journal of Geography* 202.1 (2024): 1.

¹⁶ Marcus Schneider, “Germany’s fall from grace,” *IPS*, June 5, 2024. <https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/foreign-and-security-policy/germanys-fall-from-grace-7536/>.

¹⁷ “Reported Impact snapshot Gaza Strip (14 May 2025)”, OCHA. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-14-may-2025>.

¹⁸ Rasha Khatib et al, “Counting the dead in Gaza: difficult but essential,” *The Lancet*, Volume 404, Issue 10449, 237. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)01169-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext).

¹⁹ Verdeja, “The Gaza Genocide,” 2.

²⁰ “Trump and Netanyahu’s roadmap: Nakba, forcible transfer and expulsion,” *B’Tselem*, February 5, 2025. https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20250205_trump_and_netanyahu_roadmap_nakba_forcible_transfer_and_expulsion.

²¹ Noam Chomsky and Ilan Pappé, *On Palestine*, Ed. Frank Barat, (Haymarket Books, 2015), 117-18.

²² El-Kurd, Mohammed. *Perfect Victims and the Politics of Appeal* (Haymarket Books, 2025), 21.

Amnesty International,²³ *Human Rights Watch*,²⁴ *Al-Haq*,²⁵ *PCHR*²⁶ and *B'Tselem*²⁷ have all declared Israel's practices in Gaza as genocide. Genocide is defined by "the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such,"²⁸ in the December 1948 *UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*.²⁹ Israeli Politicians are all but shy in announcing their intent publicly, such as to "turn Gaza to Dresden", calling to "dance on what used to be Gaza," "fighting human animals" and "erasing Gaza."³⁰ Co-constitutive of this genocide are the "urbicide,"³¹ "terricide," and epistemicide³² of Palestinian land as well as the "politicide"³³ as the "dissolution of the Palestinian People's existence as a legitimate social, political and economic entity."³⁴ The cities of Gaza are almost completely destroyed and turned into rubble, rendering them unrecognizable to their former inhabitants and the environment, flora and fauna suffers from diseases, toxic smoke and contaminations. This extermination campaign is reaching its 20th month and is live streamed and documented through the surviving journalists and civilians in Gaza, international media reacting to their reports and

²³ "End Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza," *Amnesty International*.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/petition/end-israels-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/>.

²⁴ "Extermination and Acts of Genocide," *Human Rights Watch*, December 19, 2024.

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/12/19/extermination-and-acts-genocide/israel-deliberately-depriving-palestinians-gaza>.

²⁵ "44,330 Palestinians Killed: Al-Haq Marks International Solidarity Day with an Urgent Call for Immediate Action to end Israel's Genocidal Campaign," *Al-Haq*, November 29, 2024.

<https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/25342.html>.

²⁶ "PCHR Releases Report on Torture and Genocide Against Palestinians from Gaza," *Palestinian Center for Human Rights*, May 2025. <https://pchrgaza.org/pchr-releases-report-on-torture-and-genocide-against-palestinians-from-gaza/>.

²⁷ "The world must stop the ethnic cleansing of northern Gaza," *B'Tselem*, October 22, 2024.

https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20241022_the_world_must_stop_the_ethnic_cleansing_of_northern_gaza.

²⁸ "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," *United Nations*.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-prevention-and-punishment-crime-genocide>

²⁹ Segal, "A Textbook Case of Genocide". <https://jewishcurrents.org/a-textbook-case-of-genocide>

³⁰ Segal, "A Textbook Case of Genocide". <https://jewishcurrents.org/a-textbook-case-of-genocide>

³¹ Dorota Golańska, "Slow Urbicide: Accounting for the Shifting Temporalities of Political Violence in the West Bank," *Geoforum*, volume 132 (June 2022): 125.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718522000896>

³² Sophia Azeb, "We May Never Return Again," *Funambulist*, Nr. 58, 26.

³³ Nur Masalah, *The Palestine Nakba, Decolonizing History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory*, (Zed Books, 2012), 1.

³⁴ Masalah, *The Palestine Nakba*, 1.

through videos of the Israeli military, filming and mocking their attacks and bombardments. So far, no resolutions from the ICJ seem to have an impact on Israel's impunity.

This thesis discusses the pressing topic of Gaza's poetic culture as mode of resistance against memocide and amnesia, focusing on its outburst since October 2023 in response to the ongoing genocide. As case study, poetry from Gaza in its movement from production to publication and reception will be discussed under the research question of "How does Gaza's poetic culture, its content, production and reception serve as a mode of resistance against memocide?" The analytical chapters are divided under three sub-questions, firstly "How is poetry in Gaza, its production and distribution preserving collective memory in the face of memocide and amnesia?", secondly "In what ways are Gazan poets unwriting imperial, settler-colonial discourse and creating counternarratives?" and thirdly "how is the reception of Gaza's poetic culture fostering solidarity and resistance internationally?"

With the case study of Gaza, this research project asks how memocide and historical amnesia take place and analyze the respective poetry and poetic culture and its function in resistance and archive of Palestinian memory. Gaza, as all struggles against occupation and ethnic cleansing, such as in Kashmir and Western Sahara, share a common experience having had their "narrative denied, their material culture destroyed and their histories erased or reinvented by European white settlers and colonizers."³⁵ While other scholars have focused on different themes in contemporary resistance poetry, poetry writing and poetry reading as everyday resistance, as recreation of a world, national solidarity and political consciousness, as crafting of political and cultural resistance against colonial hegemony, here, Gaza's poetic culture as mode of resistance against memocide and amnesia with the three analytical lenses of content, production and reception will be the focus of analysis.

³⁵ Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba*, 88.

1.2 Concepts

This thesis is guided by a theoretical framework comprised of memoricide and historical amnesia which frame the analysis of imperial, settler colonial practices, targeting and erasing Palestinian memory. Gaza's poetic culture is placed and discussed as mode of resistance against memoricide and amnesia.

Memoricide, the 'killing of memory', first coined by Doctor Mirko Dražen Grmek for "the systematic purge of Croatian heritage during the War of Independence (1991–1995)"³⁶ is a common and shared imperial, colonial practice aimed at "the erasure of the history of one people in order to write that of another people's over it."³⁷ Memoricide concerns "deliberate attempts to expunge human memory through the destruction of cultural landscapes as memory's physical prop."³⁸ It describes the rewriting of history, the enforced disappearance of memory and the "dearchivization"³⁹ of what was once truth, reality and memory. It is closely aligned and interrelated with the concept of 'cultural genocide', coined by Raphael Lemkin (1900-1959) as the "destruction and elimination of the cultural pattern of a group, including language, local traditions, shrines, monuments, place names, landscape, historical records, archives, libraries – in brief the shrines of the soul of a nation."⁴⁰ With the destruction of infrastructure, buildings, memorials, language, land and resources, toponymic and remapping projects, livelihoods and cultural heritage sites are not only eradicated but simultaneously the memory housed in them. The aim is to impose new buildings, new identities and new people and with that, a new memory to the places. Memoricide intends to make a specific group of people's lives and their presence forgettable, to their oppressors but also to the wider public, as if they have never been there in the first place, leaving no traces and easily replaceable. "This logic of elimination requires the indigenous population to disappear both literally and

³⁶ Scott Webster, "Revisiting Memoricide: The Everyday Killing of Memory," *Memory Studies* 17, no. 6 (2024): 1408. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980231184564>.

³⁷ Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oneworld Publications, 2006), 225-34. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=910807>.

³⁸ Huzaifa Pandit, "Mapping Shrines of Memory: Aspiration, Repression and Articulation in Contemporary Kashmiri Poetry," in *Female Narratives of Protest* (Routledge India, 2024), 36. <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003272335-4/mapping-shrines-memory-huzaifa-pandit?context=ubx&refId=fe1b1c5f-ce3c-4586-91ad-d7d7d71d0387>.

³⁹ Ather Zia, "The Kashmir-Palestine Conversation Series: Conversation #4 Poetry and Literature," Council for British Research in the Levant, YouTube, February 09, 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7FBzdT-R90>.

⁴⁰ Masalah, "The Palestine Nakba," 11.

figuratively.”⁴¹ Memoricide as the main concept provides the groundwork to explain the genocidal practices directed against Palestinians, aiming to erase the memory from and about them. This project explores the ways in which Gaza’s poetic culture is resisting and combating these practices and offering a multitude of functions in the protection and re-narration of memory.

There is an interlinkage and dependency between memory and heritage and the destruction of one in relation to the destruction of the other. These processes have been explored by scholars such as Veysel Apaydin⁴² previously and are thus not the focus of this project. Memory, in contrast to heritage, seems to encompass a broader spectrum of tangible and intangible, past and present, cultural, political and ecological spectrums and portrays activity and performativity as a concept. “Memory is living,”⁴³ it is easier to grasp, emotionally charged and offers itself for the study of Gaza’s poetic culture as mode of resistance to memoricide, the killing of memory.

Historical amnesia can be seen as the engineered and enforced part of memoricide, where the forgetting and oblivion about historical truths is actively facilitated and promoted. It is “a made condition, produced and reproduced”⁴⁴ by the occupying powers and describes an “information void that supports military aggression.”⁴⁵ Colonial histories “can be made unavailable, unusable, safely removed from the domain of current conceivable human relations.”⁴⁶ Palestinian and Gazan history and memory is made unavailable through Israeli state propaganda, as well as international media’s longstanding support for their narratives.

⁴¹ B.C. Browne, “Truth, Acknowledgement, and Combatting ‘Memoricide’”. In: Transitional (in)Justice and Enforcing the Peace on Palestine, Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies,” *Palgrave Macmillan*, Cham, (2023): 42. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25394-2_3.

⁴² Veysel Apaydin, “Introduction: Why Cultural Memory and Heritage?” In *Critical Perspectives on Cultural Memory and Heritage: Construction, Transformation and Destruction*, edited by Veysel Apaydin, *UCL Press*, (2020): 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv13xpsfp.6>.

⁴³ Veysel, Apaydin, “The Interlinkage of Cultural Memory, Heritage and Discourses of Construction, Transformation and Destruction,” In *Critical Perspectives on Cultural Memory and Heritage: Construction, Transformation and Destruction*, edited by Veysel Apaydin, *UCL Press*, (2020): 16. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv13xpsfp.7>.

⁴⁴ M. Nasooha, “‘A History Buried Alive’: Resisting Amnesia and Reclaiming Native Palestinian Ecology in the Works of Susan Abulhawa,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (2024): 107. <https://doi.org/10.13169/arabstudquar.46.2.0100>.

⁴⁵ Zena Agha, James Esson, Mark Griffiths, and Mikko Joronen, “Gaza: A Decolonial Geography,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 49, no. 2 (2024): 6. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12675>.

⁴⁶ Ann Stoler, “Colonial Aphasia: On Disabled Histories in France,” *Public Culture*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2011): 122. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2010-018>.

The picture of Israel, its media and military as occupier, aggressor and perpetrator of war crimes is thus circumvented and negated, imposing a new history and memory. Consumers are made unaware and ignorant about historical truths and events, unable to distinguish between narratives and subscribing to the collective amnesia which benefits Zionist narratives such as 'A land without a people for a people without a land.'⁴⁷ Information is not just forgotten or lost but actively hidden and made unavailable. Relational histories are dissociated,⁴⁸ thus the stories of imperialism, settler-colonialism and Zionism kept apart and further, the Hamas attack of October 2023 portrayed and narrated entirely detached from any historical context. The term aphasia takes this phenomenon even further in that it describes the dismembering and difficulty of generating appropriate vocabulary and understanding for what is seen and heard.⁴⁹ In defiance of the imposed information void and censorship, Palestinian poets and writers are narrating their stories and memories and opening Gaza's poetic culture to an international audience. Relational histories are associated, and vocabulary and narratives are generated. Literature and poetry become memory sites, resisting forced amnesia through the reclamation and commemorating of Palestinian knowledge, history, memory and bondage to their land.

⁴⁷ Nasoooha, "'A History Buried Alive,'" 100-101.

⁴⁸ Fernando Coronil, "After Empire: Reflections on Imperialism from the Américas," in *Imperial Formations*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, and Peter C. Perdue (Santa Fe, N.M.: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007), 245.

⁴⁹ Stoler, "Colonial Aphasia," 125.

1.3 Literature Review

The following chapter constitutes a thematic literature review, discussing outstanding and publications concerning the Palestinian literary and poetic tradition, poetry as a mode of resistance in and outside of Gaza, anti-colonial struggles, settler-colonial practices in Palestine, memocide and amnesia. The literature review is followed by a positioning of this research project and reflection on the contribution to the academic debate.

Edward Said as one of the most important figures in Palestinian and international academia, together with Ghassan Kanafani, more known as the preeminent Palestinian novelist, inspiring generations of writers and activists, are significant for this research. Seminal texts such as *Invention, Memory, and Place* (2000), *The Question of Palestine* (1986 & 1992), *Representing the Colonized* (1989), *An Ideology of Difference* (1985) and *How a Nation Was Born of Story Telling* (2013), inform much of the analysis on poetry as counternarrative against memocide, amnesia, occupation and genocide in Gaza.

The authors Rachel Gregory Fox and Ahmad Qabaha⁵⁰ (2021) reflect on the tropes of memory and resistance in contemporary Palestinian writing. In this important volume, different authors collaborate on the reclamation of a Palestinian narrative and heritage, on trauma, on the urgency of the anti-colonial struggle for self-determination and on the future of the Palestinian nation. Bringing together literature, memory and resistance, this book offers valuable insight considering resistance poetry and memocide and spans the disciplines which are of key interest for this thesis project.

A further overview of Palestinian poetry is given by Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi (1978), who focuses on the poetic culture, theater groups, publishing houses, newspapers and literary events in Gaza and the West Bank in the 1970s. She discusses poetry as “expression and tool of national solidarity and political consciousness”⁵¹ and introduces poets of resistance.

In a direct address of the current genocide in Gaza, Atef Ashaer (2024) from Gaza, himself a poet, translator, and associate professor in Arabic language and culture, writes about the systematic targeting of civilian infrastructure in Gaza now and prior to 7th of October,

⁵⁰ Fox and Qabaha, *Post-Millennial Palestine Literature*, 2021.

⁵¹ Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi, “The Contemporary Palestinian Poetry of Occupation,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7, no. 3 (1978): 84. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2536202>.

about the engineering of discourses and twisted moralization that lead to the normalization of killing. He turns to poetry as a way to grieve, as an act of will, honor and hope.⁵²

Similarly, Inas Abolfotoh (2024) sheds light on the 'poetic outburst' after October 2023 and resistance poetry. He traces new digital pathways for Palestinian literature and poetry and analyses selected poems and motifs directly as responses to genocide.⁵³

In her academic work, poet, writer, anthropologist and professor Ather Zia (2020&2022) highlights the strength of poetry in "crafting, mobilizing, and sustaining political and cultural resistance against the hegemonic powers"⁵⁴ and poetry as an effort of collective memory and placemaking, against layers of 'invisibilization'. Zia builds many relations and comparisons between the Palestinian and Kashmiri struggle, showing the similar methods of the occupying, colonial entity in silencing, erasing, criminalizing and killing communities and resistance movements. She presents the term "affective solidarity"⁵⁵ which explains how both Kashmir's and Gaza's poetic culture takes on a similar function of reclaiming memory, recovery, remembered presence, history, commemoration, witness, evidence and chronicle.

With the example of young Kashmiri poet Umza Falak's poetry, Huzeifa Pandit (2024) reflects on a "alternate forms of narrating history" as "counter-narrative tradition that can transcend readings and enactments of oppressive and dominant histories"⁵⁶ and offers a "new poetics of memory."⁵⁷ Poetry as counterculture and narrative of resistance, archive, witness, mapping of the past and celebration of grief and trauma⁵⁸ are the main themes identified by Pandit in Falak's poetry, contributing to the perspective and work from Ather Zia about Kashmir and Palestine. Even though both Zia and Pandit predominantly write about Kashmir, they engage in relevant analysis for poetry and resistance, applicable to anticolonial struggles globally.

⁵² Alshaer, Atef Alshaer, "Writing Gaza during a genocide," *Radical Philosophy* 216, 2024, pp. 3–12.

<https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/writing-gaza-during-a-genocide>.

⁵³ إيناس أبو الفتوح, and ايناس, "A Critical Study of Poetic Outbursts to the October 2023 Israeli War Against Gaza," *Shak Journals*, 31.1 (2024): 607.

⁵⁴ Zia, "Poetry as Dissent," 426.

⁵⁵ Zia, Ather "“Their Wounds Are Our Wounds”: A Case for Affective Solidarity between Palestine and Kashmir," *Identities* 27,3 (2020): 359. doi:10.1080/1070289X.2020.1750199.

⁵⁶ Pandit, "Mapping Shrines of Memory," 36.

⁵⁷ Pandit, "Mapping Shrines of Memory," 27.

⁵⁸ Pandit, "Mapping Shrines of Memory," 31.

In the debate about memoricide, the 'killing of memory', especially in the context of genocide, B. C. Brown (2023) is discussing counter-memoricide practices and transitional and decolonial justice as the struggle against present day structures of ongoing oppression. When thinking about truth recovery, he stresses any recovery "without the requisite focus on reparations, institutional reform, Palestinian return, and meaningful decolonization serves only to salve the conscience of the offender rather than providing justice for the victim."⁵⁹ With that, he discusses "counter hegemonic narratives", strategies and challenges against "collective state sponsored amnesia"⁶⁰ much like Zia and Pandit, only focusing on truth recovery processes that involve cultural, ecological, political and legal means, demanding the above mentioned aims.

Similarly, Scott Webster (2024) describes and introduces "everyday memoricide" as the "normalization of memory erasure as mundane practices."⁶¹ He further identifies the everyday memoricide, encompassing domicile, mnemonic destruction and iconoclasm, as it takes place in Palestine, "the planting and signposting of artificial forests over Palestinian village ruins; the renaming of Palestinian toponyms into Biblical and Talmudic ones as well as their transliteration from Arabic into Hebrew"⁶² as well as with the case of the felling of Djarrub Wurrung Trees in Australia, all showcasing the "normalization of colonial negation and the legacies of terra nullius."⁶³

In the study of memoricide, the tracing of hegemonic narratives and the reclamation of memory in the Palestinian context, Nur Masalah (2015) presents an important voice in collecting attempts of de-Arabization of the Palestinian terrain, narrative and historical hegemony and the elimination of collective memory, expelling others from their own history, taking the work of Israeli historian and author Ilan Pappé further. He analyses Zionist toponymic strategies in Palestine which mirror European empire building and settler colonial projects in the past. Masalah explains the De-Arabisation - and Zionist toponymy projects as symptoms of memoricide and presents counter-memoricide practices such as the 'Return March' and truth commissions.

⁵⁹ Browne, "Truth, Acknowledgement," 46.

⁶⁰ Browne, "Truth, Acknowledgement," 56.

⁶¹ Scott Webster, "Revisiting Memoricide: The Everyday Killing of Memory," *Memory Studies* 17, no. 6 (2024): 1408. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980231184564>.

⁶² Webster, "Revisiting Memoricide" 1409.

⁶³ Webster, "Revisiting Memoricide" 1422.

More general discussions of memoricidal practices are presented in the following articles. H.M. Cohen (2022) explores movements from human trauma to eco-trauma, environmental suffering, violence of bodies and biosystems in Palestine with the poetry of Nathalie Handal and Naomi Shihab Nye. Her work is helpful to this research when looking at memory in its connection to environment and remembrance in poetry.

In continuation of works concerned with the geographies of occupation in Palestine, Dorota Golańska (2022) addresses the dispersed destruction of infrastructures and environment by “physical strangulation, obscure systems of land administration, bureaucratic neglect, pollution, and obliteration of the vernacular landscape.”⁶⁴

Maria Mälksoo (2015) explains how the process and implementation of a securitization of memory “seeks to protect a particular vision of the past by condemning, delegitimizing, or overtly criminalizing the alternatives,”⁶⁵ a practice that the contemporary poetry under occupation tries to subvert. In her text, Mälksoo explains how historical remembrances are either secured or criminalized, resulting in the legitimization of a state’s interpretation and narrative of events and their role or action in it. With the ‘repoliticization’ of memory, those narratives can be uprooted, voices are able to take up space in the arena of “information warfare”⁶⁶ and debates taken out of state control. This study relates to the other works on memocide in that all seek to identify practices and discourses for how and why a specific memory or narrative is being erased or securitized and how this practice can be subverted.

When it came to particularly violent episodes within a colonial history, these were often made inaccessible and “out of reach”, meaning that a tracing of responsibility in cases of racial discrimination was made impossible or at least, highly opaque. When thinking about memory and its threats, Anne Stoler’s (2011) work on historical amnesia and aphasia helps to understand the artificial and constructed nature of the particular forgetting of events and memories, withheld from any historical representation or remembrance.

⁶⁴ Golańska, “Slow Urbicide,” 127.

⁶⁵ Maria Mälksoo, “‘Memory Must Be Defended’: Beyond the Politics of Mnemonical Security,” *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 3 (2015): 228. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010614552549>.

⁶⁶ Mälksoo, “Memory,” 222.

This thesis contributes to the academic debate on memocide, amnesia, and poetry as mode of resistance in that it combines the presented concepts into a conceptual framework to understand the forces at play in the arsenal of occupational practices aimed at the killing of memory from and about Gaza, its inhabitants, its culture, history, environment and the memories accompanying them. With the analysis of Gaza's poetic culture resisting settler-colonial narratives and practices, this project unearths the capacities for reclamation of Palestinian memory, championed by their poetic expression. Gaza's literary scene and collaborators abroad offer a multitude of recent publications featuring poetry by young authors which have yet to be discussed combining memocide with poetry as mode of resistance. While there has been much research on resistance, poetry, memory and memocide as concepts separately, few scholars have taken to combine them to investigate the role that the poetic culture plays as counternarrative, resisting the intentional killing of memory. Most academic work concerning Gaza talks about topics such as trauma, famine, children, healthcare crisis, identity, occupation and military siege. It seems as if scholars in this field predominantly apply a top-down perspective, looking from the outside in, writing from far away about far away. This project mirrors some of this gaze, however, the perspective is turned upside down, not only by making Gaza's local poetic culture and authors take the center stage of this project, but also by focusing on resistance facing genocide and occupation.

By taking up the case study of Gaza and investigating the contemporary poetic culture and poetry in light of memocide and amnesia, attention is brought to the struggle against erasure of memory and history. Poetry is discussed as a multifaceted means in resisting the neocolonial-and settler colonial Israeli narrative and dominance in knowledge production and withholding. The analysis of primary sources makes visible the many dimensions in which poets and poetry revive and recount memory, not only disrupting their aggressors reach but reclaiming space in the national and international collective memory. Next to that, this project provides a small stage and archive for the many outstanding young poets from inside and outside Gaza, writing, surviving and resisting tirelessly. This thesis can equally be understood and works as a tribute to the many Palestinian authors and poets, writing in Gaza and abroad, as an effort to listen to them and their poems and as an archive itself.

1.4 Primary Sources

Both contemporary and older poetry collections from poets from Gaza, the West Bank, exile and diaspora provide part of the primary data for this thesis. Poets whose poems are featured in this research are Heba Abu Nada, Mosab Abu Toha, Mara Humaid, Suheir Hammad, Mohammad EL-Kurd, Nasser Rabah, Essam Hajjaj, Maryam Al Khateeb, Nour Khalil Abu Shammala, Adania Shibli, Ghassan Kanafani, Heba Al-Agha, Noor Hindi, Asmaa Dwaima, Ahlam Bsharat, Zainab Al Ghonaimy, Lana Khalaf Tuffaha, Refaat Alareer, Mahmoud Darwish, Marwan Makhoul, Haidar Al Ghazali, Fargo Nissim Tbakhi and Ahmed Masoud.

Their works were accessed through a variety of media. Among them the magazines *The Baffler*, *FUNAMBULIST*, *Mizna Online*, *Protean*, *peripheries*, *New Lines Magazine*, *Electronic Intifada*, *The Markaz Review*, *Atmos*, *the Rumpus*, *The Dreaming Machine*, *Harper's Magazine*, *bellacaledonia*, *Natakallam*, *Radical Philosophy*, *the Poetry Foundation*, *the Journal of Palestine Studies* and *Modern Poetry in Translation (mpT)*, *the New York Book Review* and *The New Yorker*. Other primary sources are the publishing collective *Publishers for Palestine* with the anthologies, *And Still We Write* and *Poems for Palestine*, the books *Heaven Looks like Us*, *Don't Look Left A Diary of Genocide*, *Gaza Writes Back*, *Rifqa*, *Perfect Victims*, *Light in Gaza* and *Literary Texts Written Under Israeli Bombardment*. Furthermore, the project *we are not numbers*, the *Palestine Festival of Literature*, the *Palestine Writes Festival* and various interviews with authors on YouTube and social media provide primary data.

For this research, which traces the process of production, distribution and reception of poetry as a mode of resistance against memocide and amnesia, most poetry appears in abbreviated form and corresponds to the thematic perspective of its assigned chapter. The abundance and outburst of poetry from Gaza made it easy to source poems and investigate Gaza's poetic culture, especially after October 2023. Next to poetry anthologies, sources are websites, magazines, blogs, articles and books both online and in print. Festivals, literary events, protests and encampments offered additional material and sites to investigate. Steadily, new poems and anthologies were published during the writing process and enriched its results.

The benefits of the primary material are their abundance and recent publication date, which allows for a relevant and contemporary discussion about poetry as mode of resistance. Poetry allows for a personal and immediate impression of the authors and communities

experiences, thoughts and artistic expression under genocide, siege and occupation. Most magazines and articles offer open access to the featured poems and anthologies and books are discussed online, in interviews and events. The study of interviews, news articles, festivals, encampments, protests and cultural events enabled the tracing of production, distribution and reception process of Gaza's poetic culture and individual poems.

1.5 Source Criticism

The primary sources gathered for this project are all translations into English or direct publication for the anglophone market, which implies not only the ongoing dominance of the English language as the center and “ultimate language of knowledge production”⁶⁷ but also, in the case of translation, the inherent loss of some of the original tones and meanings of the poetry. However, the publication in English and often intentional engagement with the anglophone literary world by the authors means increased accessibility for an international audience and Palestinians in the diaspora who don’t speak Arabic, aiding not only the distribution but also information and presence of Palestinian poetry in an international arena.

The selection and curation of poems in the respective chapters is continuously discussed. Featured texts stem from writers inside Gaza, in the diaspora and exile, in online magazines, literature festivals, in the media, in interviews, blogs, on social media and in book form. This multitude of mediums allows for a wider impression when analyzing poetry as a mode of resistance to memoricide and historical amnesia as well as different viewpoints on the production, narratives and reception of the poetic culture in- and outside Gaza. Most outlets that feature poems from Gaza discussed in this project are publishing in a Western context and in English.

The focus on Gaza’s poetic culture as a whole implies a lesser regard at poems and authors individually. Poems are not separately analyzed, and their unique structure, perspectives and tone can become swallowed in the wider analytical theme and perspective. The financial and loan-based accessibility as a reader of the primary- and secondary sources is a boundary for many others. The discussion of where works are published, by whom and for whom, as in this case mostly in and for the anglophone world, is important to have. Even when works of poetry are specifically intended for English speaking audiences, the represented often face financial boundaries and do not find themselves in the position to access and buy these works. Another difficulty in the reception of poetry is that audiences are frequently already literary, academic or activist circles who are accustomed to discussions on artistic and political struggles in poetry. Linguistic and cultural boundaries still arise where texts are bridging languages and cultures not knowing, how their content is going to survive and be received.

⁶⁷ Sinah Theres Kloß, “The Global South as Subversive Practice: Challenges and Potentials of a Heuristic Concept,” *Global South* 11, no. 2 (2017): 11. <https://www-jstor-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/stable/10.2979/globalsouth.11.2.01>.

For the concepts as theoretical framework, “the(ir) lifecycles and fashionability (...) must be critically reflected upon.”⁶⁸ It is important to address the dominance of Western voices and hegemony of knowledge systems in scholarly literature, as well as in the choice of concepts and theory here. Where ideas and knowledge come from, what norms and agenda they reproduce critically informs the kind of analysis possible with them as well as the ascribed status that given theories and scholars enjoy. The decolonization of knowledge speaks to the process of dismantling colonial, imperial power structures in academia, delink from mechanisms of European knowledge production and canonization, advancing formerly suppressed epistemologies and methodologies. In this light, this project seeks to highlight Palestinian research and non-Western scholarship where Palestinian voices, ideas and writing present the focus of this research.

⁶⁸ Kloß, "The Global South," 5.

1.6 Methodology

This project works with a mixed method approach, discussing Gaza's poetic culture, its production, distribution and reception and delving into the analysis of poetry as a mode of resistance against memocide and amnesia. For the first and third analytical chapter, initially investigating the production and lastly the reception of poetry from Gaza's authors locally, in exile and diaspora, the method of process tracing will be applied. By following poetry on its journey through processes of production, distribution and reception, its mode of resistance can be traced and explored.

Process tracing is an increasingly sought after method in political science, investigating the unfolding of events or situations over time and characterizing key steps.⁶⁹ The method works with a timeline or narrative, exploring the ideas and events along the way, considering the evidence to confirm these ideas⁷⁰ and discussing the processes generated outcome. This method is applicable to this research when exploring the movements of poetry between locations, people and media; how it is produced and how it reaches the hand and eye of the reader, discussed in chapters 1&3. Methodologically, process tracing bears the risk of oversimplification and theoretically, memory can be romanticized as the "repository of alternative histories and subaltern truths."⁷¹ Additionally, when talking about the recent production and distribution of poetry from Gaza, it is necessary to keep in mind under what circumstances literary collaborations are taking place and often it seems, "we only allow Palestinians space on the page when they are dead or being slaughtered."⁷²

The second chapter discusses the content and narratives of selected poems with critical discourse and content analysis to investigate how poets are challenging imperial, settler-colonial discourse. Content analysis and discourse analysis are concerned with the ideas and narratives of the selected poems directly. They inquire about the poetry's content, story, idea, perspective and discourse in relation to the assigned themes of geography, environment, memory, genocide and resistance. With the focus on specific themes as sites of struggle against memocide and amnesia, the content of selected poems as counternarratives are discussed. All definitions of discourse analysis are concerned with 'anything beyond the

⁶⁹ David Collier, "Understanding process tracing," *PS: political science & politics* 44.4 (2011): 824. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511001429>.

⁷⁰ Collier, "Understanding process tracing," 829.

⁷¹ Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod, *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory* (Columbia University Press, 2007), 21.

⁷² Nashwa Nasreldin, "Gazan Poets Write To Survive," *New Lines Magazine*, October 29, 2024. <https://newlinesmag.com/review/gazan-poets-write-to-survive/>.

sentence', the use of language⁷³ and the investigation of language and discourse, as in this case in poetry, as 'communicative events' which constitute a particular way of talking about and understanding the world.⁷⁴ For this project, discourse and content analysis are interested in poetry as a genre and phenomenon, in Gaza's poetic culture, in the different functions of poetry and the themes that are discussed in it. Here, poems are not dissected with close reading but discussed in- and echoing the greater thematic context.

The aim of this research is to acknowledge and study the act of writing itself, as a first instance, then to look at the social, material and political dimensions of production and distribution of poetry as resistance, its narratives and its relation to and reception by others. The sheer moment of writing during a genocide and survival and expansion of Gaza's poetic culture deserves attention in itself, which explains the choice for process tracing as methodological lens.

⁷³ Deborah Tannen, Heidi Ehernberger Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffirin, eds. "Introduction to The First edition" in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Second edition (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 1.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=985110>.

⁷⁴ Gabriele Griffin, "6. Discourse Analysis," in *Research Methods for English Studies* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 93. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748683444-007>.

2. Production & Distribution of Poetry

*“But I can still write,
if I manage to charge my cellphone using the solar-powered battery. (...)
I write in order not to lose my mind,
in order to stay balanced in the midst of all this horror,
this endless war.”⁷⁵*

This chapter investigates the production and distribution of poetry in and outside of Gaza since the escalation of violence in October of 2023, in light of Israel’s ongoing genocide against Palestinians, targeting the very existence and memory of a people and land. The question that is asked here is: How is poetry in Gaza, its production and distribution, preserving collective memory in the face of memoricide and amnesia? This first analytical chapter explores the poetic culture and process of production, publication and distribution of poetry as counternarrative and countertermemoricidal practice. Further, Gaza’s educational infrastructure, status of poetry, collaborations through magazines, websites, translators, social media and festivals are introduced and the infrastructural, material, social and necropolitical dimension of memory making through poetry are discussed. With the method of process tracing, this chapter follows the “theoretical expectation”⁷⁶ that the production and distribution of poetry functions as “knowledge production,” as “place-making,”⁷⁷ as mobilization and counter narrative to memoricide and historical amnesia.

2.1 Erasure of Education

“The extent of the carnage wrought on Gaza’s literary community is something that will never be known.”⁷⁸ Especially when looking at the systematic destruction of universities, schools, libraries, archives and cultural centers,⁷⁹ the targeted killing of journalists, writers,

⁷⁵ Nasser Rabah, “*Where I Write Now*”, trans. Wiam El-Tamami, *And Still We Write* (Publishers for Palestine, 2024), 3.

⁷⁶ Jacob I. Ricks and Amy H. Liu, “Process-Tracing Research Designs: A Practical Guide,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51, no. 4 (2018): 842. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096518000975>.

⁷⁷ Zia, “Poetry as Dissent,” 417.

⁷⁸ Abdullah Younis, “Gaza’s poets never stopped writing,” *The Electronic Intifada*, February 05, 2025. <https://electronicintifada.net/content/gazas-poets-never-stopped-writing/50365>.

⁷⁹ Shojaa Al-Safadi, “Some things we can never rebuild,” *The Electronic Intifada*, August 28, 2024.

poets, students and teachers, a 'scholasticide'⁸⁰ is taking place and the intention of memoricide, as the erasure of the memory and history of the Palestinian people, is exposed. Institutions such as the Gazan Central Archives⁸¹ and in total 60% of educational facilities⁸² have been destroyed by Israel only since October 2023. With that, their racist, Zionist machinery directs a memoricidal campaign of "dearchivization"⁸³ and "state sponsored amnesia."⁸⁴ Recently, the criminalization of writing and narrating poetry has intensified drastically. The targeting of Palestinian writers is not a new phenomenon but began in the 1930s when Palestinian poetry started to grapple with the suffering furnished by colonial powers,⁸⁵ in the words of Palestinian lecturer and researcher Dr. Atef Alshaer.

When people are killed, stories lost and sites of memory erased, a community responds by collecting and recording of what is left, what can be remembered and what can be archived, retold and reenvisioned for future generations and audiences. With collecting, recording, remembering and retelling through poetry as countertermoricidal practice, Gazans and Palestinians in general have been resisting their oppressor's terror and dominant narratives.

2.2 Poetry in Gaza

*"It is not only grief that makes writing in the time of genocide a torturous task; it is, more so, one's recognition of the written word as shamefully insufficient in the face of 2,000-pound bombs."*⁸⁶

"In Palestine, stories are sacred."⁸⁷ Poetry as the dominant and most popular genre in Palestinian literature⁸⁸ has always played a primary role in Palestinian culture, looking back at

<https://electronicintifada.net/content/some-things-we-can-never-rebuild/48506>.

⁸⁰ Dader, "Topologies of scholasticide in Gaza," 2.

⁸¹ Z. Agha, J. Esson, M. Griffiths, and M. Joronen, "Gaza: A decolonial geography," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 49, no. 2, (2024): 2. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12675>.

⁸² Dader, "Topologies of scholasticide in Gaza," 2.

⁸³ Zia, "The Kashmir-Palestine Conversation Series."

⁸⁴ Browne, "Truth, Acknowledgement," 56.

⁸⁵ Armani Syed, "How Poetry Became a Tool of Resistance for Palestinians," *TIME*, January 11, 2024.

<https://time.com/6554381/poet-palestine-gaza-war/>.

⁸⁶ El-Kurd, *Perfect Victims*, 15.

⁸⁷ Refaat Alareer, "Gaza Writes Back: Narrating Palestine," *Biography* 37, no. 2 (2014): 524–37.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24570193>.

⁸⁸ Ashrawi, "The Contemporary Palestinian Poetry of Occupation," 84.

a distinguished literary tradition and celebrated a connection to the earth, culture, its history and people. Poetry especially becomes a space to rebuild the Palestinian homeland through words and make it visible through vivid and relatable language anybody could read.⁸⁹ Poetry, like “impossible music”⁹⁰ is a mode of resistance in its celebration and continuation of oral history and popular storytelling, outstanding in its production under constant threat of erasure and unwriting. The Palestinian literary tradition is crafted through poets like Mahmoud Darwish, Samih Al-Qasem, Tawfiq Zayyad, Ghassan Kanafani, Suheir Hammad, Fadwa Tuqan and May Ziadeh. The many emerging writers featured in this research predominantly write from and about Gaza specifically. Their work is a revolutionary and educational weapon,⁹¹ resisting the erasure of memory and always tied to the liberation struggle. Throughout decades of violent dispossession and occupation, poetry was always weaved in resistance efforts and now, more than ever, functions as mode of resistance against ethnic cleansing.⁹² Palestinians show a national literacy rate of 97,7%⁹³ and maintained this exceptional achievement despite Israel's destruction of schools, universities and libraries throughout its occupation.

Despite attacks, poetry has become one of the only possibilities for Palestinians to record and narrate their experiences and emotions in Gaza, in the diaspora and in exile and narrate their physical, emotional and social ties to the earth.⁹⁴ Bookstores and social media increasingly featured Palestinian writers in the past years but were stormed by Palestinian writing and poetry in the wake of October 2023. Anthologies and books continue to be published in great numbers. Writers of all generations engage in multiple languages, sites of production and in new anglophone genres for the articulation of their experiences.⁹⁵ Poetry functions as knowledge production and legitimate carrier of knowledge, making the colonial, necropolitical forms of memocide and amnesia visible and intelligible. Works of Palestinian poetry receive extensive literary critical attention, are published in great numbers and featured in university curriculums.⁹⁶ Amid occupation and ethnic cleansing, poetry becomes a “right to

⁸⁹ Syed, “How Poetry Became a Tool of Resistance.”

⁹⁰ “Heaven Looks Like Us: An Evening of Palestinian Poetry”, Haymarket Books, YouTube, May 15, 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHwVoB52yQw>.

⁹¹ Alahmed, “‘Black Intifada’,” 1.

⁹² Ernesto Verdeja, “The Gaza Genocide in Five Crises,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, (2025): 1. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2025.2452707>.

⁹³ Syed, “How Poetry Became a Tool of Resistance.”

⁹⁴ Atef Alshaer, “I Am From Gaza. Our World Is in Ruins, but Our Stories Endure,” *Atmos*, October 10, 2024. <https://atmos.earth/i-am-from-gaza-our-world-is-in-ruins-but-our-stories-endure/>.

⁹⁵ Abu-Manneh, “‘Under Suffering’s Glow’,” 4.

⁹⁶ Abu-Manneh, “‘Under Suffering’s Glow’,” 5.

a remembered presence”⁹⁷, witness, commemoration, rebellion, memory, history, survival, protest, dissent, reclamation, recovery of a collective memory, responsibility, memorial, imagination and resistance. Especially by publishing poetry, memory is made public and “affirms identity, tames trauma and asserts Palestinian political and moral claims to justice, redress and the right to return.”⁹⁸

In her acceptance speech for the National Book Award for Poetry 2024, winning the prize for her book *Something About Living* Palestinian American poet and activist Lena Khalaf Tuffaha accepts the award with the words: “our service is needed as writers, our service is needed as human beings (...) I want us to feel and be uncomfortable and be disoriented and be angry and get up.”⁹⁹ Similarly, Mosab Abu Toha, founder of the now destroyed *Edward Said library* in Gaza, says about his ‘poetry of catastrophe’: “The role of a poet or an artist is to assist, or accompany people who have never been able to go to that place, to take them into the heart of the experience.”¹⁰⁰ In the dark hours without electricity, surrounded by debris, smoke, screams, the sound of drones and airstrikes, without work and with little food left, many in Gaza have taken up pen and paper in what became for many the last resort, “a necessary act to feel alive in the face of overwhelming destruction.”¹⁰¹ The writing of poetry offers a channel of communication for telling stories in fear of imminent death and becomes a memory site, a “lieux de mémoire”¹⁰² in the words of Pierre Nora. On paper, recitation or online, words claim space, heritage and collective memory. Poetry can also become an escape, when eyes, mind and body have seen and experienced things too shocking to comprehend and express in long interviews.

*“A poem is not just words placed on a line. It’s a cloth. Mahmoud Darwish wanted to built his home, his exile, from all the words in the world. I weave my poems with veins. I want to built a poem like a solid home, but hopefully not with my bones.”*¹⁰³

⁹⁷ Zia, “Poetry as Dissent,” 417.

⁹⁸ Sa’di and Abu-Lughod, *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, 3.

⁹⁹ “Lena Khalaf Tuffaha accepts the 2024 National Book Award for Poetry for *Something About Living*”, YouTube, November 22, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3AYfJAf434>.

¹⁰⁰ Alexander Durie, “Mosab Abu Toha: The witness poet narrating the genocide in Gaza,” *The New Arab*, December 18, 2024. <https://www.newarab.com/features/mosab-abu-toha-witness-poet-narrating-genocide-gaza>.

¹⁰¹ Al-Safadi, “Some things we can never rebuild.”

¹⁰² Nasooha, “A History Buried Alive,” 107.

¹⁰³ Mosab Abu Toha, quoted in Emily Reid Green, “Courage in the Impossible: Gaza’s Poets Speak,” *NaTakallam*, accessed June 9, 2025, <https://natakallam.com/blog/courage-in-the-impossible-gazas-poets-speak/>.

2.3 Magazines and Websites

“Today, poetry is living and circulating as never before.”¹⁰⁴ The unprecedented overflow and plethora of Palestinian poetry in translation circulating currently, that accompanies Palestinians and narrates their social worlds and “the flourishing of Palestinian writing in the Anglophone world”¹⁰⁵ reached a new height in the last year. Protests, newspapers, magazines, blogs and videos seemed to be stormed by poetry coming out of Gaza, the West Bank and diaspora and further distributed them into all corners of the world. Many poets collaborated with magazines, journals, websites and newspapers abroad in the effort to spread their work. They have become essential for the distribution of poetry and for the contribution to an online archive of poetry and many continue to support Gazan poets and writers. The *New Yorker* featured Pulitzer Prize winning essays by Gaza’s renowned poet Mosab Abu Toha and other magazines published poetry via interviews, academic articles, news reports and in curated anthologies. Magazines, Journals, projects and collectives publishing poems featured in this project are: *The Baffler*, *FUNAMBULIST*, *Mizna Online*, *Protean*, *peripheries*, *New Lines Magazine*, *Electronic Intifada*, *Lit Hub*, *Asymptote*, *ArabLit Quarterly*, *Jadaliyya*, *The Markaz Review*, *Atmos*, *the Rumpus*, *The Dreaming Machine*, *Harper’s Magazine*, *Radical Philosophy*, *the Poetry Foundation*, *the Journal of Palestine Studies* and *Modern Poetry in Translation (mpT)*, *the New York Book Review* and *The New Yorker*. All offer open accessibility to poems by Gazan writers and speak to varying audiences online and offline. By using their platforms to distribute poetry from a multitude of Gazan poets, they defy the persisting information void and make histories and memories available.

Institutes like the *Institute for Palestine Studies* and the *Society of Palestinian Anthropologists* have been another important contributor to the publication and republication of texts from Gazan writers. An exemplary institute opening its doors and offering its stage for writers from Gaza is the *Literaturhaus Berlin*, which started a series titled “Zeit für Gaza” (time for Gaza), in which Palestinian poets and writers in Gaza and in the diaspora discuss literature as a tool of remembrance, resistance and self-determination. The series ask “How do you tell a story in a world where stories themselves are constantly threatened with

¹⁰⁴ “World Poetry Today: Production, Translation, Reception (2025),” The Estonian Association of Comparative Literature, University of Tartu, 2025. <https://sisu.ut.ee/evka/world-poetry-today-production-translation-reception/?lang=en>.

¹⁰⁵ Brigid Quirke, “Form, fragment, refiguring return: Memory and abstraction in three Palestinian poems,” (Access Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington, Thesis, 2023), 6. <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.24468013>.

extinction?¹⁰⁶ and will continue hosting Palestinian poets and their stories. This initiative comes late but nevertheless stands out in the German cultural establishment. Libraries and publishing houses like *Haymarket books*, the *Palestine Writes Press*, the newly formed collective *Publishers for Palestine*, the Palestinian project *We Are Not Numbers* for young writers and the academic initiative *PalREAD*, hosted at Freie Universität Berlin, are other importance actors that contribute to the support and distribution of Gaza's poetic culture and Palestinian writing. *Heaven Looks like Us*¹⁰⁷, *Ask the Night for a Dream*¹⁰⁸ and *We Are Not Numbers*¹⁰⁹ are the latest anthologies of Palestinian poetry published this year for the English-speaking market.

2.4 Translators & Collaborations

Translators became indispensable for collaborations between writers, magazines and collectives to take place, like Huda Fakhreddine, who has been a teacher and translator for many years and started translating poems by Palestinian writers from Arabic to English in a much-increased rate, after October 2023. What became a famous example is Refaat Alareer's poem *If I must die*, which was translated into more than 100 languages.¹¹⁰ These collaborations are impactful and interesting for a number of reasons: they reach a much larger, international audience much quicker, they subvert the imperial, settler-colonial narratives of Israeli cultural, militarily, political and religious superiority and impunity which are spread in mainstream news and platforms, by redrawing collective memory, telling the story of individuals and communities whose poetic contributions would otherwise be heavily censored. "Israel has invested billions of dollars to construct a sophisticated cultural apparatus, using academia, literature, film, music, tourism, and social media, in strategic ways to justify its violent occupation of Palestine."¹¹¹ With much less financial capacities and international sponsors, the Palestinian People have had to and continue to be creative in their resistance against memoricide and amnesia. Collaborations with other media highlights poetry

¹⁰⁶ "Zeit für Gaza", Literaturhaus Berlin. <https://li-be.de/programm/zeit-fuer-gaza/>.

¹⁰⁷ George Abraham and Noor Hindi, *Heaven Looks like Us Palestinian Poetry*, (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2025).

¹⁰⁸ Susan Muaddi Darraj, *Ask the Night for a Dream: Palestinian Writing From the Diaspora*, (Palestine Writes Press, 2024). <https://palestinewrites.org/product/ask-the-night-for-a-dream-palestinian-writing-from-the-diaspora-2024/>.

¹⁰⁹ Ahmed Alnaouq and Pam Bailey, *'WE ARE NOT NUMBERS': The Voices of Gaza's Youth* (Hutchinson Heineman, 2025). <https://wearenotnumbers.org/buy-our-book/>

¹¹⁰ أبو الفتح أبو إيناس, "A Critical Study of Poetic Outbursts," 607.

¹¹¹ "On Further Action", *Poems for Palestine* (Publishers for Palestine, 2024), 16.

as a welcome asset, a weapon and archive who is open and accessible to all. Masterfully, in whatever form and context they reach us, poems continue to remember and recount the social worlds that they stem from, letting memories reclaim history and counternarratives resist colonial language and discourse.

Poets writing in the diaspora can contact magazines and festivals and vice versa, but those still writing and living in Gaza are facing extreme challenges with the publication of their work. If not self-published on social media and websites, writers are sending their work via text, phone and email through the difficult infrastructure of censorship and destruction. Initiatives like the young community *Gaza Poets Society*¹¹² or *Writers Against the War on Gaza*¹¹³ are supporting them in their efforts and linking them to the global literary community. The founder of *Gaza Poets Society*, Mohammed Moussa leads the groups effort to sponsor young poets, compile anthologies and zines and mediate between local and international poets. "Sharing poetry from each poet is a delicate moment, as we worry, we may not hear from them again,"¹¹⁴ writes Moussa about the process of editing, translating and sharing poetry from his community and being confronted with deep agony, worry and isolation towards each other and the international community.

*"Please forget about us,
Forget our names, our freedom to exist,
The bloodstains on your screens (...)
...simply forget us, for we too have lost memory of your existence."*¹¹⁵

2.5 Social Media

The online literary space has become an important sphere for Palestinian writers to come together, create new virtual connections and where scattered communities and writers in the diaspora are charting new digital paths of inquiry.¹¹⁶ A poetic culture heavily targeted in Gaza and suffering from censorship abroad is finding new life and space online and through

¹¹² "Who are we at Gaza Poets Society?," *Gaza Poets Society*, Substack, June 05, 2025.

<https://gazapoetsociety.substack.com/p/who-are-we-at-gaza-poets-society>.

¹¹³ Writers Against the War on Gaza. <https://www.writersagainsthewarongaza.com/>.

¹¹⁴ Mohammed Moussa, "A statement on writing poetry during a genocide," *bellacaledonia*, March 20, 2025. <https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2025/03/20/a-statement-on-writing-poetry-during-a-genocide/>.

¹¹⁵ Tiasha Idarak, "Poets from Palestine: Verses written in tears and blood," *The Daily Star*, October 07, 2024. <https://www.thedailystar.net/books-literature/news/poets-palestine-verses-written-tears-and-blood-3722236>.

¹¹⁶ ابو الفتح and ايناس, "A Critical Study of Poetic Outbursts," 590.

social media. Hashtags such as #freepalestine and #watermelon create billions of engagements.¹¹⁷ Even without the help of other media and platforms, especially young Palestinian poets like Mosab Abu Toha, Mohammed El-Kurd, Mara Humaid, Noor Hindi and Sarah M. Saleh have managed to gain huge audiences through social media like Instagram and TikTok, next to journalists, photographers and activists. There, they share images, videos and texts about their horrifying daily realities under genocide.¹¹⁸ Playwriter Ahmed Masoud repurposed his twitter account into a diary, where he documents the genocide, describes the now unrecognizable environment of his childhood in Jabaliya camp, shares stories about his family's life in Gaza and after the recent killing of his brother by an Israeli quadcopter, Masoud became a poet.¹¹⁹

Instagram has become a pivotal space of publication and encounter for Gaza's poetic culture. In a conversation on Instagram with Bosnian writer Lana Bastašić, the Gazan poet Mosab Abu Toha shares how it feels to write in and outside Gaza during a genocide, why he loves stories and feels responsible to report and document what is happening in Palestine. He says that witnessing the horrors inflicted by the Israeli army is like rewriting old poems, like reliving experiences and seeing his poems rehappening.¹²⁰ The only thing that changed is the amount of cruelty, the amount of horror and pain he feels as a witness and victim. Abu Toha managed to escape Gaza with his family, but was kidnapped, blindfolded, interrogated and beaten on the journey by Israeli soldiers, only to be released after one day. Temporarily settled in the US with his family, he now writes poetry in the diaspora and has recently published his second volume of poetry: *A Forest of Noise*. In the interview, the writer explains: "If I don't tell this it is not told, if it is not told, it did not happen." Since only doctors come to Gaza on missions, no international journalists, aid workers or tourists, stories and poems are often the only means to preserve collective memory and the only communication to leave Gaza.

*"I'm afraid. I'm afraid that a missile will, at any moment, pierce through my body, and my story will remain forever trapped in my head, incomplete."*¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Beverley Milton-Edwards, "Protest Wave Palestine: 'We are All Palestnians'," *Protest* 4, 2 (2024): 243, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/2667372X-bja10069>.

¹¹⁸ C. Procter, "'My Grandmother Has Her Keys, Now I Have Mine': Building a Database to Preserve Testimonies of Genocide in Gaza," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (2025): 1. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0377919X.2025.2455363>.

¹¹⁹ "The power of literature in times of war: Fatima Bhutto & Ahmed Masoud | Reframe," Al Jazeera English, YouTube, February 02, 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxtbgLop77k>.

¹²⁰ Lana Bastašić (@lanabasta), "Conversation with Palestinian poet Mosab Abu Toha," Instagram, September 9, 2024. <https://www.instagram.com/lanabasta/>.

¹²¹ Esam Hajjaj, "Where I Write Now" in *And Still We Write (Publishers for Palestine, 2024)* 35.

Mosab Abu Toha and Esam Hajjaj both explain how, what Ather Zia calls a 'poetic responsibility', feels like. For them, if stories are not told, they are trapped and did not happen. The urgency to report from Gaza is felt especially by its journalists and writers, both in Gaza and in the diaspora and exile, who use their profession today to document and archive the genocides carnage.

Next to social media and sometimes also part of it, through an influx of writers participating in literary festivals like the *Palestine Writes Festival* and *The Palestinian Festival of Literature*, poetry slams, public debates, interviews, shows and audiences on social media, a new wave of resistance literature is unearthed. In a recent edition of the Palestine Festival of Literature, the panelists show their support of the international student encampments, who demand defunding of organization involved in the genocide and in the subjugating of people not only in Gaza but also locally on the respective campuses and cities. Further, they discuss the motivating and mobilizing power of literature as a tool of empathy and community¹²² and the many modes of resistance writing can encompass. This festival has especially contributed to a new mode of literary solidarity and encounter by inviting writers to Palestine and directly engaging with Palestinian writers and their work.¹²³

2.6 Immediate Audiences & Social Dimension

Many works of poetry never leave the Gaza strip and instead appear on debris of bombed buildings or are performed locally. Even without publication, distribution, or collaboration with translators and magazines, Gazan poets are writing and reading their work to their immediate audiences, "something to help them make sense of the long months of horrors," as poet Basil Abu al-Sheikh explains as he reads his poems about his arrest, imprisonment and torture by Israeli forces, in a circle of listeners.¹²⁴ With the reading and performance of poetry, the social dimension of its production and distribution comes to live. "Poets and writers give people hope and encourage them to endure the tragedies of war."¹²⁵ In light of memocide and amnesia, these writings and readings become especially important, in

¹²² "Viet Than Nguyen, Yahya Ashour, Angela Flournoy, and Randa Jarrar | Los Angeles June 4 2024," The Palestine Festival of Literature, YouTube, August 15, 2024.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0zqDWkmmxw>.

¹²³ Abu-Manneh, "'Under Suffering's Glow,'" 5.

¹²⁴ Abdullah Younis, "Gaza's poets never stopped writing," *Electronic Intifada*, February 05, 2025.
<https://electronicintifada.net/content/gazas-poets-never-stopped-writing/50365>.

¹²⁵ Younis, "Gaza's poets never stopped writing."

that they allow for expression and resistance to the destruction of the creative and cultural spirit of the people. Similarly, Palestinian poet Naomi Shihab Nye says “Poetry cares. Poetry tries to sing the quiet, subtle stories. Poetry cherishes and protects details. Poetry listens to the ones who are not in the headlines.”¹²⁶ Poetry, in the words of poet Husam Maarouf, is the “antidote to the ‘machine of death.’”¹²⁷

2.7 Material & Infrastructural Dimension

Electricity, gas, medicine, shelter, water and food are scarce in Gaza, due to the total siege, blockade of aid¹²⁸ and “systematic targeting of civilian infrastructure including hospitals, ambulances, schools, mosques, churches, bakeries, restaurants, water supplies, food supplies (and) medicine depots.”¹²⁹ With solar panels, some families manage to secure short hours of electricity where they charge phones and get in contact with the outside world, with friends and family. Often, rain prevents the panels from storing energy and results in days of darkness and isolation. In the short hours with electricity and internet, writers manage to compose texts and upload content. Writing amid displacement, in ghostly ruins and tent cities, under the sound of drones, warplanes and explosions, without privacy, surrounded by toxic smoke from explosives, sewage and illnesses and often without electricity, gas, water and food constitute the daily reality of Gaza’s poets.¹³⁰ Even in the absence of attacks and explosions, the silence becomes a torturing anticipation.

“How am I to write anything during this terrifying silence?”¹³¹

After Israel’s ongoing aid blockade in breach of international humanitarian law, famine is again imminent in Gaza as most of its inhabitants face catastrophic food insecurity.¹³²

¹²⁶ Riley Welch, Sara Bawany, and Brian Seward, “Writing Our Way Through: A Conversation with Naomi Shihab Nye,” *Porter House Review*, February 19, 2024. <https://porterhouseareview.org/articles/an-interview-with-naomi-shihab-nye/>

¹²⁷ Nashwa Nasreldin, “Gazan Poets Write To Survive,” *New Lines Magazine*, October 29, 2024. <https://newlinesmag.com/review/gazan-poets-write-to-survive/>.

¹²⁸ “Gazans face hunger crisis as aid blockade nears two months,” *United Nations*, April 28, 2025. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/04/1162666>.

¹²⁹ Alshaer, “Writing Gaza during a genocide,” 3–12.

¹³⁰ Alshaer, “I Am From Gaza.”

¹³¹ “This is Gaza: Literary Texts Written Under the Israeli Bombardment of Gaza,” in *Action for Hope*, (Association des Universitaires pour la respect du droit international en Palestine, 2024), 5. <https://aurdip.org/en/this-is-gaza-literary-texts-written-under-the-israeli-bombardment-of-gaza/>.

¹³² “GAZA STRIP: Famine is imminent as 1.1 million people, half of Gaza, experience catastrophic food insecurity,” *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification*, March 18, 2024. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/alerts-archive/issue-97/en/>.

Trucks with food and other lifesaving supplies pile up at the border crossings and are prevented from entering.¹³³ Exemplary for the dire situation is Playwright Ali Abu Yaseen who writes about a night where two cans of fava beans were shared between thirty people.¹³⁴ Living and writing translates into resistance in Gaza, where material and infrastructural resources are uniquely scarce, often abducted, destroyed or prevented from entering by the occupation soldiers or settlers.¹³⁵ Thus, poetry is produced in an environment lacking medicine, electricity, fuel, food and water next to the destroyed infrastructure and a People on the brink of imposed starvation and annihilation.¹³⁶ To find time, safety and energy to even produce texts and accomplish their publication is almost impossible and is yet miraculously achieved by so many writers in Gaza.

“Now I write on the walls of houses along the road of my displacement

And I know that they will wilt.”¹³⁷

2.8 Necropolitical Dimension

Palestinian writers have a history of imprisonment and censorship by Israeli authorities who are continuously trying to prevent their work from publication and distribution. If they are not directly targeted and killed like Refaat Alareer, prison and torture await most academics and writers. Long hunger strikes have historically enabled prisoners to demand the necessary means to write and intricate smuggling networks to distribute their texts.¹³⁸ Today, Israel is again threatened by Gaza’s poetic culture and reacts with frequent internet and telecommunication blackouts to prevent its engagement with the world outside Gaza’s prison walls. Again, poets and writers maneuver with difficulty to publish and

¹³³ “Gazans face hunger crisis as aid blockade nears two months,” *United Nations*, April 28, 2025. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/04/1162666>.

¹³⁴ “This is Gaza,” 5.

¹³⁵ “More than a million children in the Gaza Strip deprived of lifesaving aid for over one month,” *Unicef*, April 05, 2025. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/more-million-children-gaza-strip-deprived-lifesaving-aid-over-one-month>.

¹³⁶ Ahmad Abdelaziz Mansour, “Letters from Gaza Part 2,” *Protean Magazine*, October 16, 2023. <https://proteanmag.com/2023/10/17/letters-from-gaza-part-2/>.

¹³⁷ Maryam Al Khateeb, “Where I Write Now” in *And Still We Write* (Publishers for Palestine, 2024), 12.

¹³⁸ Literaturhaus Berlin, „Zeit für Gaza.“

distribute their work and make use of starlink connections provided to hospitals¹³⁹ and international electronic sim cards¹⁴⁰ for internet access.

Faced with the threat of memocide and amnesia, where knowledge and native history is suppressed, the writing of poetry online offers a medium to make place, archive and recount collective memory and prevent its destruction. Many poets and writers, among them Heba Abu Neda¹⁴¹ and Refaat Alareer in 2023, have been killed by the Israeli occupation in Gaza and the West Bank since the inception of the state of Israel, the Nakba, the first and second Intifada and increasingly, since October 7th. Often, their poetry is all that is left – the memory that could not be killed. If not directly targeted and killed, many writers in Gaza have received death threats from the Israeli army as the expression of a fear for the writer's power of what Ahmed Masoud calls 'changing hearts and minds'.¹⁴²

Necropolitics, defined by Achille Mbembé as the “the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations”¹⁴³, where “certain bodies nowadays are ‘cultivated’ or grown for the purpose of enhancing life and (re)production, while others are marked for or neglected into death”¹⁴⁴ investigate ideologies, narratives and practices at play in the targeted destruction of bodies and memories. Death worlds are created with Gaza as the prime example, where people are ultimately let to live or made to die, transformed and criminalized into non existing subjects, strapped of any rights. Poetry exposes, observes, describes and documents the necropolitical condition of Palestinian lives in Gaza, the inherent structural violence of the settler-colonial, military occupation, genocide and creation of 'death worlds'.

“What do you say to the families of the martyrs who are occupied even in death? Their children are held hostage in the cemeteries of numbers or frozen in mortuary chambers. Their bodies become bargaining chips- Or harvested for organs.”¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ Rachel Hagan, “Elon Musk’s Starlink satellite service being used at Gaza hospital,” *The Independent*, July 24, 2024. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/elon-musk-gaza-starlink-b2584966.html>.

¹⁴⁰ “For Gazans, international electronic SIM cards serve as window to world,” *Middle East Monitor*, January 19, 2024. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240119-for-gazans-international-electronic-sim-cards-serve-as-window-to-world/>.

¹⁴¹ Abeer Ayyoub, “Israel-Palestine war: The beloved Gaza novelist killed after fleeing south,” *Middle East Eye*, October, 24, 2023. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-war-beloved-gaza-novelist-killed>.

¹⁴² Al Jazeera English, “The power of literature in times of war.”

¹⁴³ J.-A. Mbembe and Libby Meintjes, “Necropolitics,” *Public Culture*, vol. 15, no. 1, (2003): 14.

¹⁴⁴ C.L. Quinan, "Necropolitics," *Posthuman Glossary* (2018): 271.

¹⁴⁵ El-Kurd, *Perfect Victims*, 20.

2.9 Conclusion

The question “How is poetry in Gaza, its production and distribution preserving collective memory in the face of memoricide and amnesia?” has been answered through the exploration of interrelated processes, asking how and why poets in and outside of Gaza are writing, what functions poetry takes on, how poetry is performed, translated, published, distributed and part of collaborations, as knowledge production, as “place-making”¹⁴⁶ as mobilization, counter-history and counternarrative. This chapter identifies a process that follows the production, publication and distribution of poetry in Gaza amidst memoricide, amnesia and ethnic cleansing.¹⁴⁷ Poetry is written under airstrikes and massacres, with little material resources such as shelter and electricity to charge phones and laptops or to have light in the night. Severe food, water and medicine shortages complicate- and often leave no space for the writing process. The destruction of archives and educational institutions and the targeted killings of teachers, writers and journalists is directed towards the erasure of indigenous, Palestinian knowledge, memory and presence on the land. Not only in reaction, but also as part of an almost incomparable status of poetry and literature, Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere, from all ages, backgrounds and professions are writing, recording and archiving what is being suppressed and criminalized. By collaborating with translators, other media, magazines and institutes in Palestine and abroad in the process of publishing and distributing poetry, space is made, silences disrupted, memory reclaimed, and knowledge produced. This widespread network of collaborators locally and abroad enables poets in Gaza to resist memoricide and preserve their stories and memories in new spaces online and offline.

Poetry manages to gather people, despite the ongoing genocide, arrests and detentions of Palestinian activists in the diaspora like Mahmoud Khalil¹⁴⁸ and the censorship and repression of poets in literary circles around the world. With the production and distribution of Gaza’s poetic culture, information and stories are made available and appropriate vocabulary is generated. Old voices continue to write, and new ones are emerging, remembering, testifying, mobilizing, grieving and “redressing pervasive hegemonic narratives”¹⁴⁹ together. By writing poetry, publishing it via social media or in collaboration with magazines, news

¹⁴⁶ Zia, “Poetry as Dissent,” 417.

¹⁴⁷ B.Tselem, “Trump and Netanyahu’s roadmap.”

¹⁴⁸ Chelsea Bailey, “Who is Mahmoud Khalil? Palestinian activist detained by ICE over Columbia University protests,” *CNN*, March 11, 2025. <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/03/11/us/mahmoud-khalil-columbia-ice-green-card-hnk/index.html>.

¹⁴⁹ Procter, “My Grandmother Has Her Keys,” 2.

outlets, festivals and institutes, circulating them with the help of translators, performing poetry to their immediate audiences, defying material and infrastructural constraints, Gaza's poets are resisting their occupiers and reclaiming history and memory, even after its erasure.¹⁵⁰ Documenting the Israeli genocidal campaign with poems and texts, in Gaza, the West Bank and from the diaspora, produces knowledge and preserves memory, past and present and allows for the reclamation of space and narrative.

¹⁵⁰ Aziz Yafi, "The Land of Rebellious Oranges", *Institute for Palestine Studies*, March 30, 2025. <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1657142>

3. Content & Discourse

*“Memories are Flowers—
We water them,
narrate them,
turn them into poems
into plays,
into stories.”¹⁵¹*

Building on the prior discussion of the resilience in production and distribution of Gaza’s poetic culture, this chapter asks: “In what ways are Gaza’s poets unwriting imperial, settler-colonial discourse and creating counternarratives?” This second chapter, discussing poetry under the analytical trajectory of geography, environment, memory, genocide and resistance, uses the method of critical discourse analysis and content analysis. The selected themes under which the poems are discussed arise from two considerations and analytical perspectives. First, the selection of existing poems, their survey and classification resulted in thematic groups. Second, these thematic groups encompass different spaces where memoricide takes place and lend themselves to the analysis of poetry as mode of resistance to the erasure of Palestinian knowledge, history, and memory.

Often, single lines of a poem have become more revealing than the extensive, deceptive talk about Gaza¹⁵² taking place in the media. Given the longstanding, one-sided discourse surrounding Gaza and the imposed oblivion of Palestinian narratives about their own land and history, it is essential to examine Israel’s prevailing narratives and amplify voices of Palestinian writers who are reclaiming the memories and historiography denied to them, making them retrievable to a broader audience.

Ironically, as Gazan poets and writers in the diaspora are filling the imposed “memory holes”¹⁵³ with stories and poetry of identity and remembrance, the occupation and its allies are simultaneously forcing Gaza’s inhabitants to burn books to be able to cook and heat, thereby

¹⁵¹ Mosab Abu Toha, “Memories are Flowers,” *The Markaz Review*, July 14, 2021. <https://themarkaz.org/four-poems-from-mosab-abu-toha/>.

¹⁵² أبو الفتوح, and ابناس, “A Critical Study of Poetic Outbursts,” 587.

¹⁵³ Stoler, “Colonial Aphasia,” 122.

creating new memory holes. In a recent video from Gaza¹⁵⁴, a man in Khan Younis, south of Gaza city, holds a volume of Iraqi poet Nazik al Malaika in his hands, saying: “we are forced to burn our poetry, our history, our literature, our civilization and our humanity in the fire, just to cook our food, just to bake our bread. (...) I apologize to the poets, writers, authors and readers.” While poetry is newly written and distributed, it is equally and simultaneously destroyed and its pages reduced to a material resource for survival as expression of ‘everyday memoricide’. Being forced to burn literature and poetry after all other materials have been used up, the expression and archive of culture, history and identity, shows the vile intent to eradicate any traces of Palestinian existence and memory in Gaza and Palestine. And still, those works of poetry that are published and reach outside Gaza’s borders in book form or online are saved from Israel’s memoricidal extermination campaign. They contain the histories and memories of Gaza’s poets which are so vehemently targeted, burned and erased.

The following section discusses selected poems, each embedded in a more general thematic dimension ranging from geography and environment to memory, genocide and resistance.

3.1 Geography

The geography of Palestine has differing functions in the memories of different people and religious traditions.¹⁵⁵ The same is often manipulated and narrated to serve Zionist narratives of invented tradition and those of conquest and domination¹⁵⁶, turning Palestinian territory into ‘Jewish territory’.¹⁵⁷ In many Palestinian poems, the environment and geography is employed to counter the occupiers memoricide in Gaza. Literature and poetry become a memory shrine, resisting forced amnesia, environmental apartheid and ecocide through the unearthing and commemorating of Palestinian ecological knowledge and bondage to their land. The streets remember their inhabitants and the inhabitants remember their streets. When reading their poems, even the readers become familiar with the environment that was lost, being given a memory to imagine and remember.

¹⁵⁴ “Palestinian man forced to burn poetry book in order to ‘cook food’ amid Gaza fuel shortage” Middle East Eye (@middleeasteye), Instagram, April 05, 2025.

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DIC0NuLAYdo/?igsh=MTc4MmMlYmI2Ng==>.

¹⁵⁵ Said, Edward W. “Invention, Memory, and Place”, *Critical Inquiry*, 26 (2), (2000), 180.

¹⁵⁶ Said, “Invention,” 181.

¹⁵⁷ Said, “Invention,” 189.

“I was always skilled at playing with the city’s memory, and I was always afraid of defeating my ancestors; that is, I feared a single drop of memory that would not remember my grandfather. So, every day, I would run in the streets of Gaza to train them to remember me.”¹⁵⁸

Geography is engrained in Palestinian poetry and its instrumentalization for ‘geonarratives’ exposed. A geonarrative implies producing knowledge about a local or global geo where, in this case through poetry as a means of narration, knowledge is produced in a particular place and about a place in the world. Actors proclaim their regional sphere of influence through neo imperial geonarratives such as ‘Greater Israel’.¹⁵⁹ The geonarrative of ‘Greater Israel’ targets Palestine with its history, geography, memories, its infrastructures, environment, olive trees, farms, mosques, people and poets¹⁶⁰ and builds on its erasure as a country, as a People and as narrative.

*“Only in Gaza,
The earth fights alongside its people.”¹⁶¹*

Before and after the Nakba, the mass expulsion of 750.000 Palestinians in 1948 and disappearance of 500 Palestinian villages from international maps and dictionaries,¹⁶² the Israeli occupation has continuously denied and prevented a Palestinian statehood and engaged in numerous practices of narrating the non-existence of Palestine and its inhabitants. The Nakba as a historic, arguably ongoing event and the Gaza strip as a geographic entity born out of the same and populated by 1948 refugees, their children and grandchildren, is intentionally excluded from discourses on Palestine by Israeli - American geonarratives.

Against the strategy of “you discredit the messenger as a way of discrediting the message,”¹⁶³ widespread and employed by the Israeli occupiers, Palestinian poems as counternarratives reclaim the narratives and forms of knowledge production, exposing their

¹⁵⁸ Maryam Al Khateeb, “Gaza,” in *And Still We Write* (Publishers For Palestine, 2024), 9.

¹⁵⁹ Forough, M. (Forthcoming), “Geonarratives: Introducing a New Social Science Concept,” *Political Geography*, 3.

¹⁶⁰ Forough, “‘Geonarratives’,” 19.

¹⁶¹ Nour Khalil Abu Shammala, “The Land fights, too,” *The Electronic Intifada*, August, 05, 2024. <https://electronicintifada.net/content/land-fights-too/47811>.

¹⁶² Nur Masalah, *The Palestine Nakba, Decolonizing History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (Zed Books, 2012), 1-3.

¹⁶³ El-Kurd, “Perfect Victims,” 24.

discrediting and erasure. With writing about previously hidden and unavailable memories, poets produce knowledge, mobilize histories, resist memoricide and amnesia and break the imposed intellectual blockade. Their words narrate their geography, memory, reality and resistance and 'make places' in an environment of placelessness. "To re-member one must re-search, meaning searching anew, for the forgotten, the silenced, and the genocided"¹⁶⁴ and poetry appears as one of *the* important tools in doing so. The writer can rebuilt cities and streets with their words, trace the faces of those that have been killed and preserve that which is rooted out.¹⁶⁵

*"when the Israeli occupation forces killed fifteen-year-old Adam Ayyad in Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem, the question was, Did he really throw a Molotov cocktail at the soldiers? Aren't the Israelis known for fabricating such stories? When instead the question should have been, Why are Israeli troops in Bethlehem in the first place? Why was Adam Ayyad born in a refugee camp? Why is "Molotov" in the headline of a story about soldiers killing a boy? So what if he throws a Molotov cocktail? Who wouldn't?"*¹⁶⁶

The poem unmask the narrative told about Palestine, refugee camps and little Palestinian boys being killed for throwing a Molotov cocktail at soldiers. Other than contemporary media and news sensationalizing such events, acting as mouthpieces of settler-colonial governments, repeating racist claims and refraining from contextualization, the poet asks what triggered this event and the media report. When investigating why Israeli troops are in Bethlehem and why Adam Ayyad was born and lived in a refugee camp, one is met with the logic of an occupation that imprisons people in their own land, criminalizes and discards them. Israeli and International media propagate a narrative of Palestinian aggression and violence, omitting the explanation of the boys' circumstances and of what could lead to such small acts of resistance. Israeli troops are in the Bethlehem Governorate because they are terrorizing the population as part of a mission to seize land, create illegal buffer zones and outposts around illegal settlements and take over or destroy Palestinian property under the

¹⁶⁴ Forough, "Geonarratives," 15.

¹⁶⁵ Yousef El-Qedra, "Writing in Gaza," *Arab Lit*, January 6, 2025. <https://arablit.org/2025/01/06/writing-in-gaza-an-act-of-existence-in-the-shadows-of-war/>.

¹⁶⁶ Mohammad El-Kurd, *Perfect Victims*, 38.

'Greater Jerusalem' Plan, increasingly now under the cover of war.¹⁶⁷ Adam Ayyad was born in a refugee camp because his parents were already made refugees in their own land, being forced to live in tents when they were expelled from their home city. 'Molotov' is in the headline of a story about soldiers killing a boy because lives are judged differently in the Palestinian context. Children never seem to stay children or imbued with rights and dignity, but simply by being born Palestinian, they are framed as the violent aggressor.

*"How far is Palestine?" She asks. It's a fifteen-hour plane ride away, a dozen unresolved UN resolutions away, a few history lessons away, a hundred and some military checkpoints away, too much G4S-provided asphyxiation.*¹⁶⁸

Mapmaking also plays a pivotal role in geonarratives in that "imperial cartography leads to the mapping production of Palestine as a territorial space of ownership and control by non-Palestinian invaders."¹⁶⁹ Maps reflect space, power and ideology and will represent a specific hegemonial narrative of a place like Gaza. When Netanyahu shows international media a map of Palestine,¹⁷⁰ Gaza is fully under Israeli control and the West Bank annexed. Their aim is to overtake Palestine completely, to expel Palestinians entirely and extend the territory of Israel into 'Greater Israel', including Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, four of which Israel has already taken up territory from.¹⁷¹ Up until this point, the Israeli army controls large parts of Rafah and is steadily extending their influence in the so-called buffer zone which they intend to extend. Palestinian existence and claim to their land is made invisible by annihilating them physically, and by annihilating their history from the map, cartographically. Historically, the map of Palestine became a battleground early on, where sixteenth century renaissance cartography of the 'Holy Land', religious scholars traveling to Palestine, French cartographers in 1801 and Europeans after the Protestant Reformation, claimed Palestine as a homogeneous biblical land. Starting the concept of a pilgrimage, all

¹⁶⁷"Israeli Measures to Link Settlements in Bethlehem with Jerusalem: Amid Genocide in Gaza, Israeli Settlements Devour Palestinian Land in the West Bank," *Palestinian Center for Human Rights*, December 28, 2024. <https://pchrgaza.org/israeli-measures-to-link-settlements-in-bethlehem-with-jerusalem-amid-genocide-in-gaza-israeli-settlements-devour-palestinian-land-in-the-west-bank/>.

¹⁶⁸ Mohammad El-Kurd, "Small Talk," *Rifqa*, (Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2021), 66.

¹⁶⁹ الحوسني, and نعيمة, "Palestine in Geography and Fiction: An Interdisciplinary Perspective," 30.52 (2021): مجلة كلية الآداب بقنا 17.

¹⁷⁰ "What was Netanyahu's map and 'plan for Gaza' all about?," *Al-Jazeera*, September 5, 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/5/what-was-netanyahus-map-and-plan-for-gaza-all-about>.

¹⁷¹ Edward W. Said, "An Ideology of Difference." *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (1985): 47. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343461>.

competed for colonial hegemony and a Palestine, 'purified' of its native communities.¹⁷² The fragment of El-Kurds *Small Talk* poetically recounts such a map by describing a journey to Palestine. Such a journey for Palestinians never amounts to taking a plane from A to B, but a riddle between resolutions, visas, history, checkpoints and detention. For many, the journey can only take place in a poem. Against all these layers of defamiliarization, poets and writers are recording acts of resistance, such as the naming of sections of refugee camps after the villages of origin that had to be left behind:

*"They gave the various sections of their camps the names of the villages they had fled, and they lived, (...) 'waiting' in a suspended time."*¹⁷³

3.2 Environment

*"Those trees don't disappear from the language, and that way, they almost exist."*¹⁷⁴

Poetry is mirroring and recording the conditions of ecocide. Long after landscapes have been cleared of trees or artificially changed by the planting of foreign trees, the original flora and fauna of a territory is still to be found in poems which offers a site of remembrance and counternarrative. As reflected by many of the poems, in Gaza, the environment suffers annihilation next to its people. The genocide is not only directed against people, it is equally targeting animals, plants, landscapes, buildings and cities. Mechanisms of subjugation, control and colonial violence can be found in the environment, such as "walls, checkpoints, im/mobilities, spatial designations, confiscations, housing demolitions, and a punitive ID card and permit system to dictate mobilities."¹⁷⁵ These spatial arrangements are premised on the seizing of indigenous land through expulsion and displacement.¹⁷⁶ By employing toponymy projects,¹⁷⁷ attempts of de-Arabization of the Palestinian terrain by renaming villages and altering landscapes and environments, bulldozing houses and destroying remnants and claims

¹⁷² نعيمة والحوسني, "Palestine in Geography and Fiction," 23.

¹⁷³ Masalah, "The Palestine Nakba," 205.

¹⁷⁴ Adania Shibli, in Claudia Steinberg, "Palestine as a Position of Witnessing: A Conversation with Adania Shibli," *World Literature Today*, December 2020. <https://worldliteraturetoday.org/2021/summer/palestine-position-witnessing-conversation-adania-shibli-claudia-steinberg>.

¹⁷⁵ Agha, "Gaza: A decolonial geography," 5.

¹⁷⁶ Agha, "Gaza: A decolonial geography," 6.

¹⁷⁷ Masalah, "The Palestine Nakba," 91.

of the owners, Israel is directly targeting Palestinians to eliminate their presence and resistance. With the latest genocidal escalation came the complete destruction of most of Gaza's cities and infrastructure. Cherished heritage sites like the Great Omari Mosque from the seventh century, the Rashad Al-Shawa Cultural Centre, and the third oldest church in the world, the Orthodox Saint Porphyrius Church have been destroyed by Israel. Next to the bombing of residential houses, cultural and governmental institutions, landscapes and agricultural land has been rendered inoperative like in Beit Lahia, once an agricultural territory producing strawberries and vegetables for locals, today a barren and wrecked piece of land.¹⁷⁸ Vandalism of Palestinian agricultural land, afforestation, Europeanization and defamiliarization of landscapes and narratives of neglected, barren lands (...) all constitute "acts of ecocide"¹⁷⁹ and serves as a "cover for the erasure of the native population of Palestine from historical records"¹⁸⁰ and popular memory.

*"I watched the long line of cars enter Lebanon, leaving long behind them the land of orange... We were heaped up there, withdrawn from our childhood, away from the land of oranges... oranges that died, an old farmer once told us, if watered by strange hands."*¹⁸¹

With this poem, Ghassan Kanafani conjures the old tragedy of Jaffa oranges, once a symbol of the land and struggle, celebrated as the pride of Palestinian agriculture, long before the watermelon became a symbol of Palestinian defiance and subsequently seized and rebranded as an Israeli export.¹⁸² Often, stories like these, told by poets, parents and grandparents about the Palestinian villages and cities, about the landscape and agriculture, are the only remanence with which memories of a destroyed past can be reconstructed and land inhabited. Sites and landmarks long gone live on in imagination, preserved in the stories wandering from generation to generation.

Sophia Azeb explains: "the Israeli state, military, and people are so frightened by Palestinian knowledge of and relation to the land and to one another that they must literally tear Palestinian land and Palestinian people to pieces."¹⁸³ This obsession with destruction

¹⁷⁸ Sally Ibrahim, "Stray animals seen desperately eating Palestinian corpses in northern Gaza," *The New Arab*, December 24, 2024. <https://www.newarab.com/news/stray-animals-seen-eating-palestinian-corpses-northern-gaza>.

¹⁷⁹ Nasooha, "A History Buried Alive," 102.

¹⁸⁰ Nasooha, "A History Buried Alive," 101.

¹⁸¹ Yafi, "The Land of Rebellious Oranges."

¹⁸² Yafi, "The Land of Rebellious Oranges."

¹⁸³ Azeb, „We May Never Return Again," 27.

continues beyond death, where the genocidal state directs not only who dies but also how and if they can be buried. The occupation forces have a history of preventing and disrupting burials for Palestinians and the withholding of corpses. A whole politics of necropolitical, colonial management of death¹⁸⁴ is ruling over Palestinian bodies. “In settler-colonial regimes, the body is re-signified as a political body and becomes an arena for re-structuring the sovereign relationships between the colonizer and the colonized.”¹⁸⁵ Presently, corpses are scattered in the streets of different parts of Gaza and attempts to retrieve and bury bodies are continuously prevented. Stray cats and dogs are seen to be rummaging around corpses of Palestinians and even eating them. The victims have turned into scattered bones with unknown names on the streets, producing toxic gases and chemicals as they decompose.¹⁸⁶

*“She’s lying on the asphalt.
Her small belly, her chest,
her forehead, her hands,
her cold feet bare in the night.
A hungry cat paces. (...)
The cat gets close
to try the flesh;
a bomb pounds the street.”*¹⁸⁷

Works like these perform a poetic exhumation, reenact scenes of annihilation and make them present.¹⁸⁸ Poetic reenactments produce knowledge and memories, they pay tribute to the victims of genocide and give a story to those that become numbers in mass graves and under the rubble of their houses. Even facing death, Gaza’s writers resist their occupiers. Poet Nasser Rabah writes: “In Gaza, we are infected with the hysteria of martyrdom, because we have nothing left to offer to our miserable lives but death, and so we approach it with enormous fanfare and exaggerated noise.”¹⁸⁹ Even facing death, Gaza’s

¹⁸⁴ S. Daher-Nashif, “Colonial management of death: To be or not to be dead in Palestine,” *Current Sociology*, 69 (7), (2020): 945. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392120948923>.

¹⁸⁵ Daher-Nashif, “Colonial management of death,” 945.

¹⁸⁶ Ibrahim, “Stray animals.”

¹⁸⁷ Mosab Abu Toha, “The Moon,” *New York Book Review*, March 21, 2024. <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2024/03/21/the-moon-mosab-abu-toha/>.

¹⁸⁸ Edith Vasquez, “Poetry as Survival of and Resistance to Genocide in Lorna Dee Cervantes’s Drive: The Last Quartet,” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 10.4 (2009): 293. <https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1272&context=jiws>.

¹⁸⁹ Rabah, “This is Gaza,” 4.

poetic culture stands as counteraction to the destruction of lives and environment and flourishes even under genocide.

3.3 Memory

*“How will my poems be free this fall when memory can’t shed its heartbreak, how will I check on my balcony rose when I haven’t watered it in one year our clothes in the washing machine, unwashed and unhung.”*¹⁹⁰

This entire research stands under the trajectory of memory and yet, the theme as content of the poems assembled and site of poetic resistance receives separate attention. “Writing is a testimony, a memory that outlives any human experience, and an obligation to communicate with ourselves and the world. We lived for a reason, to tell the tales of loss, of survival, and of hope,”¹⁹¹ writes Refaat Alareer in *Light in Gaza*. Refaat’s life as a university professor in Gaza was filled with writing poetry and telling stories; he was adored by his many students and colleagues. Now, he himself has been killed by Israeli army airstrikes, targeting him and 6 other members of his family in Gaza City in December 2023.¹⁹² In one of his last videos, he records himself amid loud bombardments in the background and says:

“We don’t deserve this. I am an academic, (...) the toughest thing I have at home is an expo marker, but if the Israelis invade, if they barge at us, charge at us, open door to door to massacre us, I am going to use that marker, to throw it at the Israeli soldiers, even if that is the last thing I would be able to do.”¹⁹³

Throughout his life, he advocated for the preservation of stories as memories, of the art of writing and telling stories to prevent others from occupying that space and creating false narratives. With the project *We Are Not Numbers*, he helped initiate a platform for young Palestinian writers to share and archive their stories as he did with the anthology *Gaza Writes*

¹⁹⁰ Heba Al-Agha, “Free Poems in the Autum,” in *And Still We Write* (Publishers for Palestine, 2024), 15.

¹⁹¹ Jihad Abusalim, Jennifer Bing, Michael Lotze Merryman (editors), *Light in Gaza: Writings Born of Fire*, (Haymarket Books, 2022), 35.

¹⁹² “In memory of Dr. Refaat Alareer,” *The Electronic Intifada*, December 7, 2023.

<https://electronicintifada.net/content/memory-dr-refaat-alareer/42466>.

¹⁹³ “Poet, professor and writer, Refaat Alareer killed in Israeli strike,” *Al-Jazeera*, December 8, 2023.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2023/12/8/poet-professor-and-writer-refaat-alareer-killed-in-israeli-strike>.

Back. With his books and poetry, in his projects and classrooms, Alareer resiliently resisted memoricide, produced counter knowledge and facilitated so many others to do the same.

“There is a country in your heart where story

lives

And poem comes from

No one can occupy it.”¹⁹⁴

Edward Said called memory a social, political and historical enterprise where memories as narratives never exist undisputed and are often newly invented for a new sense of identity and tradition for ruler and ruled.¹⁹⁵ For Said, the art of memory is something continuously misused and exploited,¹⁹⁶ highlighting the artificial amnesia that is established to eliminate important memory links. Such links are the Holocaust and the founding of the Israeli state with the Nakba, both Holocaust and Nakba as historical injustices,¹⁹⁷ the reparation payments paid to Israel by Germany and the consolidation of further occupied Palestinian land in 1967¹⁹⁸ and the general building of Israel on the ruins of Palestinian society.¹⁹⁹

Memory is deployed in Palestinian poetry as a literary weapon against invented traditions, memories and the rewriting of history by the Zionist movement, waging the battle over the right of a remembered presence and the right to possess a collective historical reality and memory.²⁰⁰ Palestinian memory, under the conditions of its silencing by the story of Zionism, is dissident memory, counter-memory and counter history where poetry is employed as part of ‘mnemonic practices’,²⁰¹ strategies to improve memory and close information voids. Poetry becomes a memory site, a site of active, continuous, collaborative articulation of remembrance, resisting state sponsored, historical amnesia and memoricide.²⁰²

¹⁹⁴ Suheir Hammad, *Born Palestinian, Born Black & The Gaza Suite*, (UpSet Press, 2010), 10.

¹⁹⁵ Said, “Invention,” 177-178.

¹⁹⁶ Said, “Invention,” 179.

¹⁹⁷ Nadim Khoury, “Holocaust/Nakba and the Counterpublic of Memory,” in *The Holocaust and the Nakba: A New Grammar of Trauma and History*, edited by Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg, (Columbia University Press, 2019), 114. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/bash18296.9>.

¹⁹⁸ Said, “Invention,” 183.

¹⁹⁹ Said, “Invention,” 192

²⁰⁰ Said, “Invention,” 184.

²⁰¹ Sa’di, and Abu-Lughod, “Nakba,” 6.

²⁰² Johnny Mansour, “The Pasha’s Mansion Refuses to Become a Theater,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 52:2,(2023): 90. DOI: 10.1080/0377919X.2023.2206305.

*“We – who are capable of remembrance – are capable of liberation.”*²⁰³

With the collection of stories, poets like Mosab Abu Toha, who was a friend and colleague of Refaat Alareer, reclaim narratives of existence in their homeland and, make silenced memories and narratives available and close memory holes. In *Memories are Flowers*, he describes the importance of caring for and protecting memories as if they were flowers. Their existence can be nurtured and transformed into a creative expression, lasting as a source of strength and identity for generations to come. And yet, Noor Hindi explains in her poem *Fuck Your Lecture on Craft my People are Dying*, the inability to even write about flowers and the moon, when they cannot be seen from prison cells. Poets employ different strategies and narratives in their defiance of memocide and amnesia and their metaphorical, stylistic and linguistic choices don't always align.

“Colonizers write about flowers.

I tell you about children throwing rocks at Israeli tanks

seconds before becoming daisies (...)

*One day, I'll write about the flowers like we own them.”*²⁰⁴

In his essay *The Gaza We Leave Behind*,²⁰⁵ published in 2024 for The New Yorker and recipient of the Pulitzer Prize,²⁰⁶ Abu Toha reflects on the loss of tangible parts of his memories, “the people and places that helped (him) remember.” He writes: “I no longer recognize many parts of my homeland. Only my memories of them remain.”²⁰⁷ To preserve tangible memories, he sent family and friends to look for pictures, passports and books in the rubble of his destroyed house in Gaza's Beit Lahia, but nothing was found. Recording the

²⁰³ Mahmoud Darwish, “Unfortunately, It Was Paradise” In *The Politics of Memory: Historical Amnesia and the Struggle for Palestinian Justice*. Futures Futures Futures Collective, McMaster University, February 10, 2025. <https://publicintellectualsproject.humanities.mcmaster.ca/public-intellectuals/the-politics-of-memory-historical-amnesia-and-the-struggle-for-palestinian-justice/>.

²⁰⁴ Noor Hindi, “Fuck Your Lecture on Craft my People are Dying,” in *Dear God. Dear Bones. Dear Yellow* (Haymarket Books, 2022). <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/154658/fuck-your-lecture-on-craft-my-people-are-dying>.

²⁰⁵ Mosab Abu Toha, “The Gaza We Leave Behind” *New Yorker*, October 7, 2024. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/essay/the-gaza-we-leave-behind>.

²⁰⁶ “‘Let it bring hope’: Mosab Abu Toha, Palestinian poet from Gaza, wins Pulitzer,” *TRT Global*, May 6, 2025. <https://trt.global/world/article/416bf957a050>.

²⁰⁷ Abu Toha, “The Gaza We Leave Behind”, 2024.

stories of his parents and his own memories through writing remains the only way of protecting them.

*“I hold the phone and try to document what my eyes have seen—a missile falling on a crowded building—, and what my ears heard—the terrified screams of women and children that followed a call, warning them of an imminent airstrike. I write about the bitterness of life, about sudden displacement, about the rings of fire that sweep over us without warning, about the fear that has become our constant companion.”*²⁰⁸

Poems become witnesses and archive for the war crimes inflicted on Gaza’s population, environment and infrastructure. Poets document what they see and hear through language, condensing words and emotions into small verses and offer it to the world to witness. Engaging with their work, as well as the work of photographers and journalists can contribute to the preservation of the ever growing virtual and physical archive of Gaza’s poetic culture. Literature and poetry not only documents war crimes in Gaza, they also serve as archive for the memories of the cities and people prior to their destruction and killing, full of life and beauty. In an interview with the German *FAZ*, Palestinian writer and former minister Atef Abu Saif, author of many novels, most recently *Don’t Look Left, A Diary of Genocide*²⁰⁹ says: “The memory of the city is preserved through literature.” No streets of Gaza are recognizable to their former inhabitants, making stories and poems indispensable archives of memories where the cities are still alive.²¹⁰ Abu Saif writes to preserve these memories and to convince himself that he is still alive, in a war where surviving is only accidental.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Asmaa Dwaima, “Where I Write Now,” in *And Still We Write* (Publishers for Palestine, 2024), 22.

²⁰⁹ Atef Abu Saif, *Don’t Look Left, A Diary of Genocide*, (Comma Press, 2024).

<https://commapress.co.uk/books/dont-look-left>.

²¹⁰ Laura Bopp, „Einst ein Ort voller Leben,“ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 25, 2025.

<https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/autoren/atef-abu-saif-und-sein-gaza-roman-leben-in-der-schwebe-110434200.html>.

²¹¹ Carlos Hanimann, “In Gaza stirbst du nicht aus Versehen. Du überlebst aus Versehen,“ *REPUBLIK*, March 15, 2025. <https://www.republik.ch/2025/03/15/atef-abu-saif-in-gaza-stirbst-du-nicht-aus-versehen-du-ueberlebst-aus-versehen>.

3.4 Genocide

“(…) I don’t know, O Father,
What to say to the child who died before living only one week in this world.
They recorded his name on the death certificate
before they recorded his name on the birth certificate.”²¹²

“Gaza has turned into a giant graveyard.”²¹³ The genocide is mirrored in Gaza’s poetic culture and a multitude of poets are taking on the double task of writing and reporting from their lives under genocide, siege and displacement. Israeli missiles target people in Gaza indiscriminately and lead to daily killings. At any moment, a family can be wiped from the civil registry, trapped under the rubble of their own house. Palestinians in Gaza write their names on their hands and legs with waterproof markers so their remains can be identified after they are torn to shreds.²¹⁴ Poets describe the massacres, the shelling, bombing and killing, the daily life and torment of displacement and grief, the pain and anguish of living without basic resources, the disappointment towards the indifference and lack of support of foreign countries, the sights of death and decay that follows them everywhere and haunt them in their dreams, the fear, terror and “bitterness of life.”²¹⁵

*“There are hundreds of martyrs. Bombs burn and disintegrate people. No one can identify the identity of the martyrs because their remains are torn apart. They are buried in plastic bags in mass graves. Each bag may contain a corpse and a half or more, and the burial hole contains more than a hundred bags.”*²¹⁶

Poems become a war diary, the documentation of massacres after massacres, the effort to describe the indescribable. What has become a gruesome reality and norm for Palestinians is unfathomable for most of the rest of the world, even though internationally, arms and intelligence suppliers, governments, lobbyists and taxpayers are complicit in this genocide. Already in 2017, writer Lena Khalaf Tuffaha wrote a powerful poem from the diaspora,

²¹² Ahlam Bsharat, “I Saw, Father, What You Saw,” in *Poems for Palestine* (Publishers for Palestine, 2024), 12.

²¹³ ايناس and الفتوح ابو, “A Critical Study of Poetic Outbursts,” 612.

²¹⁴ Hanimann, “In Gaza stirbst du nicht aus Versehen.”

²¹⁵ Asmaa Dwaima, “Where I Write Now,” in *And Still We Write*, (Publishers for Palestine, 2024), 22.

<https://publishersforpalestine.org/2024/11/19/launching-and-still-we-write-an-anthology-of-new-work-from-and-centering-gaza/>.

²¹⁶ Zainab Al Ghonaimy, “Letters from Gaza Part 2,” *Protean Magazine*, October 17, 2023.

<https://proteanmag.com/2023/10/17/letters-from-gaza-part-2/>.

reacting to the 2014 war in Gaza, which describes the irony and bestiality of receiving a 'running order' as well as the repeated genocidal campaigns against Gaza. What reads like a horror story has again become the everyday reality for Palestinians in Gaza, where newest technology and weapons are tested, cities leveled to the ground and entire families erased.

*"They call us now,
before they drop the bombs.(...)
You have 58 seconds from the end of this message.
Your house is next. (...)
It means nothing that the borders are closed
and your papers are worthless (...)
It doesn't matter that you have children. (...)
It doesn't matter
that 58 seconds isn't long enough
to find your wedding album (...)
or to gather everyone in the house."*²¹⁷

This is genocide recorded on paper. A cruel game of annihilation, paid for by thousands of innocent lives. This poem travelled far after its initial publication on the authors facebook page - it was part of many events and protest, was translated into other languages, became a song and was read on the floor of the Irish parliament. On her website, Tuffaha titles her reaction to the poems journey with "The Poem that Spoke when I could not,"²¹⁸ describing her loss of hope and anguish faced with the annihilation of her people and the poems ability to rally and unity people under international solidarity.

Inquiring into Gaza's poetic culture amid the genocide, from which a big part is upheld in the diaspora by writers such as Lena Khalaf Tuffaha and Mosab Abu Toha, shows that even though much of the infrastructure of this culture, its universities, schools and libraries have been destroyed and its poets like Refaat Alareer and Heba Abu Neda killed, not less but more people are writing. Poetry becomes the leading creative expression and artistic mode of resistance to memocide and amnesia, reaching millions all over the globe and record publication numbers.

²¹⁷ Lena Khalaf Tuffaha, „Running Orders,” *Poetry Foundation*.
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/143255/running-orders>.

²¹⁸ Lena Khalaf Tuffaha, „Running Orders.” <https://www.lenakhalaftuffaha.com/running-orders.html>

3.5 Resistance

*“O little light in me, don’t die,
even If all the galaxies of the world
close in.”²¹⁹*

Resistance, inherent in the historical struggle against military occupation and settler colonialism is deeply embedded in Palestinian identity and expressed in every day live in Gaza, under constant bombardment, deprivation of shelter and food, mass displacement and ethnic cleansing. Deciding to remain in the ruins of cities and camps, documenting atrocities as a journalist, treating patients in the overcrowded hospitals, teaching children in the villages made of tents, or evacuating people from the rubble of bombed houses as part of the civil defense team - it all translates into resistance against Israel’s genocidal, settler colonial campaign of annihilation. Writing and narrating stories of these realities through poetry is part of this resistance struggle.

“We live. We live. We do.”²²⁰

The notion Resistance Poetry itself was coined by renowned poets like Mahmoud Darwish and Samih al Qasim ‘ in response to the dispossession of the homeland and the establishment of a foreign state on then two-thirds of the historical land of Palestine’.²²¹ The existence, the writing, reading and distributing of poetry is resistance and Gaza’s poetic culture continues to exist and grow.

“In Gaza, breathing is a task, smiling is performing plastic surgery on one’s own face, and rising in the morning, trying to survive another day, is coming back from the dead.”²²²

²¹⁹ Heba Abu Nada, “Not Just Passing,” *Mizna Online*, 2023. <https://mizna.org/mizna-online/not-just-passing/>.

²²⁰ Refaat Alareer (editor), *Gaza Writes Back* (Just World Books, 2014), 11. <https://justworldbooks.com/books-by-title/gaza-writes-back/>.

²²¹ إيناس and الفتوح ابو, "A Critical Study of Poetic Outbursts," 589.

²²² Mosab Abu Toha, *Poems from Gaza*, in Anjuman Rahman, “Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear: Poems from Gaza,” *Middle East Monitor*, October 2, 2022. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20221002-things-you-may-find-hidden-in-my-ear-poems-from-gaza/>.

3.6 Conclusion

In summary, Israel's settler-colonial narratives, memoricide and enforced historical amnesia play out through the direct destruction of educational centers, by imposing intellectual blockades through the restriction of resources and internet, by propagating geonarratives like a 'Greater Israel', by instrumentalizing and defamiliarizing maps of Palestinian territory as well as the actual environment, by subjugating landscapes and agriculture to colonial mechanisms of control, through necropolitical management of life and death for humans, flora and fauna and by erasing memory links. In this chapter, poems and fragments of interviews are placed in the thematic context of geography, environment, memory, genocide and resistance to show the varying sites of memoricide as well as poetic modes of resistance against the same. In response to the chapter question, Gaza's poets are unwriting imperial, settler-colonial discourse and create counternarratives by breaking the intellectual blockade that is erected by the Israeli occupation, their poems resist the colonizers management of life and death through the production of their own narratives and work as a literary weapon against invented traditions, memories and the rewriting of history. With poetry, they make irretrievable knowledge retrievable and available for educational purposes. Poets resist and challenge colonial narratives and create counternarratives, unmask colonial maps, reconstruct environments, cities and lives. Their poetry offers a new, indestructible cartography and poetically reclaims knowledge and memories as itself a memory site.

4. Reception of Poetry & International Solidarity

*“If I must die,
 you must live
 to tell my story
 to sell my things
 to buy a piece of cloth
 and some strings,
 (make it white with a long tail)
 so that a child, somewhere in Gaza
 while looking heaven in the eye
 awaiting his dad who left in a blaze—
 and bid no one farewell
 not even to his flesh
 not even to himself—
 sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up above
 and thinks for a moment
 an angel is there bringing back love
 If I must die
 let it bring hope
 let it be a tale.”²²³*

With the question of “how is the reception of Gaza’s poetic culture fostering solidarity and resistance internationally?”, this last chapter delves into the mobilization of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for liberation and resistance against memoricide, that occurs through the distribution and reception of poetry from Gaza abroad. Based on the method of process tracing, the analysis of poetry as mode of resistance in tributes, under censorship, on protests, readings and encampments, as narrative and platform for hope and transitional

²²³ Refaat Alareer, “If I must die,” in *Poems for Palestine* (Publishers for Palestine, 2024), 3.

justice form the key patterns and moments of reception and solidarity internationally. The following chapter is structured accordingly.

4.1 Reception & Tributes

Here, the last part of the process is traced, following writers, poems and readers to investigate international reception and reaction to the poetic outburst from Palestinian writers in Gaza and abroad in response to the genocide. The process of writing, publishing and distributing has been followed wherein the poetic outburst in response to genocide, memocide and amnesia is viewed as a phenomenon. The process of reading and sharing poetry, much like the process of writing, editing, publishing, translating, distributing is, in itself, dissent, “speaking truth to the occupying power”²²⁴ and a process of “placemaking.”²²⁵ Poems gain a life of their own, sending them on a journey around the world and mobilizing an entire generation of readers and activists. Already in the introduction to *Gaza Writes Back*, Gaza’s beloved professor and poet Refaat Alareer wrote:

“Gaza was now more deeply rooted not only in the hearts of every Palestinian, but also in the hearts of every free soul around the globe. Gaza stood head and shoulders above all else. Gaza never stooped. Gaza taught us to fight oppression with what little we have, by any means necessary. Gaza taught us never to kneel, and not even to think of it.”²²⁶

These words have only gained in relevance, seeing the international solidarity movement grow and connect struggles against occupation and genocide everywhere. Nothing can show the outburst of poetry and its circulation internationally quite like the reception of Refaat Alareer’s poem *If I must die*. With this poem, his words have clung onto hearts all over the globe and followed people on protest,²²⁷ to universities, cultural and literary events. The news sites that have republished his poem are too many to mention. Since his death, many of his students have written tributes and homages to Alareer in response to his poem *If I must die*, such as Fatena Abu Mostafa:

²²⁴ Zia, “Poetry as Dissent,” 416.

²²⁵ Zia, “Poetry as Dissent,” 417.

²²⁶ Refaat Alareer (editor), *Gaza Writes Back*, (Just World Books, 2014), 17. <https://justworldbooks.com/books-by-title/gaza-writes-back/>.

²²⁷ Figure 1 & 2 (Appendix)

“For Dr. Refaat Alareer
If you must die
then I must live
to begin where you left off, although
you have never truly ceased. (...)
I must craft endless poems (...)
I must live
to write a new story.”²²⁸

Another writer friend, Mohammed El-Kurd, pays one of many tributes to Alareer in his speech for the *Palestine Festival of Literature*, applauding his courageousness, humanity, humor and laughter in his commentary about the reality in Gaza amid the falling Israeli bombs, that ultimately also buried Alareer himself under the rubble until today.²²⁹

4.2 Censorship

Even though poems from Gaza and the Palestinian diaspora are traveling the world, becoming “a way to history, reclamation and recovery of a collective memory against “memoricide,”²³⁰ there are plenty examples of censorship efforts that prevent Palestinian authors from taking up space and intercept the circulation and reception of Gaza’s poetic culture abroad, such as in the case of Germany. “Palestinian authors, actors, scholars and filmmakers are continuously experiencing the cancelation of events and debates, silencing their voices and position in the public eye”²³¹ like Palestinian author Adania Shibli, who was uninvited from the 2023 *Frankfurter Buchmesse*, where she was supposed to receive a prize for her novel *Minor Detail* (2017). Nathan Thrall experienced censorship efforts over *A Day in the Life of Abed Salama* (2023) and Ghayath Almadhoun over a release event for his novel *Kontinentaldrift* (2023). Germany stands out in its “repression and criminalization of protests in solidarity with Palestine, the crackdown on Palestinian and Jewish members of solidarity

²²⁸ Fatena Abu Mostafa, “The Multiplication of Poets,” *we are not numbers*, March 23, 2025.
<https://wearenotnumbers.org/the-multiplication-of-poets/>.

²²⁹ “Mohammed El-Kurd on Gaza,” *The Palestine Festival of Literature*, YouTube, February 26, 2024.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeaKc0TyWxo>.

²³⁰ Zia, “Poetry as Dissent,” 419.

²³¹ Dorothea Reidenbach, “Critical Geopolitics and Germany’s Repression of Palestine Solidarity,” (Essay, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2025), 5.

movements and the cancelation of cultural and literary events featuring Palestinian artists and activists.”²³² Germany violently implements a racist ‘Staatsräson’ which normalizes authoritarian measures against racialized groups and protects and justifies Israel’s settler-colonial, genocidal campaigns against Palestinians under the pretext of protection from antisemitism.”²³³

*“No matter how deep it drowns,
the truth always washes ashore.”*²³⁴

4.3 Protests, Encampments & Cultural Events

In spite of these drastic examples of censorship, poetry by Palestinian writers has never been published in greater numbers and printed in as many news outlets, magazines, blogs, books and anthologies as in this moment. The reception of poetry has fueled solidarity movements internationally and inspired countless events, encampments and protests. We are witnessing an “unprecedented degree of global resistance and solidarity with Gazans and Palestinians.”²³⁵ The distribution and reception of poetry becomes a phenomenon, a call to action, beyond words on the page to tell a story, but a demand to end complicity and work to participate in actions in solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle.

*“Are we indeed ‘all Palestinians’ as we chant on the streets of New York and London? If so, this rallying cry must abandon metaphor and manifest materially in resistance and refusal. Because Gaza cannot stand alone in sacrifice.”*²³⁶

The most public and visible way Gaza’s poetic culture has been transformative and inspirational globally is through its fueling and appearance on protests. In a long history of often overlooked Palestinian protests,²³⁷ cities around the world are now hosting protests unprecedented in size, sheer geographic spread and vast repertoire of action.²³⁸ People have

²³² Reidenbach, “Critical Geopolitics,” 7.

²³³ Reidenbach, “Critical Geopolitics,” 7.

²³⁴ El-Kurd, *Rifqa*, 35.

²³⁵ Angela Y. Davis, “STANDING WITH PALESTINIANS,” *Hammer and Hope*, Article 2, Issue 3, 2024. <https://hammerandhope.org/article/angela-davis-palestinians-gaza>.

²³⁶ Mohammed El Kurd. “Are we indeed all Palestinians?,” *Mondoweiss*, 13 March 2024. <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/03/are-we-indeed-all-palestinians/>.

²³⁷ Beverly Milton-Edwards, “Protest Wave Palestine: “We are All Palestnians”,” *Protest* 4, 2 (2024): 231. <https://doi.org/10.1163/2667372X-bja10069>.

²³⁸ Milton-Edwards, “Protest Wave Palestine,” 231.

been gathering regularly, despite extreme police repression,²³⁹ to hold vigils and participate on marches in solidarity with Palestine.²⁴⁰ Poems are recited, performed and appear on boards, mobilizing communities, uniting demands and exposing complicities. At Harvard University, activists recited Refaat Alareer's *If I must die* in unison²⁴¹ and on a protest in Ramallah, Alareer's poem is written on a poster held by a protester.²⁴² Like his work, Gaza's poetic culture is taken to the streets and morphing into an active, unmistakable part of the "protest momentum"²⁴³ we are witnessing, where space is reclaimed, public debates and opinion reshaped, collective imaginaries educated, communities formed²⁴⁴ and where poetry speaks as counternarrative and preserver of its authors' memories and histories.

In response and tribute to Gaza's poets, readers are writing their poems on signs when attending protest, like comments under Mosab Abu Toha's poetry on the *Markaz Review*²⁴⁵ show. Poetry that is encountered online is carried onto the streets, turning into a political demand and carrier of information.

Next to protest, activists in different cities are organizing events centered around poetry from Gaza. Poems are recited, discussed, authors virtually or physically present at literary events and their poetry is printed for museums and exhibitions like one of Marwan Makhoul's poems turned slogan for Kunsthall Gent and their Palestine Café.²⁴⁶

*"in order to write non-political poetry, I must listen to the birds
and in order to hear the birds,
I must silence the plane."*

As mentioned earlier, in the recently launched event series titled "Zeit für Gaza" (time for Gaza), Berlin's *Literaturhaus* hosted Palestinian writers and poets for an evening of

²³⁹ Phillipp Krach, "German Police Clear Pro-Palestinian Camp at Berlin University," *Reuters*, May 7, 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/world/german-police-clear-pro-palestinian-camp-berlin-university-2024-05-07/>.

²⁴⁰ Iman Mohamed, "Global Protests for a Free Palestine: Photo Essay," *Yes Magazine*, January 23, 2024. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2024/01/23/global-protest-free-palestine-israel-ceasefire>.

²⁴¹ "Harvard students protest with die-in and poetry by Refaat Alareer for Gaza," Middle East Eye, YouTube, February 13, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/gVD8vnNwavM>.

²⁴² Figure 1 (Appendix)

²⁴³ Larbi Sadiki and Layla Saleh, "The Gaza War: The Tie that Binds Global Protest," *Protest* 4, 2 (2024): 111. <https://doi.org/10.1163/2667372X-04020002>.

²⁴⁴ Milton-Edwards, "Protest Wave Palestine," 235.

²⁴⁵ "Four Poems from Mosab Abu Toha," *The Markaz Review*, July 14, 2021. <https://themarkaz.org/four-poems-from-mosab-abu-toha/>.

²⁴⁶ "Gaza support poster - Poem by Marwan Makhoul / Design by Mark Foss," *Kunsthall Gent*. <https://kunsthallgent.bigcartel.com/product/freepalestine>.

recitation and remembrance,²⁴⁷ after a long period of silence from major cultural institutions in Germany. Curated by Fadi Abdelnour and Heba Tebakhi, historical and contemporary texts and poems from and about Gaza were read and discussed. The event centered around the long tradition of 'resistance literature', featuring works from Mahmoud Darwish, Ghassan Kanafani, Mu'in Bseiso, Mohammad Al-Zaqzuq and Heba Al-Agha. Additionally, the collective *um ihre namen zu sagen* (speaking their names) commemorated 239 authors and poets, who were killed since October 2023, by reading their names aloud. Abdelnour asked: "In what kind of society do we live in where it takes courage for a public institution to give time to the victims of genocide?"²⁴⁸ This necessary courage exposes the widespread attempts to suppress solidarity with Gaza's victims of genocide and the alienation with the Palestinian liberation struggle which event organizers and participants have to subvert. These events show poetry's ability to reclaim spaces and narratives, to open new spaces, to find words when others fall silent or are repressed, to gather and unite people as listeners to precious memories. They indicate the active reception of Gaza's poetic culture into the libraries, theaters, cinemas and cultural venues of the world. They remember and give time to the victims of genocide and return the idea of human dignity by commemorating their names, work and lives. With poetry, they contribute to a shift in public awareness and societal, cultural and political discourse on the genocide in Gaza and benefit from the collaboration with prestigious and public institutions.

Another site where Gaza's poetic culture inspires solidarity and resistance are recent encampments and 'teach ins' at university campuses worldwide, where poetry is written, recited and performed in community. Countless encampments internationally feature poetry in their community work and host readings to educate on and with Gaza's poetic culture. Exemplary are Utrecht Universities' encampment which continuously hosts poetry readings in collaboration with the cultural center *Moira* hosting the *Palestine Café Utrecht*²⁴⁹ and FU Berlin's encampment, named 'Heba-Camp',²⁵⁰ after the poet Heba Abu Neda, featuring Palestinian poetry in their program.

²⁴⁷ "Zeit für Gaza," *Literaturhaus Berlin*.

²⁴⁸ (own translation) „Zeit für Gaza," *Literaturhaus Berlin*, YouTube, May 21, 2025, 25:10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMsRyHAmTT4&t=2009s>.

²⁴⁹ "Plestine Café Utrecht," *Moira Cultural Center*. <https://moira-utrecht.nl/news/exporiments/spoonie-community-support-evening/>.

²⁵⁰ "Berlin: Kommt zum PalästinaCamp an der FU!," *Waffen der Kritik*, June 24, 2024. <https://www.klassegegenklasse.org/berlin-kommt-zum-palaestinacamp-an-der-fu/>.

4.4 Participation and Transitional Justice

Poetry, other than academic journals and articles, is accessible to a wide variety of people, which makes it relevant and powerful. When thinking about how knowledge and information travel, poetry is one medium offering a very quick exchange. No perquisites are necessary for writing, reading or publishing, often no extensive financing in its production, distribution and reception. Poetry can be read in print and digitally at any moment and location. In that way, we should consider poetry an extremely valuable, intimate source in portraying knowledge and memory as counternarratives across time and space. Through poetry, information actively hidden and made unavailable through imposed amnesia can be placed in focus again, attention directed and discourses shifted. The occupation propaganda is fueled with historical amnesia, enabling ignorance and illiteracy about uncomfortable responsibilities and complicities. State sponsored amnesia is enforced most frequently, like in Gaza, to direct international attention away from what is happening on the ground. Propaganda and amnesia go hand in hand in the effort to shape memory and knowledge in a specific direction, omitting Palestinian knowledge and memory.

*“In the morning I read the news. The news is about us. But it’s designed for people reading it far, far away, who couldn’t possibly imagine they could ever know anyone involved. It’s for people who read the news to comfort themselves, to tell themselves: it’s still far, far away. I read the news for different reasons: I read it to know I’m not dead.”*²⁵¹

Through reading and working with poetry, its readers engage against amnesia and memocide in a collective awakening, they become an ‘eyewitness’, experiencing, imagining and remembering what is described retrospectively. Often readers see death in faraway countries and become increasingly disengaged and disconnected from what is carried out in their name. And yet: “if people were to discover and fully comprehend the real nature of the things that are done in their name, they might act upon that knowledge.”²⁵² Poets participate in information politics and facilitate these discoveries, providing information that is otherwise unavailable and crucial sources of knowledge production. “Poetry invites the reader to ‘step into’ another person’s experience. (...) the poet ‘shows’ us rather than simply telling us and

²⁵¹ Atef Abu Saif, *Don’t Look Left, A Diary of Genocide* (Comma Press, 2024).
<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/dont-look-left-atef-abu-saif/1144780990>.

²⁵² Arundhati Roy, *The End of Imagination*, (Haymarket Books, 2016), 265, ProQuest Ebook Central.
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uunl/detail.action?docID=4596388>.

(...) can transport us to a place, time, and experience, which (...) allows us to understand the emotion being conveyed in the poem.”²⁵³ Further, poetry works against “the extinction of experience.”²⁵⁴ By reading poetry as an outside audience, what the authors are describing can be virtually and imaginatively experienced. Poetry allows for immersion into realities that are of someone else. The term ‘extinction of experience’ originally applies to the ongoing alienation between humans and nature.²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, it equally suits the alienation and loss of interaction between different human life worlds, between lives condemned to die and lives allowed to prosper. Poems bring these realities to light and highlight what was formerly hidden to the assumingly uninformed reader. It claims space on book pages, on the internet, on event stages, on the street and in memory, that cannot be erased.

*“INSIDE A POEM WE FOUND A TUNNEL
INSIDE THE TUNNEL WE FOUND OURSELVES.”*²⁵⁶

Moreover, poetry can be experienced as “public grieving,”²⁵⁷ as “shared sorrow”²⁵⁸ and employed as a platform to grief like Atef Alshaer’s poetry.²⁵⁹ When grief is transformed into words and made public, what is grieved is also made public and accessible. Grieving can catalyze, heal and mobilize writers and readers to actions beyond the poem and work as a political resource and decolonizing practice. The concept of grievability, envisioned by Judith Butler in *Frames of War*, can be seen as perquisite to historical amnesia and asks whose lives are considered valuable, whose lives are mourned and whose lives are forgotten, deemed undeserving of grief. Grievability informs the framing of perpetrator and victim and discusses the categorization into worthy and unworthy lives and memories, into grievable and non-grievable identities. Next to grieving through poetry, reliving the genocide and start of the war in detail through poetry can be retraumatizing and overwhelming but also healing, even a sanctuary and “antidote to the machine of death,”²⁶⁰ in the experience of poet Mohammad Al-

²⁵³ H. Owton, “Introducing Poetic Inquiry. In: Doing Poetic Inquiry. Palgrave Studies in Creativity and Culture,” *Palgrave Macmillan*, Cham, (2017): 8. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64577-3_1.

²⁵⁴ Masashi Soga and Kevin J. Gaston, “Extinction of experience: the loss of human–nature interactions,” *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 14.2 (2016): 94–101. <https://doi.org/10.1002/fee.1225>.

²⁵⁵ Soga and Gaston, “Extinction of experience,” 94–101.

²⁵⁶ Fargo Nissim Tbakhi, “Palestine Is a Futurity: Prophecies (Cruising Jerusalem),” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 18, no. 3 (2021): 347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2021.1954219>.

²⁵⁷ Judith Butler, *Precarious Lives* (Verso, 2004), 37.

²⁵⁸ Mohammed Moussa, “A statement on writing poetry during a genocide”, *bellacaledonia*, March 20, 2025. <https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2025/03/20/a-statement-on-writing-poetry-during-a-genocide/>.

²⁵⁹ Alshaer, “Writing Gaza during a genocide,” 3–12.

²⁶⁰ Nasreldin, “Gazan Poets Write To Survive.”

Zaqzouq. People in Gaza seek poets to record their stories and Al-Zaqzouq and others feel the increasing responsibility to document the extreme suffering and write the pain they are being asked to record and witnessing.²⁶¹

Not last, but of lesser relevance given Israel's ongoing, relentless genocide against Palestinians, poetry, similar to videos and images, provide archive material and evidence for trials and truth commissions in transitional justice efforts. They act as documents that will outlive this genocide and this generation as archives of memories. They tell in detail about the buildings and infrastructure destroyed, the erasure of landscapes and agriculture and of all the lives taken. Transitional justice for Palestine demands the incorporation into a larger political project driven by Palestinians, decolonization, equality, justice and agency, truth recovery, combatting memoricide, reparations, Palestinian return and institutional reform, dismantling of racist, imperial, settler colonial ideologies, challenging amnesia and unsettle colonial hierarchies.²⁶²

*“RETURN IS A FUTURE IS A PAST!
PAST IS A FUTURE WE RETURN TO!”²⁶³*

This process is charted in the many poems where authors resist memoricide and amnesia, recover truths, reclaim narratives and envision and describe a liberated Palestine as it existed before and can exist again. With this collection of approaches to poetry as mode of resistance, solidarity and transitional justice, we see the possibilities and practices of poetry and of a poetic culture in calling communities together, fostering solidarity among writers and audiences, of preserving collective memory and of challenging colonial narratives and invented memories. Gaza's poetic culture and community is alive and working tirelessly inside and outside of Palestine, against the ideological and material, genocidal manifestations of Zionism.

²⁶¹ Nasreldin, “Gazan Poets Write To Survive.”

²⁶² Browne, “Truth, Acknowledgement,” 36-90.

²⁶³ Tbakhi, “Palestine Is a Futurity,” 346.

4.5 Narratives

*“Our strategy should be not only to confront Empire but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness—and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we’re being brainwashed to believe.”*²⁶⁴

Thinking about how Gaza’s poetic culture is narrated, as was investigated in chapter one, also concerns narratives more generally. Who narrates the poetry further than its immediate circle, their immediate audience and recipients? Who narrates Palestinian testimonies and the Palestinian struggle outside of Gaza and Palestine? Who narrates Palestinian dehumanization, the normalization of death and Palestinian resistance and who is given attention? “Our death is so quotidian that journalists report it as though they are reporting the weather,”²⁶⁵ says Mohammed El-Kurd. Poets and writers have become their own news outlets, continuously reporting what they are witnessing and sending news fragments to the rest of the world. If their words do not directly find our eyes and ears through social media, books or television, others are presenting their texts and messages. Especially marginalized groups cannot rely on large media centers like CNN and BBC to tell their stories but have to employ tools like poetry as a reclamation of narratives. Oral testimonies and poetry have been increasingly given attention, apart from the official state archives and narratives, spread by the occupation. What were largely absent and apathic audiences are now responding to Gaza’s poets and their memory work about the immediate genocide and past events like the Nakba, the Naksa and the ensuing wars against Gaza.

In her acceptance speech for the *PEN Pinter Prize* 2024, titled “No propaganda on earth can hide the wound that is Palestine,” writer and activist Arundhati Roy discusses the American/Israeli narratives on the war crimes perpetrated in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon and Syria, where bombs and missiles annihilate entire populations and cities. These actions are justified with a repulsing rhetoric resembling Orwellian doublethink, where war becomes peace, a repeated pattern in US propaganda. Patterns of ‘doublethink’ emerge as propaganda, where labeling the Other as barbarous animal, one-sided media coverage, live streaming of war crimes, labeling the own nation as free and civilized, sending dangerous humanitarian aid and simultaneously worsening the humanitarian situation through extensive weapon exports,

²⁶⁴ Roy, *The End of Imagination*, 282.

²⁶⁵“Mohammed El-Kurd on Gaza,” *The Palestine Festival of Literature*, YouTube, February 26, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeaKc0TyWxo>.

bombing, preventing aid convoys and cuts of funding to aid agencies, become the norm. Slogans in favor of a free Palestine are criminalized and accused of inciting genocide, a map presented by Netanyahu, depicting the erasure of Palestine is however “applauded.”²⁶⁶ These hypocritical dynamics are slowly being dismantled and writers like Roy and El-Kurd indispensably contribute by reclaiming narratives and discourses with their work. The keeping of two stories apart,²⁶⁷ that of the contemporary Gaza, of genocide and that of settler-colonialism, imperialism and Zionism, are connected, remembered and their interconnectedness exposed.

In defiance of dominant, hypocritical propaganda, artists and activists collaborate in the narration of stories and memories that are actively hidden or criminalized. On video for the Instagram page of the collective *Artists4Ceasfire*, the actor Richard Gere is reading the poem *Think of Others*, by Mahmoud Darwish, thereby narrating the authors words and re-telling his story to a new audience:

*“As you prepare your breakfast, think of others
(do not forget the pigeon’s food).
As you conduct your wars, think of others
(do not forget those who seek peace).
As you pay your water bill, think of others
(those who are nursed by clouds).
As you return home, to your home, think of others
(do not forget the people of the camps).
As you sleep and count the stars, think of others
(those who have nowhere to sleep).
As you liberate yourself in metaphor, think of others
(those who have lost the right to speak).
As you think of others far away, think of yourself
(say: “If only I were a candle in the dark”).”²⁶⁸*

The same way this poem invites and demands readers, to consider others on every step of their everyday lives, the writer and director Ahmed Masoud from Jabaliya says: “the genocide made me a poet” and explains that poems exactly like these allow the reader to

²⁶⁶Roy, “No propaganda.”

²⁶⁷ Stoler, “Colonial Aphasia,” 124.

²⁶⁸ Mahmoud Darwish, “Think Of Others,” in *artists4ceasfire* (artists4ceasfire), Instagram, April 23, 2025. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DIw8xaNzO6h/>.

process their emotions and conscience.²⁶⁹ When the news and images of genocide result in rigidity and shock for Palestinians and non-Palestinians, when family members of writers are killed as in the case of Masoud, then writers turn poets, answering to poetry's therapeutic and cathartic ability of opening spaces for processing and healing. Emotions and grief from writer and reader erupt in poems, explode and transform. More than any news report could ever deliver is fused into small bundles of concentrated words which do not stop depicting genocide, but console its victims, mobilize its onlookers and hold its perpetrators accountable.

4.6 Sowing Hope

*"Poetry can't stop a bullet. Poetry won't free a prisoner. (...) "But if we can't imagine a free liberated world in language, how can we build one?"*²⁷⁰

However skilled the poet and transformative the poem, Poetry has so far not moved politicians to commit to a lasting ceasefire, to end Apartheid policies in Palestine, to facilitate humanitarian aid to reach those in need, to stop arms deliveries to Israel and end the military occupation, siege and genocide in Gaza. Despite the mass protests taking place across the globe, the bombing of Gaza continues. Nevertheless, when poetry, as this project shows, has the capacity to record what is happening on the ground, to store and revive collective memory, to reclaim Palestinian history and identity and cultivate hope, it has an immense task and its writers, performers and collaborators on site and virtually are fulfilling it heroically. In *A State of Siege*, Mahmoud Darwish writes "we sow hope".²⁷¹ Mosab Abu Toha reflects in one of his essays for the *New Yorker* on this poem and the nauseating notion of hope. To him, hope is a difficult, abstract word and something to be cultivated and taken care of by Palestinians on their own.²⁷² The hope he sees in poetry is that stories of people survive and that people are moved to act.²⁷³ Poetry produces counter-memories and "remembrance and collective memory produce the grounds for collective agency."²⁷⁴ Poetry's language foreshadows action and if

²⁶⁹ „Palestinian writer Ahmed Masoud shares pictures from Gaza and reads poetry,” *The Convention*, YouTube, March 2, 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAASLYxeB5k>.

²⁷⁰ Syed, "How Poetry became a Tool of Resistance."

²⁷¹ Mahmoud Darwish, *A State of Siege*, Marxists Internet Archive, 2002. <https://www.marxists.org/subject/art/literature/darwish/2002/siege.htm>.

²⁷² Mosab Abu Toha, "A Palestinian Poet's Perilous Journey Out of Gaza," *The New Yorker*, December 25, 2023. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/01/01/a-palestinian-poets-perilous-journey-out-of-gaza>.

²⁷³ "Palestinian poet Mosab Abu Toha processes the war in Gaza through his art," PBS NewsHour, YouTube, October 29, 2024 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ux4zAopzfSg>.

²⁷⁴ Sa'di and Abu-Lughod, *Nakba*, 116.

poetry cultivates hope, it *imagines a free, liberated world in language*, the one we so desperately need to build in reality.

*“To dig a tunnel out of prison, one must first imagine it, before clawing at the floor.”*²⁷⁵

In *Standing with Palestinians*, Angela Davis powerfully connects struggles and explains the urgency of resistance when she says: “we must not — capitulate to those who represent the interests of racial capitalism and the legacies of colonialism.”²⁷⁶ To resist capitulation, we must engage in the desecuritization and repoliticization²⁷⁷ of memory which have to be liberated from state repression. Securitization “seeks to protect a particular vision of the past by condemning, delegitimizing, or overtly criminalizing the alternatives,”²⁷⁸ a practice that the contemporary poetry coming out of the arenas of occupation tries to subvert. Public discourse on genocide and occupation in Gaza is strongly censored and receives disproportionate amounts of intervention. Out of fear and harmful consequences, institutions and individuals capitulate to dictated aphasia. Poetry is subverting these developments by breaking narrative barriers and reclaiming memory about Palestinian identity, history and geography. Poetry repoliticizes previously silenced discourses, meaning narratives are made available and stories opened for discussion and exposes their securitization, their imposed disappearance or manipulation. The desecuritization and repoliticization²⁷⁹ of memory is one of the core functions that Gaza’s poetic culture takes on. With poetry containing historical and cultural knowledge and becoming an important tool for the recording of genocidal practices, it functions as a protective case for memories and becomes a memory site.

*“Glory to you, Homeland that never dies, that will never die as long as its people, despite oppression, can laugh and hope and sacrifice.”*²⁸⁰

²⁷⁵ The Palestine Festival of Literature, “Mohammed El-Kurd.”

²⁷⁶ Davis, “STANDING WITH PALESTINIANS.”

²⁷⁷ Maria Mälksoo, “‘Memory Must Be Defended’: Beyond the Politics of Mnemonical Security,” *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 3 (2015): 223. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010614552549>.

²⁷⁸ Mälksoo, “‘Memory Must be Defended’,” 228.

²⁷⁹ Mälksoo, “‘Memory Must Be Defended’,” 223.

²⁸⁰ Mahmoud Joudah, “Literary Texts Written Under the Israeli Bombardment of Gaza,” in *Action for Hope*, (AURDIP, 2023), 2. <https://aurdip.org/en/this-is-gaza-literary-texts-written-under-the-israeli-bombardment-of-gaza/>.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter asked: “How is the reception of Gaza’s poetic culture fostering solidarity and resistance internationally?” The many forms of reception of Gaza’s poetic culture are fostering solidarity and resistance internationally through recurring appearance and engagement with poetry in different media, on cultural events, protests and student encampments around the world. The phenomenal circulation of poetry and its implementation in tributes, cultural and literary events, encampments and protests speak of the mobilizing, inspirational force it carries. Despite heavy censorship efforts, authors in Gaza, in the diaspora and exile manage to circulate their texts and face an increasingly open cultural sphere, where their work is featured and applauded. Gaza’s poetic culture is increasingly mobilizing people around the world to engage with Palestinian poetry as mode of resistance against memoricide and amnesia. As mode of resistance and necessary tool for self-determination, poetry continues to champion the ‘power to narrate’. Engaging with poetry, as counternarrative and archive of memories, makes readers and writers eyewitnesses, enables them to resist amnesia, to imagine liberation, participate in public grieving and healing and to sow hope for an end to genocide and a liberated, free Palestine.

5. Conclusion

“Regardless, here I turn into a story.

Do not forget me; bring me back to Jaffa.”²⁸¹

“How does Gaza’s contemporary poetic culture, its content, production, distribution and reception serve as a mode of resistance against memocide?” was asked at the beginning of this research project. The discourse analysis and process tracing conducted for this research followed poetry in its movement between locations, people and media. What was found is that the different sites of Gaza’s poetic culture, its content, production, distribution, and reception all uniquely contribute to its survival and resilience. The unwavering courage and determination required to produce poetry during a genocide enables poets to resist Israel’s campaigns of dispossession and erasure of memory, identity and history. Their poetry as mode of resistance against memocide and amnesia takes on the functions of memory, counternarrative, truth, knowledge, history, commemoration, remembrance, witness, protest, dissent, rebellion, memory, memorial, imagination, responsibility and liberation. With writing, reading, publishing and distributing poetry and collaborating with Palestinian poets from Gaza and in the diaspora, the imposed information voids are filled, relational histories are made available, vocabulary produced, and stories connected.

The first analytical chapter showed how the writing of poetry, its process of production and distribution preserves collective memory in the face of memocide and amnesia and takes place through collaborations with a multitude of actors. Poets write during genocide against Israel’s erasure of Palestinian lives, environment, history, culture and memory. Increasingly, new spaces are made and claimed where Gaza’s poetic culture can resist the destruction of educational and literary sites like the Edward Said library in Gaza and produce and distribute poetry with the help of social media, magazines, journals, blogs, institutes, collectives, festivals, publishing houses, translators and projects. Poets and writers defy material and infrastructural constraints, reclaim history and memory, document the ongoing genocide, produce and preserve knowledge and produce space and narratives.

The second analytical chapter showed how through poetry, poets in Gaza, in exile and in the diaspora, are challenging hegemonic, imperial and settler colonial narratives by

²⁸¹ Haidar, Al-Ghazali, “My Name is Ahmad,” *Funambulist*, 58. <https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/return/my-name-is-ahmad>.

breaking intellectual blockades, resisting colonial managements of life and death and employing their work as a literary weapon against invented traditions, memories and rewritten histories. Their poems unmask colonial geonarratives, reconstruct environments, cities, landscapes and lives. Poetry as mode of resistance can be traced through the different themes discussed in this chapter that engage with the struggle against memoricide. Geography, environment, memory, genocide and resistance all encompass spaces where Palestinian existence in Gaza is erased. By reclaiming the power to narrate through poetry, its authors resist their annihilation in a literary world that is beyond destruction.

And the third analytical chapter found that the international reception of Gaza's poetic culture and poetic outburst is fostering solidarity and resistance globally. Poetry fuels and inspires tributes, cultural events, university encampments and protests, making them essential to revolutionary movements of solidarity with the Palestinian cause, with freedom and justice. The reception of poetry from Gaza and the active engagement with Palestinian memory in poetry, as a site of liberation and struggle, enables its survival. With poetry, Palestinian memory is repoliticized and unsilenced, liberation imagined and grief and hope catalyzed.

*"It used to be called Palestine,
it will be called Palestine."*²⁸²

5.1 Beyond the Story

Ultimately, these chapters ask bigger questions. Who is human? What is a worthy life? How do we remember, mourn and collect the stories of past lives and worlds? "The Palestinian condition is the human condition"²⁸³ and we look to Palestine and Palestinian poetry to look at ourselves; to understand the condition we and our world are in.

At the outset of this project, researcher and writer Mahar Musleh reminds us in her essay *Imagining Return* of the many aspects and conditions that the fight for freedom and justice entails to ultimately, one day, return. Return to Palestine and to Gaza is about rebuilding communities and relationships, the undoing of violence and uncriminalization of Palestinians, the reappearance from where erasure was forced, reparations and justice beyond

²⁸² Mahmoud Darwish, *On This Earth*, trans. Ashraf Osman (Archmemory, June 2012), <https://archmemory.blogspot.com/2012/06/blog-post.html>.

²⁸³ El-Kurd, *Perfect Victims*, 31.

peace dialogues, in form of a collective effort ending structures of oppression and violence.²⁸⁴ Gaza's poetic culture and its collaborators in the diaspora and exile are preceding this return and liberation. Poetry offers space until space on the ground is reclaimed. Poetry documents and defies destruction. Poetry archives memories until families unite and return. Poetry records and witnesses the genocide until its perpetrators are brought to justice. Poetry inspires hope and resilience, mobilizing people all over the world and envisions "the sky unbroken."²⁸⁵

This project not only contributes to the study of genocide, memocide, historical amnesia and resistance poetry, but it claims to function as additional archive for a small collection of works from writers and poets who participate in the production and distribution of Gaza's poetic culture. Increasingly, scholars and students engage academically with the genocide taking place and raise their voices – this project aims to be among them. Here, not only those who call writing their profession are discussed but also those who have only recently and through the barbaric crimes inflicted on them, their families and environment, turned to poetry. The outburst of poetry in the wake of Gaza's genocide and memocide as mode of resistance is the primary focus of this thesis and novel addition to wider research.

Even though this project looks at Palestinian writing in its distribution all over the world, it should be remembered that the affirmation of Gaza's poetic culture does not imply the consideration of Palestinian voices at the UN and The Hague meetings where their lives and countries future are discussed. With the extreme focus on poems in movement, it seems everyone is reading and mobilizing through their engagement with Gaza's poets. In fact, only gradually, through poetry, through protest, through campaigns by NGO's, through independent journalism and brave activists, narratives about Gaza are shifting and influencing the political standpoints regarding educational, economic, political and military collaboration with Israel. Poetry plays an indispensable role but struggles with financial, cultural and linguistic boundaries and is still met with censorship. To lift these boundaries, venues and institutions must increase their collaboration with Gaza's poetic culture drastically, keep the conversation about poetry as mode of resistance alive and involve poets and audiences who were previously excluded. Additionally, amid the unprecedented circulation of poetry from Gaza internationally, we have to recognize that this process takes place in an environment of violence and suffering. It seems, this suffering is helping to justify the 'spaces on the pages', that Palestinian poets are experiencing. Is there also space for Palestinian poetry when the

²⁸⁴ Mahar Musleh, "Imagining Return," *The Funambulist*, Issue 58, (2025): 30-31.
<https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/return/imagining-return>.

²⁸⁵ Musleh, "Imagining Return," 2025.

land is freed, the people return, the wounded healed, the criminals brought to justice, the Apartheid dismantled and settler colonial, memoricidal policies and practices ended?

5.2 Further Research

This research began with barely any material and sources on Gaza's poetic culture and at its end, it is surrounded by countless international contributions. Many new and similar reports have been published, both academically and on other platforms as well as new anthologies of Palestinian poetry. This process was not anticipated but is of course welcomed, incredibly urgent and beneficial during today's ongoing genocide in Gaza. Engaging with poetry in academia, in the literary world and through cultural events works against the disassociation of related histories, against the estrangement between people and memories and should be recognized as a discipline and method of knowledge production and as historical document. Many more platforms should be facilitated for the established and emerging Gazan poets to tell their stories and for all writers struggling against occupation in different contexts, like Kashmir and Western Sahara. Narratives supporting the dehumanization of Palestinians and the perpetration of war crimes against their people, fueled by Zionist, racist, and colonialist ideologies must be exposed and deconstructed. These should be important axioms for any further research concerned with Palestine, Gaza, memocide and poetry as mode of resistance. We should continue thinking about how and why poetry is written, how it travels and whom it reaches. This project ends with the hopes that readers are called to continue their engagement with Gaza's poetic culture and work in support and solidarity with Palestinian writers and poets against the material, cultural and literary negation of Palestinian existence, survival and liberation.

“To Gaza, With Hope
I love you further
I love you more.
Even with no buildings
Even with no cafés I love you further
I love you twice
Once for your pride
And twice for your strength
Your Jabalia will be inside my heart.
I will write it on every beach
And on bus stops
I will call my children Rafah, Khan Younis,
Nuseirat and Beit Hanoun.
I love you further
Beyond what they say and their pain
Away from their tanks and hate speeches.
I will continue to eat chilli like you taught me
Tell jokes as you showed me
Love life the way you do
Be brave and resist
Keep hoping, keep dreaming.
I only ask you one thing
*Stay here, for everyone I love.”*²⁸⁶

²⁸⁶ Ahmed Masoud, “To Gaza, with Hope,” *The Dreaming Machine*, no. 14, May 8, 2024.
<https://www.thedreamingmachine.com/four-poetic-voices-from-the-gaza-strip-and-the-diaspora-heba-al-agma-yousef-el-qedra-alaa-sbah-ahmed-masoud/>.

Appendix

Figure 1



A Palestinian woman lifts a placard bearing verses by Palestinian poet Refaat Alareer, killed in Gaza on 7 December 2023, in Ramallah, 11 December 2023 (Picture: Marco Longari/AFP)

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/-gaza-war-palestinian-writing-fights-erasure-how>.

Figure 2



On Dec. 9, protesters hold tributes to Palestinian writer, poet, and professor Refaat Alareer, who was killed by an Israeli airstrike, as tens of thousands of Palestine supporters march through London calling for a permanent ceasefire. (Picture: Ron Fassbender/ Alamy) <https://time.com/6554381/poet-palestine-gaza-war/>.

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

- Rasha Abdulhadi. *And Still We Write* (Introduction). Publishers for Palestine, 2024.
- Abraham, George, and Noor Hindi. *Heaven Looks like Us Palestinian Poetry*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2025.
- Abu-Manneh, Bashir. “‘Under Suffering’s Glow’: Palestinian Writing after Oslo”, *Post-Millennial Palestine Literature, Memory, Resistance*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1hp5h85>.
- Abu Mostafa, Fatena. “The Multiplication of Poets,” *we are not numbers*. 2025. <https://wearenotnumbers.org/the-multiplication-of-poets/>.
- Abu Nada, Heba. *Not Just Passing*. Mizna Online, 2023. <https://mizna.org/mizna-online/not-just-passing/>.
- Abusalim, Jehad, Bing, Jennifer, Merryman Lotze, Michael (editors). *Light in Gaza: Writings Born of Fire*. Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2022.
- Abu Saif, Atef. *Don’t Look Left, A Diary of Genocide*. Comma Press, 2024. <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/dont-look-left-atef-abu-saif/1144780990>.
- Abu Toha, Mosab. “Before I Sleep.” *Mizna Online*, 2024. <https://mizna.org/mizna-online/before-i-sleep-poem-from-forest-of-noise/>.
- Abu Toha, Mosab. “The Moon.” *New York Book Review*, March 21, 2024. <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2024/03/21/the-moon-mosab-abu-toha/>.
- Abu Toha, Mosab. “The Gaza We Leave Behind.” *New Yorker*, October 7, 2024. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/essay/the-gaza-we-leave-behind>.
- Abu Toha, Mosab. “A Palestinian Poet’s Perilous Journey Out of Gaza.” *New Yorker*, December 25, 2023. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/01/01/a-palestinian-poets-perilous-journey-out-of-gaza>.
- Abu Toha, Mosab. Quoted in Emily Reid Green, “Courage in the Impossible: Gaza’s Poets Speak.” *NaTakallam*, 2025. <https://natakallam.com/blog/courage-in-the-impossible-gazas-poets-speak/>.

Abu Toha, Mosab. "Memories are Flowers." *The Markaz Review*, July 14, 2021.

<https://themarkaz.org/four-poems-from-mosab-abu-toha/>.

Abu Toha, Mosab. *Poems from Gaza*. In Anjuman Rahman, "Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear: Poems from Gaza." *Middle East Monitor*, October 2, 2022.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20221002-things-you-may-find-hidden-in-my-ear-poems-from-gaza/>.

Alareer, Refaat (editor). *Gaza Writes Back*. Just World Books, 2014.

<https://justworldbooks.com/books-by-title/gaza-writes-back/>.

Alareer, Refaat. "If I must die," in *Poems for Palestine*. Publishers for Palestine, 2024, 3.

Al-Agha, Heba. "Free Poems in the Autum," in *And Still We Write*. Publishers for Palestine, 2024, 15.

Al Ghonaimy, Zainab. "Letters from Gaza Part 2," *Protean Magazine*. October 17, 2023.

<https://proteanmag.com/2023/10/17/letters-from-gaza-part-2/>.

Al Khateeb, Maryam. "Where I Write Now," in *And Still We Write*. Publishers for Palestine, 2024, 12.

Al Khateeb, Maryam. "Gaza," in *And Still We Write*. Publishers For Palestine, 2024, 9.

And Still We Write. Publishers for Palestine, 2024.

<https://publishersforpalestine.org/2024/11/19/launching-and-still-we-write-an-anthology-of-new-work-from-and-centering-gaza/>.

Azeb, Sophia. „We May Never Return Again (A Celebration of Our Aliveness).” *Funambulist*, Issue 58, 2025.

<https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/return/we-may-never-return-again-a-celebration-of-our-aliveness>.

Bsharat, Ahlam. "I Saw, Father, What You Saw," in *Poems for Palestine*. Publishers for Palestine, 2024, 12.

Bastašić, Lana (@lanabasta). "Conversation with Palestinian poet Mosab Abu Toha." *Instagram*, September, 09, 2024.

<https://www.instagram.com/lanabasta/>.

Darwish, Mahmoud. *On This Earth*. trans. Ashraf Osman, Archmemory, June 2012.

<https://archmemory.blogspot.com/2012/06/blog-post.html>.

Darwish, Mahmoud. "Unfortunately, It Was Paradise" In *The Politics of Memory: Historical Amnesia and the Struggle for Palestinian Justice*. Futures Futures Futures Collective, McMaster University, February 10, 2025.

<https://publicintellectualsproject.humanities.mcmaster.ca/public-intellectuals/the-politics-of-memory-historical-amnesia-and-the-struggle-for-palestinian-justice/>.

Darwish, Mahmoud. "Think Of Others," in *artists4ceasfire* (artists4ceasfire). Instagram, April 23, 2025. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DIw8xaNzO6h/>.

Dwaima, Asmaa. "Where I Write Now," in *And Still We Write*. Publishers for Palestine, 2024. <https://publishersforpalestine.org/2024/11/19/launching-and-still-we-write-an-anthology-of-new-work-from-and-centering-gaza/>.

El-Kurd, Mohammed. *Rifqa*. Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2021.

El-Kurd, Mohammed. *Perfect Victims and the Politics of Appeal*. Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2025.

Hammad, Suheir. *Gaza Suite*, Palestinian Festival of Literature, YouTube, 2009.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ju_i5-NDhnQ.

Hammad, Suheir. *Born Palestinian, Born Black & The Gaza Suite*. UpSet Press, 2010, 10.

Hajjaj, Essam. "Where I Write Now," in *And Still We Write*. Publishers for Palestine, 2024, 35.

Hindi, Noor. "Fuck Your Lecture on Craft my People are Dying," in *Dear God. Dear Bones. Dear Yellow*. Haymarket Books, 2022.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/154658/fuck-your-lecture-on-craft-my-people-are-dying>.

Humaid, Mara. "We were the News Today." *Harper's Magazine*, January 2024.

<https://harpers.org/archive/2024/01/we-were-the-news-today-maram-humaid-journalist-gaza-al-jazeera-israel-hamas-war-october-2023/>.

Joudah, Mahmoud. In "Literary Texts Written Under the Israeli Bombardment of Gaza," *Action for Hope*, October 7, 2023. <https://aurdip.org/en/this-is-gaza-literary-texts-written-under-the-israeli-bombardment-of-gaza/>.

Khalaf Tuffaha, Lena. „Running Orders." *Poetry Foundation*.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/143255/running-orders>.

- Mansour, Ahmad Abdelaziz. "Letters from Gaza Part 2." *Protean Magazine*, October, 16, 2023. <https://proteanmag.com/2023/10/17/letters-from-gaza-part-2/>.
- Masoud, Ahmed. "To Gaza with Hope." *The Dreaming Machine*, no 14, May 8, 2024. <https://www.thedreamingmachine.com/four-poetic-voices-from-the-gaza-strip-and-the-diaspora-heba-al-agma-yousef-el-qedra-alaa-sbaih-ahmed-masoud/>.
- Moussa, Mohammed. "A statement on writing poetry during a genocide." *bellacaledonia*, March 20, 2025. <https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2025/03/20/a-statement-on-writing-poetry-during-a-genocide/>.
- Musleh, Mahar. "Imagining Return." *The Funambulist* 30-31. Issue 58, February 2025. <https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/return/imagining-return>.
- Poems for Palestine*, Publishers for Palestine, 2024. <https://publishersforpalestine.org/2024/02/13/poems-for-palestine-chapbook-launch/>.
- Rabah, Nasser. "Where I Write Now." In *And Still We Write*, 3. Publishers for Palestine, 2024.
- Shibli, Adania. In Claudia Steinberg, "Palestine as a Position of Witnessing: A Conversation with Adania Shibli." *World Literature Today*, December 2020. <https://worldliteraturetoday.org/2021/summer/palestine-position-witnessing-conversation-adania-shibli-claudia-steinberg>.
- Tbakhi, Fargo Nissim. "Palestine Is a Futurity: Prophecies (Cruising Jerusalem)." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 18, no. 3 (2021): 347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2021.1954219>.

Web-Pages

- "On Further Action." *Poems for Palestine*, 16. Publishers for Palestine, 2024.
- "Poems from Palestine" in Logical Revolts. *The Baffler*, 2021. <https://thebaffler.com/logical-revolts/poems-from-palestine>.
- "This is Gaza: Literary Texts Written Under the Israeli Bombardment of Gaza", *Action for Hope*, Association des Universitaires pour la respect du droit international en Palestine (AURDIP), 5, 2024. <https://aurdip.org/en/this-is-gaza-literary-texts-written-under-the-israeli-bombardment-of-gaza/>.

“Mohammed El-Kurd on Gaza.” *The Palestine Festival of Literature*, YouTube, February 26, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeaKc0TyWxo>.

“Four Poems from Mosab Abu Toha.” *The Markaz Review*, July 14, 2021. <https://themarkaz.org/four-poems-from-mosab-abu-toha/>.

“Palestinian writer Ahmed Masoud shares pictures from Gaza and reads poetry.” *The Convention*, YouTube, March 2, 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAASLYxeB5k>.

“Palestinian poet Mosab Abu Toha processes the war in Gaza through his art.” *PBS NewsHour*, YouTube, October 29, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ux4zAopzfSg>.

Secondary Sources:

Abu Shammala, Nour Khalil. “The Land fights, too,” *The Electronic Intifada*, August 05, 2024. <https://electronicintifada.net/content/land-fights-too/47811>.

Agha, Zena, James Esson, Mark Griffiths, and Mikko Joronen. “Gaza: A Decolonial Geography.” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 49, no. 2 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12675>.

Alahmed, Nadia. “‘Black Intifada’: Black Arts Movement, Palestinian Poetry of Resistance and the Roots of Black and Palestinian Solidarity.” 1 (2019). <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/220132611.pdf>.

Alareer, Refaat. “Gaza Writes Back: Narrating Palestine.” *Biography* 37, no. 2 (2014): 524–37. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24570193>.

Al-Ghazali, Haidar. “My Name is Ahmad,” *Funambulist*, 58, February 13, 2025. <https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/return/my-name-is-ahmad>.

Al-Safadi, Shojaa. “Some things we can never rebuild.” *The Electronic Intifada*, August 28, 2024. <https://electronicintifada.net/content/some-things-we-can-never-rebuild/48506>.

Alshaer, Atef. “Writing Gaza during a genocide.” *Radical Philosophy* 216 (2024): 3–12. <https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/writing-gaza-during-a-genocide>.

- Alshaer, Atef. "I Am From Gaza. Our World Is in Ruins, but Our Stories Endure." *Atmos*, October 10, 2024. <https://atmos.earth/i-am-from-gaza-our-world-is-in-ruins-but-our-stories-endure/>.
- Apaydin, Veysel. "Introduction: Why Cultural Memory and Heritage?" In *Critical Perspectives on Cultural Memory and Heritage: Construction, Transformation and Destruction*. UCL Press (2020):1-10. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv13xpsfp.6>.
- Apaydin, Veysel. "The Interlinkage of Cultural Memory, Heritage and Discourses of Construction, Transformation and Destruction." In *Critical Perspectives on Cultural Memory and Heritage: Construction, Transformation and Destruction*. UCL Press, (2020): 7. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv13xpsfp>.
- Ashrawi, Hanan Mikhail. "The Contemporary Palestinian Poetry of Occupation." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7, no. 3 (1978): 84. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2536202>.
- Ayyoub, Abeer. "Israel-Palestine war: The beloved Gaza novelist killed after fleeing south." *Middle East Eye*, October 24, 2023. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-war-beloved-gaza-novelist-killed>.
- Bailey, Chelsea. "Who is Mahmoud Khalil? Palestinian activist detained by ICE over Columbia University protests." *CNN*, March 11, 2025. <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/03/11/us/mahmoud-khalil-columbia-ice-green-card-hnk/index.html>.
- Bertens, Johannes Willem. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. Third edition. (London: Routledge, 2014), 5.
- Bopp, Laura. „Einst ein Ort voller Leben.“ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 25, 2025. <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/autoren/atef-abu-saif-und-sein-gaza-roman-leben-in-der-schwebe-110434200.html>.
- Browne, B.C. "Truth, Acknowledgement, and Combatting 'Memoricide'. In: Transitional (in)Justice and Enforcing the Peace on Palestine. Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies", *Palgrave Macmillan*, Cham. (2023). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25394-2_3.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Lives*. (Verso, 2004), 37.

- Chomsky, Noam and Pappé, Ilan. *On Palestine*. Ed. Frank Barat (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), 117-18.
- Cohen, Hella Bloom. "Poetry, Palestine and Posthumanism." *Postcolonial Studies* 25, no. 3 (2022): 361–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2021.1979742>.
- Collier, David. "Understanding process tracing." *PS: political science & politics* 44.4 (2011): 823-830. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511001429>.
- Coronil, Fernando. "After Empire: Reflections on Imperialism from the Américas," in *Imperial Formations*. Ed. Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, and Peter C. Perdue (Santa Fe, N.M.: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007), 245.
- Dader, Khalid, et al. "Topologies of scholasticide in Gaza: education in spaces of elimination." *Fennia-International Journal of Geography* 202.1 (2024): 1.
- Daher-Nashif, S. "Colonial management of death: To be or not to be dead in Palestine." *Current Sociology*, 69 (7), (2020): 945. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392120948923>.
- Davis, Angela Y. "STANDING WITH PALESTINIANS." *Hammer and Hope*, Article 2, Issue 3, 2024. <https://hammerandhope.org/article/angela-davis-palestinians-gaza>.
- Dr. Alhosani, Naeema. "Palestine in Geography and Fiction: An Interdisciplinary Perspective." 30.52 *مجلة كلية الآداب بقنا*, (2021): 17. https://qarts.journals.ekb.eg/article_143883_5a8239b743f3a4be39c6c563ab656be2.pdf.
- Durie, Alexander. "Mosab Abu Toha: The witness poet narrating the genocide in Gaza." *The New Arab*, December 18, 2024. <https://www.newarab.com/features/mosab-abu-toha-witness-poet-narrating-genocide-gaza>.
- El Kurd, Mohammed. "Are we indeed all Palestinians?," *Mondoweiss*, 13 March 2024. <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/03/are-we-indeed-all-palestinians/>.
- El-Qedra, Yousef. "Writing in Gaza", *Arab Lit*, January 06, 2025. <https://arablit.org/2025/01/06/writing-in-gaza-an-act-of-existence-in-the-shadows-of-war/>.
- Erll, Astrid, and Rigney, Ann. "Literature and the Production of Cultural Memory: Introduction." *European Journal of English Studies*, 10 (2): (2006): 111–15. doi:10.1080/13825570600753394.

- Forough, M. (Forthcoming). "Geonarratives: Introducing a New Social Science Concept." *Political Geography*, (2025): 3.
- Fox, Rachel Gregory, and Ahmad Qabaha. *Post-Millennial Palestine Literature, Memory, Resistance*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2021).
<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2751087>.
- Futures Futures Futures Collective, "The Politics of Memory: Historical Amnesia and the Struggle for Palestinian Justice," McMaster University, February 10, 2025.
- Golańska, Dorota. "Slow Urbicide: Accounting for the Shifting Temporalities of Political Violence in the West Bank." *Geoforum* 132 (June 2022): 125–34.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718522000896>.
- Griffin, Gabriele. "6. Discourse Analysis". *Research Methods for English Studies*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, (2013): 93. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748683444-007>.
- Grzinic, Marina; Tatlic, Sefik. *Necropolitics, Racialization, and Global Capitalism: Historicization of Biopolitics and Forensics of Politics, Art, and Life*. (Lexington Books, 2014). ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Hagan, Rachel. "Elon Musk's Starlink satellite service being used at Gaza hospital." *The Independent*, July 24, 2024. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/elon-musk-gaza-starlink-b2584966.html>.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Edited by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Hanimann, Carlos. "In Gaza stirbst du nicht aus Versehen. Du überlebst aus Versehen." *REPUBLIK*, March 15, 2025. <https://www.republik.ch/2025/03/15/atef-abu-saif-in-gaza-stirbst-du-nicht-aus-versehen-du-ueberlebst-aus-versehen>.
- Hillman, Brenda. "Cracks in the Oracle Bone: Teaching Certain Contemporary Poems." Essay on Poetic Theory, *Poetry Foundation*, August 16, 2010.
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69568/cracks-in-the-oracle-bone-teaching-certain-contemporary-poems>.

- Ibrahim, Sally. "Stray animals seen desperately eating Palestinian corpses in northern Gaza." *The New Arab*, December 24, 2024. <https://www.newarab.com/news/stray-animals-seen-eating-palestinian-corpses-northern-gaza>.
- Idrak, Tiasha. "Poets from Palestine: Verses written in tears and blood." *The Daily Star*, October, 07, 2024. <https://www.thedailystar.net/books-literature/news/poets-palestine-verses-written-tears-and-blood-3722236>.
- Khalaf Tuffaha, Lena. „Running Orders." <https://www.lenakhalatuffaha.com/running-orders.html>.
- Khatib, Rasha et al. "Counting the dead in Gaza: difficult but essential." *The Lancet*, Volume 404, Issue 10449, 237. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)01169-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext).
- Khoury, Elias. "Remembering Ghassan Kanafani, or How a Nation Was Born of Story Telling." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 42, no. 3 (2013): 85–91. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2013.42.3.85>.
- Khoury, Nadim. "5. Holocaust/Nakba and the Counterpublic of Memory." in *The Holocaust and the Nakba: A New Grammar of Trauma and History*, edited by Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg, New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2018, 114-132. <https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.7312/bash18296-007>.
- Krach, Phillipp. "German Police Clear Pro-Palestinian Camp at Berlin University." *Reuters*, May 7, 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/world/german-police-clear-pro-palestinian-camp-berlin-university-2024-05-07/>.
- Mansour, Johnny. "The Pasha's Mansion Refuses to Become a Theater." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 52:2 (2023): 90. DOI: 10.1080/0377919X.2023.2206305.
- Masalah, Nur. "Settler-Colonialism, Memoricide and Indigenous Toponymic Memory: The Appropriation of Palestinian Place Names by the Israeli State." *Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies* 14, no. 1 (2015): 3–57. <https://doi.org/10.3366/hpls.2015.0103>.
- Masalah, Nur. *The Palestine Nakba, Decolonizing History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory*, Zed Books, London, 2012.

- Mälksoo, Maria. “‘Memory Must Be Defended’: Beyond the Politics of Mnemonical Security.” *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 3 (2015): 223.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010614552549>.
- Mbembe, J.-A, and Libby Meintjes. “Necropolitics.” *Public Culture*, vol. 15, no. 1, (2003): 11–40.
- Milton-Edwards, Beverley. "Protest Wave Palestine: “We are All Palestinians”." *Protest* 4, 2 (2024): 243. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/2667372X-bja10069>.
- Mokhiber, Craig. “Text-Book Case of Genocide”: Top U.N. Official Craig Mokhiber Resigns, Denounces Israeli Assault on Gaza.” *Democracy Now*, November 01, 2023.
https://www.democracynow.org/2023/11/1/craig_mokhiber_un_resignation_israel_gaza
[a](https://www.democracynow.org/2023/11/1/craig_mokhiber_un_resignation_israel_gaza).
- Moussa, Mohammed. “A statement on writing poetry during a genocide.” *bellacaledonia*, March 20, 2025.
<https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2025/03/20/a-statement-on-writing-poetry-during-a-genocide/>.
- Mohamed, Iman. “Global Protests for a Free Palestine: Photo Essay.” *Yes Magazine*, January 23, 2024. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2024/01/23/global-protest-free-palestine-israel-ceasefire>.
- Muaddi Darraj, Susan. *Ask the Night for a Dream: Palestinian Writing From the Diaspora*, Palestine Writes Press, 2024. <https://palestinewrites.org/product/ask-the-night-for-a-dream-palestinian-writing-from-the-diaspora-2024/>.
- Nasooaha, M. “A History Buried Alive”: Resisting Amnesia and Reclaiming Native Palestinian Ecology in the Works of Susan Abulhawa.” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (2024): 107. <https://doi.org/10.13169/arabstudquar.46.2.0100>.
- Nasreldin, Nashwa. “Gazan Poets Write To Survive.” *New Lines Magazine*, October 29, 2024. <https://newlinesmag.com/review/gazan-poets-write-to-survive/>.
- Nora, Pierre. “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire.” *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520>.
- O’Neill, Rory. “Trump’s plan for ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Gaza is illegal, says UN investigator.” *Politico*, 09.02.2025. <https://www.politico.eu/article/trumps-plan-to-ethnically-cleanse-gaza-is-illegal-says-un-backed-judge/>.

- Owton, H. "Introducing Poetic Inquiry. In: Doing Poetic Inquiry. Palgrave Studies in Creativity and Culture." *Palgrave Macmillan*, Cham, 2017.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64577-3_1.
- Pandit, Huzaifa. "Mapping Shrines of Memory: Aspiration, Repression and Articulation in Contemporary Kashmiri Poetry." In *Female Narratives of Protest*, 26–37. Routledge India, 2024. <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003272335-4/mapping-shrines-memory-huzaifa-pandit?context=ubx&refId=fe1b1c5f-ce3c-4586-91ad-d7d7d71d0387>.
- Pappé, Ilan. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oxford, England: Oneworld Publications, 2006. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=910807>.
- Procter, C. "'My Grandmother Has Her Keys, Now I Have Mine': Building a Database to Preserve Testimonies of Genocide in Gaza." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (2025): 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0377919X.2025.2455363>.
- Quinan, C.L. "Necropolitics." *Posthuman Glossary*, (2018): 270 – 272.
- Quirke, Brigid. "Form, fragment, refiguring return: Memory and abstraction in three Palestinian poems" thesis, Open Access Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.24468013>.
- Reidenbach, Dorothea. "Critical Geopolitics and Germany's Repression of Palestine Solidarity." Essay, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2025.
- Ricks, Jacob I., and Amy H. Liu. "Process-Tracing Research Designs: A Practical Guide." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51, no. 4 (2018): 842–46. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096518000975>.
- Rigney, Ann. "The Dynamics of Remembrance: Texts Between Monumentality and Morphing." In *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, 345–356. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110207262.5.345>.
- Rigney, A. (2018). Remembering Hope: Transnational activism beyond the traumatic. *Memory Studies*, 11(3), 368-380. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698018771869>

- Riley Welch, Sara Bawany, and Brian Seward. "Writing Our Way Through: A Conversation with Naomi Shihab Nye." *Porter House Review*, February 19, 2024. <https://porterhousereview.org/articles/an-interview-with-naomi-shihab-nye/>.
- Roy, Arundhati. *The End of Imagination*, Haymarket Books, 2016. ProQuest Ebook Central. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uunl/detail.action?docID=4596388>.
- Roy, Arundhati. "No propaganda on earth can hide the wound that is Palestine." *PEN Transmissions*, October 15, 2024. <https://pentransmissions.com/2024/10/15/no-propaganda-on-earth-can-hide-the-wound-that-is-palestine-arundhati-roys-pen-pinter-prize-2024-speech/>.
- Sa'di, Ahmad H., and Lila Abu-Lughod. *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Sadiki, Larbi, and Layla Saleh. "The Gaza War: The Tie that Binds Global Protest." *Protest* 4, 2 (2024): 111. <https://doi.org/10.1163/2667372X-04020002>.
- Said, Edward W. "Invention, Memory, and Place." *Critical Inquiry*, 26 (2), (2000): 175-192.
- Said, Edward W. "An Ideology of Difference." *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (1985). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343461>.
- Said, Edward. "The Burdens of Interpretation and the Question of Palestine." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16, no. 1 (1986): 29-37. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2537020>.
- Said, Edward. *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.
- Said, Edward W. "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors." *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 2 (n.d.), (1989): 205-225. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1343582.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Abfe8422f99df3bcde85587a926fbfbf7&ab_segments=&initiator=&acceptTC=1.
- Sinah Theres Kloß. "The Global South as Subversive Practice: Challenges and Potentials of a Heuristic Concept." *Global South* 11, no. 2 (2017): 1-17. <https://www.jstor.org/eur.idm.oclc.org/stable/10.2979/globalsouth.11.2.01>.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. "Colonial Aphasia: Race and Disabled Histories in France." *Public Culture*, 1 January 2011; 23 (1): 121-156. <https://doi.org/eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1215/08992363-2010-018>.

- Schneider, Marcus. "Germany's fall from grace." *IPS*, 06.2024. <https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/foreign-and-security-policy/germanys-fall-from-grace-7536/>.
- Segal, Raz. "A Textbook Case of Genocide." *JewishCurrents*, October 13, 2023. <https://jewishcurrents.org/a-textbook-case-of-genocide>.
- Soga, Masashi, and Kevin J. Gaston. "Extinction of experience: the loss of human–nature interactions." *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 14.2 (2016): 94-101. <https://doi.org/10.1002/fee.1225>.
- Stoler, Ann. "Colonial Aphasia: On Disabled Histories in France." *Public Culture*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2011, 122. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2010-018>.
- Tannen, Deborah, Heidi Ehernberger Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin, eds. "Introduction to the First Edition." In *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, 1. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2015. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=985110>.
- Thomas, Nathan, et al. "Process tracing for applied linguistics." *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics* 3, no. 2 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2024.100118>.
- Vasquez, Edith. "Poetry as Survival of and Resistance to Genocide in Lorna Dee Cervantes's Drive: The Last Quartet." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 10.4 (2009): 293.
- Verdeja, E. "The Gaza Genocide in Five Crises." *Journal of Genocide Research*, (2025): 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2025.2452707>.
- Webster, Scott. "Revisiting Memoricide: The Everyday Killing of Memory." *Memory Studies* 17, no. 6 (2024): 1408–28. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/17506980231184564>.
- Yafi, Aziz. „The Land of Rebellious Oranges." *Institute for Palestine Studies*, March 30, 2025. <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1657142>.
- Younis, Abdullah. "Gaza's poets never stopped writing." *Electronic Intifada*, February 05, 2025. <https://electronicintifada.net/content/gazas-poets-never-stopped-writing/50365>.
- Zia, Ather. "Poetry as Dissent and Placemaking in Indian-Occupied Kashmir." *Asian Affairs* 53, no. 2 (2022): 416–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2022.2096782>.

Zia, Ather. “‘Their Wounds Are Our Wounds’: A Case for Affective Solidarity between Palestine and Kashmir.” *Identities* 27, 2020, (3): 357–75.
doi:10.1080/1070289X.2020.1750199.

Zia, Ather. “The Kashmir-Palestine Conversation Series: Conversation #4 Poetry and Literature.” Council for British Research in the Levant, YouTube, February 09, 2023.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7FBzdT-R90>.

إيناس, and الفتوح و. "A Critical Study of Poetic Outbursts to the October 2023 Israeli War Against Gaza." *Shak Journals*, 31.1 (2024): 607.

Web-Pages

“Reported Impact snapshot Gaza Strip (14 May 2025).” *OCHA*.
<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-14-may-2025>.

“200 days of military attack on Gaza: A horrific death toll amid intl. failure to stop Israel’s genocide of Palestinians.” *Euro-Med Humans Rights Monitor*, April 24, 2024.
<https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6282/200-days-of-military-attack-on-Gaza:-A-horrific-death-toll-amid-intl.-failure-to-stop-Israel%E2%80%99s-genocide-of-Palestinians>.

“Trump and Netanyahu’s roadmap: Nakba, forcible transfer and expulsion.” *B’Tselem*, February 5, 2025.
https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20250205_trump_and_netanyahu_roadmap_nakba_forcible_transfer_and_expulsion.

“End Israel’s genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.” *Amnesty International*.
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/petition/end-israels-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/>.

“Extermination and Acts of Genocide.” *Human Rights Watch*, December 19, 2024.
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/12/19/extermination-and-acts-genocide/israel-deliberately-depriving-palestinians-gaza>.

“44,330 Palestinians Killed: Al-Haq Marks International Solidarity Day with an Urgent Call for Immediate Action to end Israel’s Genocidal Campaign.” *Al-Haq*, November 29, 2024. <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/25342.html>.

“PCHR Releases Report on Torture and Genocide Against Palestinians from Gaza.” *Palestinian Center for Human Rights*, May 12, 2025. <https://pchrgaza.org/pchr-releases-report-on-torture-and-genocide-against-palestinians-from-gaza/>.

“The world must stop the ethnic cleansing of northern Gaza.” *B’Tselem*, October 22, 2024. https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20241022_the_world_must_stop_the_ethnic_cleansing_of_northern_gaza.

“Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.” *United Nations*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-prevention-and-punishment-crime-genocide>.

“World Poetry Today: Production, Translation, Reception (2025).” *The Estonian Association of Comparative Literature*, University of Tartu. <https://sisu.ut.ee/evka/world-poetry-today-production-translation-reception/?lang=en>.

“Heaven Looks Like Us: An Evening of Palestinian Poetry.” Haymarket Books, YouTube, May 15, 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHwVoB52yQw>.

“Lena Khalaf Tuffaha accepts the 2024 National Book Award for Poetry for Something About Living.” YouTube, November 22, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3AYfJAf434>.

“Zeit für Gaza.” *Literaturhaus Berlin*. <https://li-be.de/programm/zeit-fuer-gaza/>.

„Zeit für Gaza,” *Literaturhaus Berlin*, YouTube, May 21, 2025, 25:10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMsRyHAmTT4&t=2009s>.

“Who are we at Gaza Poets Society?” *Gaza Poets Society*, Substack, June 05, 2025. <https://gazapoetsociety.substack.com/p/who-are-we-at-gaza-poets-society>.

Writers Against the War on Gaza. <https://www.writersagainsthewarongaza.com/>.

“The power of literature in times of war: Fatima Bhutto & Ahmed Masoud | Reframe.” Al Jazeera English, YouTube, February 02, 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxtbgLop77k>.

- “Gazans face hunger crisis as aid blockade nears two months.” *United Nations*, April 28, 2025. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/04/1162666>.
- “GAZA STRIP: Famine is imminent as 1.1 million people, half of Gaza, experience catastrophic food insecurity.” *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification*, March 18, 2024. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/alerts-archive/issue-97/en/>.
- “More than a million children in the Gaza Strip deprived of lifesaving aid for over one month.” *Unicef*, April 05, 2025. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/more-million-children-gaza-strip-deprived-lifesaving-aid-over-one-month>.
- “For Gazans, international electronic SIM cards serve as window to world.” *Middle East Monitor*, January 19, 2024. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240119-for-gazans-international-electronic-sim-cards-serve-as-window-to-world/>.
- “Palestinian man forced to burn poetry book in order to ‘cook food’ amid Gaza fuel shortage.” *Middle East Eye* (@middleeasteye), Instagram, April 05, 2025. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DIC0NuLAYdo/?igsh=MTc4MmM1YmI2Ng==>.
- “Israeli Measures to Link Settlements in Bethlehem with Jerusalem: Amid Genocide in Gaza, Israeli Settlements Devour Palestinian Land in the West Bank.” *Palestinian Center for Human Rights*, December 28, 2024. <https://pchrgaza.org/israeli-measures-to-link-settlements-in-bethlehem-with-jerusalem-amid-genocide-in-gaza-israeli-settlements-devour-palestinian-land-in-the-west-bank/>.
- “What was Netanyahu’s map and ‘plan for Gaza’ all about?” *Al-Jazeera*, September 5, 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/5/what-was-netanyahus-map-and-plan-for-gaza-all-about>.
- “In memory of Dr. Refaat Alareer.” *The Electronic Intifada*, December 7, 2023. <https://electronicintifada.net/content/memory-dr-refaat-alareer/42466>.
- “Poet, professor and writer, Refaat Alareer killed in Israeli strike.” *Al-Jazeera*, December 8, 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2023/12/8/poet-professor-and-writer-refaat-alareer-killed-in-israeli-strike>.
- “‘Let it bring hope’: Mosab Abu Toha, Palestinian poet from Gaza, wins Pulitzer.” *TRT Global*, May 6, 2025. <https://trt.global/world/article/416bf957a050>.

“Harvard students protest with die-in and poetry by Refaat Alareer for Gaza.” Middle East Eye, YouTube, February 13, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/gVD8vnNwavM>.

“Gaza support poster - Poem by Marwan Makhoul / Design by Mark Foss.” *Kunsthal Gent*. <https://kunsthalgent.bigcartel.com/product/freepalestine>.

“Mohammed El-Kurd on Gaza.” The Palestine Festival of Literature, YouTube, February 26, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeaKc0TyWxo>.