

Representations of Palestinian Resistance between the Honor of Liberation and the Extent of Shortcomings: A Reading in the Experience of the Algerian Poet El-Hacen El-Ouahidi

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore the poetic experience of the Algerian poet El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, through selected rich examples of his poetry that reflect the writer's commitment to supporting the Palestinian cause. It reasserts the role of the engaged intellectual in addressing pivotal issues linked to Arab nationalism and reveals the poet's engagement in this direction by analyzing his stylistic structures. The study sheds light on the structural transformations in the literature of the Palestinian cause, which has become a central issue embraced by poets. El-Ouahidi responds to this cause with profound emotional sensitivity, allowing him to employ stylistic techniques that fulfill deeper artistic functions. These techniques play a role in the poetic context as active agents in the search for self and identity, appealing to the subtleties of aesthetic reception among readers. These include: the phenomenon of multiple styles and purposes, repetition, symbolism, and the diversity and flexibility of poetic segments. Using an analytical stylistic approach, the study raises questions about the extent to which the Palestinian cause is present in El-Hacen El-Ouahidi's poetry. Was this engagement merely circumstantial and occasional, or was it genuinely spontaneous? How did the poet represent Palestine? What were the dimensions and symbolism that captivated his emotions? What poetic tools did he employ in expressing it? The findings confirm that El-Hacen El-Ouahidi stands as a model of the Algerian poet who is not isolated from the concerns of the Arab nation. He responded to them through his sense of the intellectual's duty toward Palestine—an issue of the past, present, and future. His interaction with the cause, his dedication to its core concerns, and his focus on its seriousness demonstrate that the Algerian poet continues to engage deeply with the Palestinian issue. It remains his inspiration for writing and a call to defend and confront all who seek to undermine it. Thus, the cause serves as a principal indicator of the commitment of Arab intellectuals to the broader concerns of their nation.

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Introduction

The Islamic world in general—and the Arab world in particular—has never been as deeply concerned with any issue as it has been with the Palestinian cause. This cause has profoundly impacted national, regional, and global public consciousness. Amid the dominance of contemporary media communication and its growing role in education, awareness, and cultural formation, the Palestinian issue remains one of the most prominent and widely disseminated causes. Modern communication technologies can play a significant role in broadcasting, promoting, and enhancing its value among Arab, Islamic, and global audiences. They also help solidify the sense of belonging to it and reinforce the spiritual and cultural connection to the sacred, employing all available tools and methods to rally support for the Palestinian causeⁱ.

Despite the harsh conditions Algerians themselves have endured—which often made it difficult to focus on what was happening in Palestine—they linked their fate to that of their Palestinian brothersⁱⁱ.

From the earliest days of the Palestinian cause, the Algerian people recognized its importance and standing, even as Algeria itself was still under the yoke of French colonialism, struggling for survival and liberation. It is a battle of awareness before it is a battle of action. In today's world, with its abundance of distractions and demotivators that pull the Arab and Muslim individual away from their heritage and beliefs, the weapon of awareness is far more effective in instilling a culture of solidarity with Palestine. The Zionist aggression has long worked to distort this awareness and manipulate global public opinion, turning attention away

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from the truth of the conflict. Media influence has thus become not just necessary, but essential in resisting occupation.

Accordingly, leveraging all modern means to serve the Palestinian cause has become urgent—fostering solidarity at national, regional, Arab, and international levels.

It is honor enough for Palestine that it commands a powerful media presence, pure souls that strive in its support, and a global human and Arab nationalist sentiment that obliges individuals to stand by it and engage with its cause. The Palestinian cause provokes a deep sense of responsibility and awakens a conscious awareness of the duty to support it—through voicing opinions, taking a stand, and contributing to raising awareness of the legitimacy and justice of the cause. It is a global cause that demands accountability and justice. This awareness must be spread among others by exposing the occupation, denouncing the usurping entity, and highlighting the injustice suffered by the Palestinian people—whether through writing about the cause or participating in awareness campaigns in support of the Palestinian people.

First: The Palestinian Cause in Algerian Collective Consciousness

The honorable and revolutionary Algerian was never detached from taking pride in supporting the Palestinian cause and feeling a deep sense of loyalty to his Arab and Islamic nation. His strong sense of belonging drove him to organize various events, festivals, and activities aimed at drawing attention and rallying solidarity with the Palestinian cause. He expressed his support sincerely and selflessly—through seminars, demonstrations, artistic and cultural exhibitions, or literary evenings that celebrated the cause. Participation was broad and support unprecedented, regardless of differences in location or motivation.

Though the goal was singular—support and solidarity—the means of resistance and struggle were diverse. Each person contributed with the tools they possessed, using various forms of literature such as oratory, poetry, novels, and short stories to support and defend the Palestinian cause. Lavish poetic collections were composed, denouncing the enemy, mocking the cowardly and the indifferent, and calling for resistance, confrontation, and selflessness. These works aimed to drive out the occupier from the sacred land.

Second: El-Hacen El-Ouahidi – The Poet of the Cause

El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, the poet from Sétif, Algeria, remains one of the overlooked voices of his generation, absent from much of the literary spotlight despite being a prominent figure in the field. He carries the message of literature, having written for occasions, heritage, values, the homeland, nationalism, religion, and humanity at large. He holds a notable place in the realm of Arabic poetry, a rare echo of the great poets of the past. He masterfully composes in both classical (vertical) and modern (free verse) forms, as if it were second nature. His rich language allows him to weave profound meanings, vibrant expressions, and innovative literary devices, presenting the finest poetic images and phrases.

He spent many years tirelessly dedicated to the field of education while nurturing his poetic craft. With eloquence and poetic fluency, he produced some of the most remarkable poems across various themes, blending love for humanity and nature with patriotism, history, and Arab-Islamic nationalism. His poetry, found in his published collections, reveals an exceptional artistic vision.

The Palestinian cause holds a prominent place in his works, as he dedicated several powerful poems to it—ten of which were published in various collections. As is the tradition of many Algerian poets, El-Hacen El-Ouahidi stood firmly with Palestine, calling for solidarity, awakening determination, celebrating resistance, and expressing the necessity of protecting sanctities. Like the revered Moufdi Zakaria, he viewed it as one of the holiest causes in the conscience of Algerians and the Arab world. His poetry reflects deep loyalty and commitment to the Arab and humanitarian causes, using his pen to depict the reality of the nation, the roots of its crisis, and the path toward freedom and dignity.

Since its inception, the Palestinian cause has had a lasting impact on El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, who firmly believed in its justice and felt it was his duty to defend it based on the legitimacy of its principles. He made the pen his weapon, declaring his resistance and struggle in verse against anyone who dared violate Arab lands. For example, he lamentsⁱⁱⁱ:

“Torn is Al-Sham, Baghdad too, and Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia, and Jerusalem—what a wonder! The Arabs are left without a homeland, Scattered, turned into a nation of strangers.”

In his poem titled "*Oppressor or Oppressed?*", he affirms unwavering solidarity, brotherhood, and love for the sacred land and its neighboring capitals. He sings of freedom and the centrality of the Palestinian issue in his being—as if he were a partner in mending wounds and alleviating suffering. He places Arab unity above all, melting borders and shrinking distances as if the Arab world were one nation. Resistance becomes a legitimate path, and sacrifice a justified cause—until the very last breath. He writes^{iv}:

“Love for this land floats like a dream, From the hills of Baghdad to Cairo’s gleam. From Sham and Najd it proceeds, Till Aurès breathes a pure soul indeed. Dawn breaks, a nation awakens proud, Loyal to God, never to the crowd. It is Jerusalem—do you even know? The radiant Kaaba of ancient glow. And the bride of honor, nobly sublime, Marked by Al-Farouq with swords in time. Salah al-Din left his sword unsheathed, In the land of victory, still bequeathed.”

To denounce injustice with both tongue and heart is the weakest form of faith—how much more sacred when the issue is one of divine sanctity and place?

The poet has long accompanied the Palestinian cause, and it is ever-present in his poetry—affirming his steadfast commitment. It is the core cause in Arab consciousness and a primary measure of how truly the sons of the Arab nation uphold their existential concerns. The Palestinian cause remains the fundamental inspiration for writing and a call for unwavering defense.

Section One: Condemning Betrayal and Depicting the Crisis

In his collection "*On the Steps of Sinbad*", the poet El-Hacen El-Ouahidi presents in the poem "*Roles*" a tragic image of a defeated reality that Palestine suffers under overwhelming Arab abandonment. This is expressed through poignant questions that reflect feelings of confusion, sorrow, deep grief, and the pain of regression—where all that remains is condemnation, which has brought nothing but humiliation, submission, and disgrace. Jerusalem has become a place of exile for its people, defiled by Zionists who have established their entity upon it, while the poet highlights the suffering of the land and its free people.

These are legitimate questions stemming from a critical reality—a reality that falsely claims Arab unity and initiative in supporting the cause verbally, while in truth it reveals fragmentation and disarray in dealing with the sanctity and legitimacy of Palestine. The poet’s rhetorical questions are filled with astonishment and anger at the shallowness of positions taken, and at the trembling lackeys who have abandoned their Arab identity and surrendered to Western meddling in the sacred land, which has now become a haven for foreign settlers. He condemns their disgraceful actions, their failures, and their boastful hypocrisy, as seen in his poem "*Roles*"^v:

If they are but jailers, How, then, is Jerusalem up for sale?

The wounds of the land still bleed, While the pulse of speech deceives.

The poet denounces sharply and forcefully a state of betrayal and submission, embodied in empty practices—mere denunciations and futile shows of power that bring no real effect or gratitude. By speaking of "*Jerusalem*", this powerful religious symbol, the poem emphasizes both national and spiritual dimensions, through which the poet stirs and galvanizes the will, aiming to recharge defeated souls and awaken them from apathy.

The poet, whose sense of Arab nationalism has deeply matured and taken root, sees Palestine as his homeland. His sincere prayers for it reveal his profound emotional, patriotic, and pan-Arab sentiment, as seen when he says^{vi}:

May God protect you, O my homeland, So that your pain may not destroy you.

Thus, El-Hacen El-Ouahidi continues to dream of a homeland, striving to gather the fragments of the living conscience amid apathy, mockery, and the exploitation of the cause for personal or political gain—hoping that the usurped homeland will return to its nation, a nation whose heritage has been ravaged by dark conspiracies and whose failures have been carried out by those lacking any honor. His verses express a hopefulness rooted in divine aid—that, despite adversity, someone will arise to strengthen Palestine and lift it from its collapse.

The poet engages the reader through rhetorical questions that recur at the beginning of the poem^{vii}:

Did they unite? Did they stand together? Did they initiate? Did they submit?

These questions come in a tone of denial and disbelief, aimed at exposing the hollow positions of those in leadership roles. They intensify the urgency to find a satisfying answer for this shameful silence, reflecting a deep internal conflict in the soul of a rebellious self.

The poet expresses the enormity of submission, helplessness, and sorrow over the current state of those in power and the homeland itself. He presents a defeated reality, dissecting its causes and exposing those responsible:

They are cloaked in garments of shame, And some kinds of shame even glitter.

He vividly portrays the homeland, wounded and burdened with trials, as the weight grows heavier and the bitterness deepens. Painful images follow one another, depicting the suffering: forced displacement, the loss of land, the absence of protective eyes and hearts ready to defend it. In illustrating the degree of shame surrounding corrupt politicians, shame becomes metaphorically their "garment," a part of their identity—a deceptive adornment that polishes their image. Their dream of peace has turned into a calamity, and their submission has brought ruin upon the nation. They are the chaff—hearts hollow, and their efforts in vain.

No less powerful is his metaphor describing sacrifice:

“The wounds of the land are bleeding”

This line reflects the ongoing, deeply rooted pain endured by the people of Palestine. The poet makes powerful use of eloquent Arabic, employing expressive structures rich in strength and intensity, which convey his emotional response to the betrayal of Jerusalem.

The vocabulary of the poem exposes two distinct semantic fields:

- Submission and humiliation: *shame, calamity, clouds of oppression, lackeys.*
- Pride and dignity: *meteors, the eye, ascension or rising.*

The musicality of the poem follows the Hazaj meter, harmonizing with the emotional rhythm of the verses. We can sense a sharp tone and urgency, with a moving rhyme ending in the letter ‘Ayn (ع), paired with a consistent long ‘Alif. This combination evokes the depth of the cause, pain, and suffering, adding a steadily rising musical resonance. It suggests open emotional confession, enhancing the impact on the listener, as the rhythm fluctuates to reflect shifting feelings—from despair to cautious optimism by the poem’s end.

The text is loaded with symbolism and implied meaning. The poet invokes:

- "Jerusalem" as a sacred religious symbol—stirring passion and highlighting the necessity of its defense.
- "The homeland" as the violated land demanding sacrifice.
- "Shame," "wounds," and "clouds" as representations of the suffering of the Arab people under failed leadership and their collective challenges.

These elements together portray a difficult political and social reality that frustrates the hopes and ambitions of the Arab people. The recurring questions seek unity and agreement among the nation's sons, illustrating appearances, diagnosing the crisis, and revealing the deep anxiety and sorrow experienced by both the poet and his society.

Section Two: Awakening Resolve and Drawing Inspiration for Support

The poems of El-Hacen El-Ouahidi fall within the realm of engaged literature, which is concerned with exploring the reality of Palestine—its past, present, and future. His verses depict its suffering and catastrophe while seeking avenues of support, joining his voice with that of other poets in taking a stand. He feels a moral duty to speak out about the tragedy of a people and the identity of a nation besieged by global powers that have conspired against it. His focus is on the relationship between resistance and love for the homeland, demonstrating how symbolic spaces function as expressive mediators and objective correlatives that enrich the poetic text and reflect the depth of the experience.

In his poem for Gaza, El-Ouahidi composes a lament portraying the feeble support from the Arab world—a support that at best amounted to condemnation and a few chants. Yet, this weakness only heightened Gaza's dignity, as it draws inspiration from the glories of the Arab past rather than its present, from the heritage of forefathers rather than the lyres of descendants. In his poem "*Ode to Gaza*", he writes^{viii}:

"Our throats are too shy to utter any words, With flutes, drums, and soothing lyres, While her children bear rifles and verses, Verses of Al-Farazdaq, Al-Mutanabbi, and Darwish, And all of our Arabized poetry!"

El-Ouahidi critiques the internal disputes and divisions, and the repetitive condemnations, which led to submission, defeat, and disgrace—emboldening the enemy to escalate its brutality, appetite for land, and violations of both life and dignity. In return, the Arab world replaced honor with humiliation, while seeking aid knowing well that it is not granted without sacrifice and struggle. He exposes this shameful position in the face of the occupier's savagery^{ix}:

"We say: Have you no fear of God in us? Do you not dread the searing flame? We say: Leave the land and depart, we beg you, You are neither its companion nor its friend, And it is no companion of yours!"

What is taken by force can only be reclaimed through force. If the nation truly sought an honorable goal, it would prepare the means for it. Yet it deludes itself into thinking that victory will come without effort. Resistance, however, through resurgence and determination, is what brings liberation closer. Gaza understood that its people's suffering and steadfastness are its only shield against aggression. El-Ouahidi thus paints Gaza's resilience as arising from its harsh reality—not from hollow slogans and pompous rhetoric^x:

"Here is Gaza, Chanting a thousand anthems from Touqan's verses, She has never heard from you, Nor received any meaningful response. Here is Gaza, exposing the traitorous rabble, Plucking light from the eyes of the idle."

The reference to place (Gaza) signifies steadfastness, and in Touqan's poetry they found pride, defiance, and dignity. They have not been fooled by vain slogans cloaked in deception, nor by music, cowardice, or

pleas. El-Ouahidi glorifies the unwavering determination of the people of Gaza, who never fell prey to conspiracies nor pinned hopes on those lounging on cushions and preaching from pulpits.

In documenting the Nakba (catastrophe), El-Ouahidi aims to awaken the nation to the reality that what is taken by force cannot be reclaimed through mere condemnation or denunciation, which only results in surrender. Such reactions only embolden the Zionist occupation, allowing it to act with impunity. In his poignant poem *"The Cause"*, El-Ouahidi exposes political maneuvers that not only fail to liberate Palestine but instead serve the interests of the aggressor^{xii}:

"Seventy years... and the cause remains the same, All denounce... the same words dominate. The revered king denounces, as does the president, the prince, The imam, the ailing, the weak, The near and the far... all condemn the crimes Against our children, our women, our land... Our eternal land of peace."

The poet chronicles how the Palestinian cause has endured unchanged for seventy years, with no real progress. The tragedy persists, and the reaction remains one of empty slogans and recycled expressions—limited to denunciation and indignation. He vividly illustrates the impotence and complicity shared by kings, politicians, princes, and even the sick and elderly. All condemn "the crimes of the enemy," yet without any meaningful action.

The poems of *El-Hacen El-Ouahidi* fall within the realm of committed literature, concerned with exploring the reality of Palestine—its past, present, and future. His poetry portrays its pain, calamity, and the paths to its liberation. Adding his pen to those of other poets, El-Ouahidi expresses his position with heartfelt commitment to the tragedy of a people and the identity of a nation that has been targeted by global forces. He emphasizes the connection between resistance and patriotism, and how symbolic places become expressive mediums and objective correlatives enriching the text and reflecting the depth and nature of the experience.

El-Ouahidi composes a lament for Gaza, highlighting the feeble support from the Arab world, which rarely went beyond condemnation or patriotic chants. Yet, this weakness only increased Gaza's dignity, as it draws inspiration from the nation's glorious past rather than its present, from the heritage of the ancestors, not the lyres of descendants. In his poem *"A Song for Gaza"*, he writes^{xiii}:

"Our throats are too ashamed to echo even a word, With flutes, drums, and charming lyres, While her children carry rifles and poetry— Poetry of Al-Farazdaq, Al-Mutanabbi, Darwish, And all our grand, Arabized verse!"

Division, discord, and superficial condemnation have led to surrender, submission, and betrayal. Far from weakening the enemy, these only fueled its brutality and hunger for land, people, and dignity. Gaza, however, rejected humiliation and chose dignity and determination, realizing that liberation is not granted but earned through sacrifice. El-Ouahidi denounces the Arab world's failure to confront the savagery of occupation^{xiii}:

"We say: do you not fear God in us? Do you not fear the raging flame? We say: leave the land, begone, You are neither its companion nor friend— It does not belong to you!"

That which is taken by force can only be reclaimed by force. If the nation truly desired an honorable goal, it would have prepared for it accordingly. Victory does not come through wishful thinking but through uprising and momentum. Gaza has realized that it is only the steadfastness of its people that can halt the aggression.

El-Ouahidi portrays Gaza's position, shaped by its harsh reality, oppression, and injustice—not by empty slogans or pompous rhetoric:

"Here is Gaza, Chanting a thousand anthems of Tuqan, None of which you've heard, Nor offered a reply of your own. ... Here is Gaza, exposing the traitorous lowly, Tearing the rays from the eyes of the indolent!"

By referencing place, the poet underscores resilience. From Ibrahim Tuqan, they draw inspiration for pride and steadfastness—not for deceitful slogans wrapped in cowardice and flattery. El-Ouahidi takes pride in the determination of Gaza’s people who see through the schemes and place no hope in those lounging on cushions in silence.

In chronicling the Nakba, El-Ouahidi seeks to awaken the Arab nation, stressing that what was taken by force will not be returned through condemnation. Such methods only lead to surrender and embolden the occupier to act with impunity. In his powerful poem “*The Cause*”, he exposes political behavior that perpetuates oppression rather than working toward liberation. He writes:

"Seventy years... and the cause remains the same. All condemn... and the phrase is still repeated. The blessed king denounces... the president, the prince... The imam, the sick, the crippled, the near and the far... All denounce the crimes against our children... our women... our land— The eternal land of peace!"

Here, El-Ouahidi laments the ongoing suffering of the Palestinian cause over seventy years—its tragic situation unchanged despite decades of repeated condemnations. He depicts a reality of paralysis and complicity among leaders, kings, princes, even the ill and weak—all voicing disapproval, but offering no meaningful action.

The machine of crime reigns over the “eternal land of peace”—a paradox that reveals the chasm between the sanctity of the land and its bitter reality. The poet censures Arab silence and the superficiality of official positions, expressing deep frustration at the indifference despite the clarity of the tragedy.

In his renowned poem “*Who Can Stop Them?*”, El-Ouahidi exposes the Arab rulers who have submitted to the enemy, having lost their conscience and indulged in worldly pleasures. The poem becomes a cry to awaken them from their apathy:

"Where are the sultans who once threatened on the day of the raid? They said: We shall rise in revolution to spark the flame... But they sleep on couches, too weary to stir, Tired of bitterness, Surrounded by alluring maidens on pools of provocation..."

The poet ridicules the Arab leaders who made empty promises of resistance and dignity, then abandoned the cause. Immersed in luxury and pleasure, they turned a blind eye to their nation's pain. There is a stark contrast between lofty words and pitiful actions.

The Palestinian cause breathed new realism into El-Ouahidi’s poetry. He saw no value in condemnation or denunciation, no vengeance for Palestine, only herds echoing each other’s rhetoric—no honor, no courage, no triumph. Heroism, he suggests, exists only in bedtime stories.

In his majestic poem “*Above the Siege*”, El-Ouahidi cries out in sorrow and rage over Gaza’s suffering. He writes:

"Rise, this is Gaza the bereaved, calling you! Shake off the dust of wishes, dry your tears! Shall the free man sleep beneath trials, Wrapped in life, while death's robe is being tailored? Around him, the occupier stands inflated, The crops in his mouth reduced to dust... Believe in the faith of those who trust you, rise quickly— Do not think tyrants' swords can destroy you!"

The poet addresses the Arab nation, urging it to awaken from its slumber and take a dignified stance. Gaza calls for action, not tears. Clinging to hope without effort only weakens the nation. The poet condemns apathy, stressing that life under occupation is shameful. The enemy thrives on silence and weakness.

El-Ouahidi ties the path to victory with revolutionary preparation, drawing parallels to the Algerian resistance against French colonialism. He masterfully uses linguistic devices to reinforce his message. In “*Above the Siege*”, he proclaims^{xiv}:

"Ask Algeria, read its epics— Truth comes by the sword, not by 'perhaps'. All tyrants, though they feign peace, Have sealed hearts—stay alert and firm! What the sword seizes by force must be reclaimed the same, No homeland will be freed by your daydreams. Shun illusions, don't be fooled by their sweetness— Only the sharpness of steel revives you!"

The poet recognizes the importance of learning from history—liberation comes by force, not dreams; independence demands sacrifice. The promised victory will not come from passive hopes.

In rekindling the sanctity of the homeland—Palestine—El-Ouahidi evokes its cities and sacred symbols, calling for sacrifice and resistance. He plays on the emotional power of the land, urging those who claim to love it to act. In *"Above the Siege"*, he writes^{xv}:

"Scorch the enemy with molten fire from within you, Strike your foes with your fiercest force! Rise as a storm from the blood of the free— Revive your bones, flow like rivers! On a hill in Acre, challenge them, The lofty Dome of the Rock shall raise you! Galilee's almonds and Jaffa's shade protect you, And in Hebron, God's Friend saves you! In Bethlehem, the Virgin smiles— Telling the Christ of the martyrs' blood. The West Bank—its dream buried in its soil, And Gaza—surrounded by thorns they planted. Here is Palestine—captivity disturbs her slumber, And yesterday's qibla waters you with glad tidings!"

Through metaphor, the poet presents Palestine as a wounded captive calling for resistance and liberation. He evokes religious symbols (*Abraham, the Virgin, Christ, the Dome of the Rock*) and geographic ones (*Acre, Jaffa, Gaza, Galilee*) to inspire Arab audiences. He calls for a revolution rooted in martyrdom, blending earthly and sacred struggles—resistance demands uprising, and holy connection demands sacrifice.

The poet exalts the value of Al-Quds (Jerusalem), portraying its image as a beacon of glory, deeply rooted in its authentic history and the sacredness of its courtyards. He venerates it for its symbolism and high standing—as a space of dignity and purity—worthy of protection and resistance against those who conspire against it. He says^{xvi}:

"Al-Quds is the capital of dignity, Of tolerance and purity. Al-Quds is the land of the prophets— No usurper shall raise a beacon there. Al-Quds belongs to Islam, not To lewdness, humiliation, or filth."

Jerusalem is not like any other land—it is a symbol of pride and honor, a spiritual capital that embodies supreme values such as dignity and purity. It is the lighthouse of revelation and the land where prophets descended. The poet affirms that the occupier has no claim over it and will never have a stronghold there. He strongly rejects any profanation or degradation of its sanctity. His profound jealousy over Al-Quds and its revered status in the heart of the Islamic Ummah is evident, and his tone of rejection toward occupation and moral decay is forceful.

Section three: Representations and Symbolism

El-Hacen El-Ouahidi presents a vivid image of the militant Arab who limits himself to condemnation and protest—"our tired throats." He contrasts this with the image of the steadfast Palestinian fighter. The people are portrayed as burdened by suffering, their voices hoarse, their bodies exhausted. The expression "our shoulders repel each other" signals disunity and fragmentation of stance. The word *"repel"* suggests discord and lack of cohesion.

The image of "its children carrying rifles and poetry" embodies the spirit of challenge and resilience among Gaza's youth. Their resistance employs various means, and poetry becomes a source of valor and connection to cultural heritage. When he says, *"Gaza is not dying yet,"* he reveals their enduring resilience despite all adversities.

Culturally, El-Ouahidi draws deeply from the rich Arab literary heritage, referencing figures like Al-Farazdaq, Al-Mutanabbi, and Mahmoud Darwish, signaling the roots of Arab literary identity that reinforce the profound refusal of injustice and the virtue of perseverance.

By contemplating El-Ouahidi's poetry, we discover a living model of engaged poetry that, through Arab nationalism, embraces the wounded cause of Palestine—a cause that has not found an honorable stance from a defeated nation. The poet's stance aligns with his religious faith, compelling him to defend it by the least of means—by invoking the religious symbols tied to Jerusalem. In his poem "*The Lady of Cities*," he says^{xvii}:

O Quds, never shall your land be sold cheaply, Nor shall your courtyards—trampled by Taba—be disgraced. Al-Farouq clothed you with noble garments, And in you walked Issa, the spirit of the Creator, and gave you life. O capital of faith, peace upon you...

This poem reflects the sacred value of Jerusalem, a city under siege because it is the holiest symbol and the heritage of prophets. Its value deserves sacrifice, martyrdom, and devotion. It is the land where the Prophet walked, and where Jesus, son of Mary, once lived, and it was honored by Al-Farouq Umar Ibn Al-Khattab.

In his poem "*A Song for Gaza*," El-Ouahidi again invokes literary symbols, referring to Al-Farazdaq, Al-Mutanabbi, and Darwich—figures who inspired Gaza's children with strength, determination, and poetic force. Their verses pierce hearts and awaken zeal. He alludes to the power of poetry as a weapon as potent as the sword and rifle, saying^{xviii}:

Our throats are ashamed to repeat certain words, Flute, tambourine, and charming lyre— While Gaza's children carry rifles and poetry, The poetry of Al-Farazdaq, Al-Mutanabbi, and Darwich, And all our proud Arab verses.

What characterizes Algerian poetry in addressing the Palestinian cause is the rejection of surrender and submission, and the call for unity and solidarity to confront the Arab nation's foremost enemy. The poet urges the breaking of the siege and the chains, transforming oppression into an epic of mobilized resolve. He decries calls for peace and negotiations over a stolen land and dignity. To seek an honorable death is to be granted a noble life.

The poet El-Hacen El-Ouahidi profoundly stirs the soul when he concludes his poem with:

The gate of life is knocked by the hand of death. Chains may crush you, but the blood-red builds you again.

The poems display varied structures:

- Four follow traditional vertical prosody using meters such as Al-Hazaj, Al-Basit, and Al-Raml.
- Six are written in free verse, drawing from pure meters like Al-Kamil, Al-Mutakarib, and Al-Khabbab.

These rhythms enrich the emotional experience and harmonize with the intensity of the poetic moment.

The poet repeatedly uses interrogative tools like "*hal*" and the Hamza, and negation structures to reinforce confusion and rebuke toward those who betray the cause. Word choices—such as the repetition of "*Here is Gaza*"—infuse the poem with emotional depth and remind the reader of the perseverance and resistance. These repetitions underscore the continued call for struggle and confront those who seek to erase the memory of the nation or marginalize its cause.

The musicality of the poems emphasizes the central role of poetry in preserving memory and encouraging ongoing resistance.

Section Four: The Artistic Features That Distinguished El-Hacen El-Ouahidi's Poetry

Algerian poetry addressed the Palestinian cause from a religious, nationalist, and humanistic perspective, calling for resistance against the occupation by all means capable of curbing its brutality and confronting the crimes it relentlessly committed—such as killings, displacement, and forced migration.

The revolutionary spirit was seen as the path to salvation and the most effective solution for shortening the lifespan of the Zionist entity. While the poet employed a variety of poetic forms across his ten poems—alternating between classical Khalilian verse and free verse—they were, on the whole, filled with genuine revolutionary meaning, profound content, and a deep commitment to the Palestinian cause. His poetry condemned collaborators, traitors, and sycophants, and awakened the living souls imbued with steadfast faith to fight for the liberation of the land at any cost.

The Palestinian cause enriched the language of the Algerian poet El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, allowing him to establish concepts, themes, symbols, and meanings rich with historical, social, and political dimensions. As the Palestinian issue remains a just Arab national cause, it demands continued allegiance. El-Ouahidi skillfully employed a refined and inspiring language, and his poetic talent was evident in the creation of vivid imagery that conveyed deep meanings. He carefully selected his words and expressions to serve as a weapon of resistance, embodying the culture of defiance. Into this poetry, he poured his emotions and gauged its impact like a precise strike.

The poet dedicated a special place to his poem “The Cause”, the longest among his collections, reflecting the central importance of the Palestinian cause in his work. It served as a driving force in his poetic experience, with a tone full of weariness, sarcasm, and satire directed at the ways in which the Palestinian tragedy was handled—an issue that threatens Arab nationalism. He believed the crisis lay in the weak stances of Arab regimes that exploited the cause for their own interests, showing humiliation and selling illusions, content with mere condemnation, denunciation, and worn-out slogans. As he wrote^{xix}:

“The same phrases once said, are said again... And will remain the lead theme in all conferences... No... but... yes... no... indeed... If... perhaps... maybe... shall... will... Words and speeches are repeated... And the meaning remains the same—we denounce, while the rifles lie still... We continue to denounce... while the swords sleep in their sheaths... we keep denouncing... While the armies lazily build their idle barracks...”

The poet aligned himself with the stance of the Arab peoples betrayed by their leaders, adopting in his verses a clear and truthful position. He exposed political practices where leaders gather around negotiation tables only to submit, with no real intent other than to display armies that never raise weapons—except against their own people. Thus, nothing changed, except the timing, as he said^{xx}:

“How often have we heard it repeated from the pulpits— Like sermons and solemn advice... Seventy years, and the talk remains the same, The only thing that changed in the cause was the timing of the siege... We memorized all the eloquent speeches— They became poetry we recite Every time stories of heroism are told to children. Rejection, denunciation, threats, and strong condemnations, And the filing of complaints against the aggressor. To the so-called secured United Nations Security Council...”

He concludes his speech with a clear and blunt truth: that stolen rights cannot be reclaimed through submission, which only brings more dispersion, exile, and siege. The hope of return seems far-fetched, as he writes^{xxi}:

“And when will you return the beloved, gentlemen? When will we see her free and joyful, Embraced by spring, and radiant once more? They said: Perhaps... after the devastation!! Thank you... a thank you overflowing with your honesty, Overflowing with your courage... and thanks again For this decision!”

The poet conveys in his poems a series of messages—each a reflection born from the wounds of defeat. There is no point in councils that have become no more than banquets, while the wound deepens and the

tragedy lingers on every face. Hopes fade, and the scenes of despair offer no glimpse of a near dawn. This sentiment is evident in his poem “*The Secret of the Wounded*” where he writes^{xxii}:

Why does life grow harsher? And this universe—its lie seems real! Why does the dawn not return, smiling lips flirting with the lovely world? Here, poetry loses its path, and inspiration falters! The ears of hope are deaf—they do not bear its hiss! What does the shrouded wound conceal? Her glances are gunpowder shots with no sound, And sighs wrestled by sleepy eyes, Where ugly feelings disappear.

In a position rejecting all forms of compromise with the occupation and its collaborators, the poet understood the impact of betrayal in breaking weak and cowardly spirits. Thus, when portraying these stances, he exposes the hesitant and the fearmongers among the traitors, using rhetorical techniques such as intimidation, mockery, and sarcasm. In his poem “*The Cause*”, he says^{xxiii}:

“We will reclaim it... peacefully! Do not rush, do not declare war... No... do not get angry, do not condemn, do not reject, no... no... No... no... do not revolt, be calm. Endure! For the reward of patience is martyrdom, safety, and the rank of the noble, And a green paradise filled with fruits...”

Thus, the Palestinian cause remained static since the Nakba, just as the behavior of the collaborators—these idols of international forums—remained stagnant. Their hollow rhetoric, endlessly repeated by hesitant tongues, has neither reached glory nor achieved liberation or self-assertion.

El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, the Algerian poet, remains one of the committed Arab poets who understood the power of the word and the necessity of perpetual struggle.

Conclusion

El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, the Algerian poet, is among the committed Arab poets who grasped the value of the word and believed that the struggle must persist—never relying on peace, for peace is a language the occupier does not understand. He affirmed that the true response to aggression lies in bullets, resistance, and martyrdom.

It is not surprising that Algerian poets “stood out with this vision of the greater homeland, for they themselves were unique in their suffering and torment. Thus, the tragedies of the Arab-Islamic nation appeared particularly painful to them, enveloping their poems in Arab-Islamic grief and coloring them sometimes with tones of jihad, and at other times with somber shades^{xxiv}. This was an echo of their own turbulent reality. They saw Algeria’s tragedy reflected in the broader tragedies of the Arab and Islamic world. Wherever the Arab world suffered, the Algerian poet sang and echoed that suffering in his own resonant voice.”

The distinguishing features of El-Hacen El-Ouahidi’s poetry on the Palestinian cause include:

- Treating the Palestinian issue as existential, stemming from religious, national, and humanitarian belonging.
- Going beyond traditional Khalilian classical verse by embracing free verse (shi’r al-tafila) enriched with revolutionary themes—rejecting betrayal, submission, and passivity—often attacking collaborators, those who feign indifference, and the justifiers among the Arab tribes.
- Affirming that Algerian poets continue to engage with Palestinian affairs and developments, maintaining their commitment and loyalty to the Arab-Islamic nationalist cause.
- Highlighting that the Palestinian cause remains a primary source of inspiration for writers and poets who rose to defend it and stand with its oppressed and displaced people. Their poetry overflows with emotion, deep symbolism, and serves to raise awareness among generations about the dangers

threatening Palestine. They depicted the suffering of the Palestinian people and infused their verses with passion, revolution, and rejection of all conciliatory approaches to the conflict.

The poet sought to explore the relationship between Arabs and their Arab identity, which remains intertwined with religion, heritage, and collective destiny—especially in light of the ideological transformations that have shaped the contemporary Algerian poetic experience. This poetry represents a culmination of his efforts in the literature of resistance, focusing on two levels:

He tackled the core of the Palestinian cause—a conflict between indigenous Palestinians and Zionist occupiers, who established a state on land they wrongfully seized. He exposed the behavior of those who trade in the cause, who leaned toward a peace that was never a real means to repel aggression or restore the homeland.

The poems varied between classical (vertical) verse and free verse, with a wide range in tone and emotional intensity. El-Hacen El-Ouahidi did not stop at depicting suffering; he also highlighted Palestinian resilience, as well as the degrees of humiliation, submission, and degradation. He called for revolution and the declaration of jihad, using different rhythmic patterns—such as hazaj, rajaz, mutaḡārib, kāmil, and khabab—to ignite enthusiasm, emotional fervor, and a fighting spirit, energizing Algerian and Arab audiences alike and vowing revenge and defense of Jerusalem.

He depicted the core struggle between the indigenous Palestinian people and the Zionist occupiers who usurped their land unjustly. He unmasked those who traded in the cause and leaned on peace—a path that never served to fend off aggression or reclaim homeland. Therefore, the Palestinian cause has always been and continues to be the central issue in the consciousness of the Algerian people, despite their own repression and isolation. The wars in Palestine have motivated Algerians to volunteer, donate, and take up arms, just as they have driven poets to embrace these battles.

The poet depicted various forms of Arab fragmentation, disunity, loss, and division, as well as the Palestinian people's suffering—humiliation, displacement, killing, and exile—intended to eradicate armed resistance, all amid a disgraceful Arab silence and empty slogans that denounce aggression while calling for peace and negotiations^{xxv}.

Algerian poetry addressing the Palestinian cause continues to resonate proudly, calling for Arab unity and nationalism. It remains highly responsive to the developments of the cause, to the point that it may be considered a form of "literature of the moment", written in synchrony with unfolding events. In all his poems, El-Hacen El-Ouahidi reaffirmed that the aspirations of the Arab nation depend on resistance, the elimination of betrayal and treason, the rejection of hollow slogans, and the refusal of all complicity in scattering efforts aimed at dismantling Arab unity

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ⁱ See: Mohamed El-Bachir El-Ibrahimi, *Is There a Holiday for Those Who Lost Palestine?*, Al-Ikhwa Al-Islamiyya Magazine, Al-Khaldounia Publishing House, Baghdad, Issue 15, 12/06/1953, p. 57. Also see: *The Works of El-Ibrahimi*, Vol. 4, Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, Beirut, 1997, p. 215.

ⁱⁱ See: Abdelrahman Chibane, *Algeria and Palestine: Between the Power of Justice and the Justice of Power*, Al-Khaldounia Publishing, Algeria, 2010, p. 57.

ⁱⁱⁱ See: El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *In the Footsteps of Sindbad*, Dar Al-Tanweer, Algeria, 1st edition, 2022, p. 47.

^{iv} See: El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *From the Depths of My Country*, Dar Al-Badr Al-Satea, El Eulma, Algeria, 1st edition, 2023, p. 68.

^v See: El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *In the Footsteps of Sindbad*, Dar Al-Tanweer, Algeria, 1st edition, 2022, p. 49.

^{vi} See: El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *In the Footsteps of Sindbad*, Dar Al-Tanweer, Algeria, 1st edition, 2022, p. 49.

^{vii} See: El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *In the Footsteps of Sindbad*, Dar Al-Tanweer, Algeria, 1st edition, 2022, p. 49.

^{viii} See: El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *In the Footsteps of Sindbad*, Dar Al-Tanweer, Algeria, 1st edition, 2022, pp. 54–57.

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- ^{ix} See: El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *In the Footsteps of Sindbad*, Dar Al-Tanweer, Algeria, 1st edition, 2022, p. 55.
- ^x See: El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *In the Footsteps of Sindbad*, Dar Al-Tanweer, Algeria, 1st edition, 2022, p. 56.
- ^{xi} See: El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *From the Depths of My Country*, Dar Al-Badr Al-Satea, El Eulma – Algeria, 1st edition, 2023, p. 96.
- ^{xii} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Sur les traces de Sindbad*, Dar Al-Tanwir, Algeria, 1st ed., 2022, p. 56.
- ^{xiii} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Chants spirituels (Taranim)*, Dar Al-Tanwir, Algeria, 1st ed., 2012, p. 121.
- ^{xiv} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Chants spirituels (Taranim)*, Dar Al-Tanwir, Algeria, 1st ed., 2012, p. 128.
- ^{xv} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Chants spirituels (Taranim)*, Dar Al-Tanwir, Algeria, 1st ed., 2012, pp. 123–124.
- ^{xvi} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Des entrailles de ma patrie*, Dar Al-Badr Al-Sate', El-Eulma – Algeria, 1st ed., 2023, p. 74.
- ^{xvii} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Des entrailles de ma patrie*, Dar Al-Badr Al-Sate', El-Eulma, 1st ed., 2023, p. 87.
- ^{xviii} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Sur les traces de Sindbad*, Dar Al-Tanwir, Algeria, 1st ed., 2022, p. 54.
- ^{xix} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Des entrailles de ma patrie*, Dar Al-Badr Al-Sate', El-Eulma – Algeria, 1st ed., 2023, p. 96.
- ^{xx} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Des entrailles de ma patrie*, Dar Al-Badr Al-Sate', El-Eulma – Algeria, 1st ed., 2023, p. 101.
- ^{xxi} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Des entrailles de ma patrie*, Dar Al-Badr Al-Sate', El-Eulma – Algeria, 1st ed., 2023, p. 101.
- ^{xxii} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Des entrailles de ma patrie*, Dar Al-Badr Al-Sate', El-Eulma – Algeria, 1st ed., 2023, p. 94.
- ^{xxiii} El-Hacen El-Ouahidi, *Des entrailles de ma patrie*, Dar Al-Badr Al-Sate', El-Eulma, 1st ed., 2023, p. 96.
- ^{xxiv} Mohamed Zghina, *Poètes de l'Association des Oulémas Musulmans Algériens*, Dar Al-Houda for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, Aïn M'lila – Algeria, 2005, p. 118.
- ^{xxv} Abou El Kacem Saadallah, *Mohamed El-Aïd Khalifa, Pionnier de la poésie algérienne à l'époque moderne*, Dar Al-Maaref, Egypt, 2nd ed., 1968, pp. 191–192.