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Literature
Confronting Mortality

المرثية والتحريض الثوري :
الشعر ، والحداد ، وانتفاضة طلاب يناير ١٩٧٢

إليوت كولا

تستكشف هذه المقالة دور الرثاء في ثقافة الاحتجاج المصرية بعد عام ١٩٦٧ . ورغم أنه عادةً ما يتم حصر دراسة المرثية ضمن نموذج نفسي فردي ، إلا أن مرثيات الاحتجاج المصرية تشير إلى الأبعاد الجماعية لهذا الجنس الأدبي ، حيث يشكل أداء المرثية جزءاً أساسياً من الممارسات التذكارية للحركات الاجتماعية ، التي بدورها تجعل من مناسبات الحداد فرصاً لتجمع الناشطين وتركيز النضال . من هذا المنطلق ، تحلل المقالة نصوصاً شعريةٍ لكل من زين العابدين فؤاد ، وأحمد فؤاد نجم ، وأمل دنقل ، موضحةً تأطيرها الخطاب السياسي وتقديمها سرديات بطولية ومأساوية تحريضية .

إليوت كولا أستاذ مشارك في قسم الدراسات العربية والإسلامية بجامعة جورجتاون في واشنطن . تركز أبحاثه على الأدب المصري الحديث ، ونظرية الحركات الاجتماعية ، ودراسات الأداء . قام بتأليف كتاب بالإنجليزية بعنوان **الآثار المتضاربة** وترجمة العديد من الروايات العربية إلى الإنجليزية ، ومن ضمنها **مالك الحزين** لإبراهيم أصلان والتبر لإبراهيم الكوني .

Elegy and Mobilization: Poetry, Mourning, and the Student Uprising of January 1972

Elliott Colla

For much of January 1972, Egyptian university students staged protests on the campuses of Cairo University and Ain Shams University, holding teach-ins, mass assemblies, and sit-ins of a magnitude not seen since the protests of 1968.[1] There were at least two immediate triggers for the protests. The initial spark was a Palestine solidarity exhibit organized by a student group–"The Society of Supporters of Palestinian Revolution"–in the Faculty of Engineering at Cairo University. The second was President Anwar Sadat's national address on 13 January in which he announced that military engagement with Israel would be postponed yet again. Sadat blamed his military inaction on the "fog" caused by the civil war in Pakistan; to most, the claim sounded like another prolongation of the "no peace, no war" strategy that Sadat had followed since coming to power.[2]

Student militants from the Palestine solidarity group used the reaction to Sadat's speech to create a broader campus debate through teach-ins and public forums whose activities grew in size and intensity over the next week. As student accounts of the period make clear, the issue of Palestine was not separate from that of Egypt, since both peoples were fighting to liberate their national territories from the same enemy (Sha'bān, *Inḥazt* 88-106). The real possibility that Sadat was seeking to disentangle Egyptian claims from Palestinian ones indicated surrender. This sentiment recurred often in the slogans of the protests:

Anwar Bey, Anwar Bey/Why have you sold Egypt?

O you who have sold out Palestine/To whom will you sell the Egyptian people?

> The Zionist is on my land/The secret police is at my door! (Amīn 53-54)[3]

The protest became more organized on 19 January, when a group of Engineering students formed a new "National Student Committee" independent from official patronage networks. This committee then promptly decided to mount an open-ended strike and occupation of the campus. Activists used mimeograph machines in administrative offices to publish "wall-magazine"[4] broadsheets inviting students from all the faculties of Cairo University to join the strike.

By early morning 20 January, banners and posters covered the campus. Hundreds of students assembled at the Ṣāwī Lecture Hall at the Faculty of Engineering, then marched toward the front entrance. As they marched, they chanted:

> Clench your fingers, make a fist/Strike with your hand/The land is your land/Even if the stranger holds it in his clutch!

> The blood of our brothers is no sacrifice/No to the collaborators, and no to the Americans! (Asʿad 61)

The procession soon arrived at the main event hall of Cairo University, and forced open the doors. There, student activists announced the convening of "The First General Nationalist Student Conference," under the auspices of "The National High Committee of Cairo University Students" whose leaders, drawn from various faculties, included Aḥmad ʿAbdallah Rozza,[5] Aḥmad Bahāʾ al-Dīn Shaʿbān, Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Fūʾād, Hānī Idwārd, and Shawqī al-Kurdī. By the time the conference was ready to begin, the crowd of students had grown to 10,000 or more. One professor estimated the size to be double that (Shukrī 113), making this the largest protest event since the mass demonstrations of 1968 in which students had also played a leading role (Hussein 270-316; al-Salāmūni). The conference got off to a start with student leader (and poet) Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Fūʾād reading his elegy, "Ughniyya ilā ʿAbd al-Ḥakam al-Gar-

rāḥī" ("Song for Abdel Hakam al-Garrahi"). The poem opens with these lines:

> I'm writing to you
> To erase the shame of fear and trembling from my
>   heart
> To wash from my feet the indignity of standing
>   motionless
> I write to you
> To escape the death inside me
> With mine, your hands lift the banner. (Fū'ād 53)

Fū'ād had composed his elegy almost five years earlier, in the immediate wake of the June 1967 Defeat (*al-Naksa*). These first lines resonate deeply with the confusion and self-blame in the writing of that moment. But the poet's choice of subject was itself based upon a long-standing set of commemorative institutions and narratives of heroic student sacrifice that were familiar to his audience in 1972.

Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥakam al-Garrāḥī (1915-1935) was a university student, poet, and translator of Charles Baudelaire, and one of the leaders in the 1935 protests against British rule. Since Garrāḥi's story is crucial to the meaning of Fū'ād's poem, it is worth retelling. On 14 November 1935, a large procession of university students attempted to cross the Nile in order to protest at 'Ābdīn Palace (Sha'bān, *Ḥikāyat* 53-55). Led by a flag-bearing student, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Majīd Mursī, the protesters were met by armed police at 'Abbās Bridge. When Mursī was gunned down, Garrāḥi picked up the flag and continued, leading the protesters toward the ranks of police. Garrāḥi was shot 13 times, but marched onward until he fell. Taken to hospital, doctors managed to remove eight bullets from his body. For five days he struggled before he finally succumbed to his injuries.[6]

Before passing, Garrāḥi self-consciously cast himself in the role of martyr-to-be in the Egyptian national liberation struggle. In one public letter from his deathbed,[7] Garrāḥi addressed the British Prime Minister:

One of your stupid men shot me with his bullet. Now, I march slowly toward my own death. But I am content to let my spirit depart and to sacrifice my blood. Death is but a trifle, and its pangs are sweet to taste. . . . Long live Egypt! Egypt above all! Long live our sacrifice! Down with colonialism! (qtd. in Abū Ghāzi)

Many important dignitaries visited Garrāḥi in hospital. When he died, he was given an official state burial that was attended by government ministers, university deans, and public figures.

In the months and years that followed, Garrāḥi's name was commemorated in other ways. On the campus of Fū'ād University (later The Egyptian University, then Cairo University), a monument was erected to student martyrs. On it, Garrāḥi's departing words are prominently featured. At the same time, university students are said to have routinely invoked Garrāḥi's name in anti-British demonstrations during the 1940s, chanting the slogan:

'Abd al-Majīd
Has come back again
You've picked up the flag
O 'Abd al-Ḥakam! (Rabī'ī)

One of the most active student organizations at Cairo University during the early 1970s was named after Garrāḥi; a second was named after Mursī. All of this is to say that by the time Fū'ād stood up to read his poem on the morning of 20 January 1972, he knew that Garrāḥi's name would not just resonate with his audience, but also create a vibrant link between places, events, and figures past and present.

Fū'ād's elegy contains motifs of redemption, rebirth, and transcendence that are conventional in the genre. In the first stanza, the poet focuses not so much on the death of the hero (in 1935) as on himself (in 1967), inactive, passive, and motionless. The cursory reference to standing appears to refer to the classical motif of *al-wuqūf 'alā al-aṭlāl*, the convention of discoursing on

loss by way of standing–and weeping–at the abandoned encampments. It is also a place of witness: to mourn the event of loss is to validate its reality.

The tone in the opening lines is one of condemnation and blame. The "indignity of standing" here has to do with the fact that this witness is motionless: he is no agent, but mere spectator. The poet rebukes himself for failing to "call out" and for "sitting . . . in order to flee" (Fū'ād 54). The implication is that, in failing to act and keeping quiet (in 1967), the poet has soiled the memory of Garrāḥi's sacrifice (in 1935), and become (retroactively) complicit in Garrāḥi's murder. While the focus of the first stanza is on the poet's interior state, a clear comparison emerges between a past of heroic sacrifice and glory (1935) and a present of shame and degradation (in 1967).

In the second stanza, the poet reframes Garrāḥi's death as part of a longer history in which a long line of unnamed heroes step forward to make their sacrifices. Then, through an extended metaphor, the exhausted poet imagines himself (and redeems his past inaction) in two ways: first, as Mursī, the student who fell and dropped the flag that Garrāḥi picked up; second, as heir to Garrāḥi, whose example allows him to pick up his own pen when it falls. In this way, Garrāḥi's flag becomes the poet's banner:

> I can no longer hold this pen
> Raise your flag
> You were not the first
> Nor the last
> To raise my flag. (Fū'ād 56)

If the first stanza compares the two periods of time–1935 and 1967–in order to contrast them and keep them apart, the second stanza collapses these times into a single narrative of ongoing, collective struggle. Within this deeper narrative, the sacrifice of Garrāḥi is not a past event, but one still alive, still happening in the present. The poem concludes by offering a cosmic temporality connecting past and present–loss and trauma–with a future of redemptive action and possibility. When Fū'ād then performed it

live for those thousands of students, he was effectively folding that moment–20 January 1972–into the same narrative, and calling for his fellow students to pick up the flag that dropped in 1935.

Other poems would be recited during the Student Uprising of 1972, but I begin with Fū'ād's poem because it shows how elegy, even while invoking a language of loss and mourning, can mobilize activists within a narrative of action. When Fū'ād stepped onto the stage that morning, he did so both as student leader and as poet. This point underscores the centrality of poetic practices in the protest cycle that began with the anti-corruption protests of 1968, continued with the student uprisings of 1972 and 1973, and the labor strikes of 1974-1975, and arguably concluded only with the Bread Uprising of January 1977. Poetry appears everywhere in student accounts from this period, both those whose political nature was not always explicit and also in direct political actions: this poetry (written in small literary journals and the "wall-newspapers" of campus clubs and groups) was recited at regular meetings and teach-ins, and sung at concerts, assemblies, demonstrations, marches, and occupations. Poetry was so integral to student repertoires that participants almost always engaged in some activity involving poetic text–declaiming, chanting, and singing–when they staged campus strikes and sit-ins, or when they took to the streets. For student activists, poetry and politics were not separate and discrete activities, but rather formed a "concatenation of art and politics" wherein each kind of performance fueled the other (Raunig 263).

This article explores "Egyptian movement poetry" (see Colla) by way of analyzing three key examples of colloquial Egyptian elegy (*rithā'*) that were part of the protest repertoires of the Student Uprising of January 1972, and one elegy composed in Modern Standard Arabic. Despite their differences, they challenge some of the critical assumptions about elegy, by which I mean the tendency to treat elegy as having to do with individual loss, grief, and consolation which are themselves understood in psychological, philosophical, or spiritual terms. In his classic study of the English elegiac tradition, for instance, Peter Sacks frames the genre in terms that elide psychic and literary activity:

> Each elegy is to be regarded, therefore, as a work,
> both in the commonly accepted meaning of a prod-
> uct and in the more dynamic sense of the working
> through of an impulse or experience–the sense that
> underlies Freud's phrase "the work of mourning." (1)

While most scholars have moved beyond Sacks's theoretical framework, the psychological, individualizing frame contin-ues to dominate the topic, at least in English literary studies (Ramazani 1-31).

In contrast, while studies of the classical (and modern) Ar-abic *rithā'* do not readily assume a psychological approach, they also focus on the individual figure of the grieving poet. Mag-da al-Nowaihi's comments on Arabic elegy, for example, touch on the conventions of the genre–such as complaint, guilt, and blame–that might rightly be described as "psychological." Yet the crux of Arabic elegy in her account is to be found in ex-istential, philosophical struggles between mortality and immor-tality, memory and erasure (see al-Nowaihi). Nonetheless, these agonistics are presented as individual in nature. Similarly, Marlé Hammond's account, which focuses on the gendered nature of the genre, also presents the theme of loss and bereavement as largely personal in nature.

My intention in drawing attention to the "personal" incli-nation of the critical literature on elegy is not to indicate error. In each of the above cases, the authors have good reason to focus on the poetic expression of individual, even private, experience. Indeed, in the case of Fū'ād's elegy above, we can see the poet grappling with loss experienced as deeply personal and within the solitary confines of a private room. And yet, in public perfor-mance, the arc of the poem moves from the individual, interior experience of loss toward an outwardly-focused common strug-gle. And it is this movement that I want to underscore in this es-say: Fū'ād's elegy begins by speaking in the register of personal loss; but in performance, its collective dimensions begin to show. The other elegies I will consider here may have been composed as meditations on private grief, but their performance, as part of protest repertoires, indicates that they are not primarily "working

through" a process of mourning, nor offering aesthetic consolation for psychological loss. Instead, they are texts designed to move public audiences toward collective action.

It is no accident that "movement elegies" such as Fū'ād's draw on the social and collective features of classical Arabic elegy that push the poetry beyond individual experience in clear ways. For instance, Fū'ād's poem echoes the classical *marthiyya* (elegy), wherein poets create a sense of identity between themselves and the object of mourning such that "the distinction between the elegizer and the elegized collapses" (Stetkevych 297). Moreover, just as Egyptian neoclassical poets composed elegies for public officials, movement poets like Fū'ād confidently assume a common set of values with their audiences in order to create a sense of shared moral responsibility for the losses incurred (Noorani 40). Finally, even as these movement elegies express grief, they seek collective justice, not private consolation. Indeed, much like the pre-Islamic *marthiyya*, they sometimes advocate retributive action (Homerin 541-42). These, then, are three important dimensions of the elegies under consideration here: one involving the poet's relation to the object of grief articulated as social rather than purely individual; a second involving the poet's membership in the same moral community as his audience; and a third involving incitement to act in the name of justice.

To draw out the collective, performed dimension of elegy within the student movement, I will rely on concepts drawn from social movement theory. The choice is not arbitrary, since this scholarship recognizes the social and political dimensions of commemoration. Social movements may not welcome death, but they routinely embrace funereal practices as opportunities for assembling cadres and raising consciousness. For this reason, in the Arab world (as elsewhere), protest actions often move to the rhythms of burial processions, funerals, and mourning commemorations. In this context, elegy performances can be understood as clear examples of framing activities that provide "an interpretive schemata that signifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action in one's present or past environment" (Steinberg 845).

According to leading social movement theorists, a successful frame contains three elements:

> a diagnosis of some event or aspect of social life as problematic and in need of alteration; a proposed solution to the diagnosed problem that specifies what needs to be done; and a call to arms or rationale for engaging in ameliorative or corrective action. (Snow and Benford 199)

But, elegy performances cannot be reduced to the semantic elements of thematizing issues, articulating complaints, and setting demands. Indeed, the gathering of activists for funerals and commemoration is itself an instance of mobilization. Thus, if we shift focus beyond the purely linguistic aspects of the collective performance of elegy, we can grasp that the force of these elegies is not only contained in what the poems say, but also in what they can do.

In her pathbreaking study of Palestinian national commemoration, Laleh Khalili explores the many practices and institutions of social movement commemoration, including the display of martyr photographs, posters, and murals; funerals; the honoring of martyrs' mothers; the creation of special sites of memory; and public rituals of procession and visitation (117-39). The kind of commemoration Khalili explores is not about individual cognition, but rather social practice: "This heuristic shift externalizes remembering, and allows us to look at processes of remembering and commemorating in a social setting and in relation to particular audiences and contexts" (4). Building on Khalili's scholarship, I observe that the public performance of elegy was a crucial practice within student movement repertoires of the 1970s. The meaning of these poems as performed transcended the semantic text: audiences participated actively alongside (and in conversation with) performers, and this gave the events an embodied, collective affect which may have been more "meaningful" to actors than mere words. The public, shared sense of these texts only grew with time, since after initial performances, these poems have continued to circulate in repeated recitation,

song, discussion, and citation. Indeed, some of the poems discussed here are not only actively remembered, but remain a core part of Egyptian social movement repertoires to this day. Their resonance goes well beyond Egypt's borders: these elegiac performances also echo similar phenomena in the Arab world (and elsewhere) where social movements have memorialized the dead in order to frame questions of political virtue, diagnose chronic social problems, and call for direct action (Armbrust 53-123; Deeb 129-64; Jarman 136-58).

    In the argument that follows, I will turn to two well-known elegies by Ahmed Fouad Negm–"Jīvārā māt" ("Guevara's Died") and "Ba'arit ḥāḥā" ("The Ha-ha Cow")–that were standards of post-1967 protest repertoire so as to develop the narrative entailments that make elegy and commemoration so useful as framing and mobilizing techniques. I will then conclude with an extended reading of Amal Dunqul's elegy for the students' occupation of Tahrir Square, "Ughniyyat al-ka'ka al-ḥajariyya" ("Stone Cake Song").

Heroic and Tragic Narratives

    The poetic repertoire of the 1970s student movement is a varied one which included various genres and themes, from poems of complaint (*shakwa*) and incitement (*taḥrīḍ*), to poems of encouragement of bravery (*ḥamāsa*) and demand (*maṭālib*), to name just a few. In this, they resonated with the various genres of slogans and chants in Egyptian protest culture (Mughīth 270-77). Like these other genres, elegy accomplished a number of critical framing tasks: educating audiences about events that may not be commonly known; naming actors as protagonists and villains; assigning coherent moral values to various kinds of action. Arguably, elegy stands apart from other genres by virtue of at least three unique dynamics. First, because elegy marks a direct response to the universal fact of human mortality, it has a wider appeal than other genres whose subjects are particular. Second, elegy possesses a uniquely organic connection to pre-existing social conventions, rituals, and calendars (such as funerals, commemorations, and anniversaries). Third, given

the theme of death, elegy has an inimitable capacity to generate collective affects, such as shame and guilt, and to channel them into others, such as anger and outrage, which have special significance for mobilization.

Khalili argues that whether or not commemorations directly engage in storytelling, they invariably entail narratives that arrange events in a particular order and give moral–and political–shape to actions and characters (5). The public performance of elegy could be understood in the same light, that is, as yet another genre of public commemoration. By the same token, what Khalili observes about two different modes of narrative–one "heroic" and one "tragic"–might also apply to elegy.

In Khalili's account, the heroic narrative is distinguished by two contrasting temporalities: an exulted past and a degraded present (81). This parallel temporal structure generates rich possibilities for comparison and contrast–between past and present, glory and shame, departure and return. In this way, the battlefield–and the recounting of battles–looms large in the heroic narrative, as the time-place where these temporal conflicts are resolved (Khalili 94). Heroic death in battle is not death, but rather a kind of "defiance" even in death. Thus, the heroic narrative replaces grief with exultation, and doubt with the certainty of future victory (94). Two more aspects of Khalili's account are crucial here. The first has to do with virtue and moral community: if the heroic narrative is able to generate bonds of identity within a group across temporal divides, it does so only while also setting the group against an opponent. It creates a historical sense of an "us" struggling against "them." Second, the story of the fallen hero (martyr) "obliges survivors to persevere in resistance," and "prevents compromise" (94). It commands witnesses to not forget, not forgive, and not surrender. Both of these elements were to be found in Fū'ād's elegy as my analysis has shown.

We can also see these same features on full display in Ahmed Fouad Negm's 1968 poem "Jīvārā māt." The title of Negm's elegy is ironic since the deeper purpose of the poem is to deny death itself. It does this by situating the event of death within the wider context of Third-World revolution, of which Guevara was most emblematic. Guevara was no stranger

to Egypt: his theories of popular revolution were discussed in the leftist press (see ʿAbd al-Qādir; Salah ʿĪsa; Morsi), and he visited the country twice (Di-Capua 172-74; 188-90). During his second visit, in 1965, Guevara was given a warm state reception by state officials, labor militants, and peasant activists.[8] In October 1967, while in Bolivia, he was captured and executed there by CIA agents. Negm composed his elegy to Guevara soon after.[9] The text would become a core song within the performance repertoire of Negm and his partner, composer, oudist, and singer Sheikh Imām ʿĪsa.[10]

The poem begins with reports of Guevara's death:

> Guevara's died
> Guevara's dead
> On the radio that's what they said
> On the street that's all the news
> And in the mosques, and in the pews
> And in the alleys
> Bars and cafes
> Guevara's dead
> Is what they said.
> The hearsay extends
> Its long and chatty thread. (Negm, *Yaʿīsh* 78)

By the last line of the first stanza, Negm strikes a stark moral distinction between words and deeds. At the end of the second stanza, he strikes another contrast between the loud world of news reports and the silence of Guevara's death: "In stark silence/No drummer drumming/And no announcements" (79).

The heroism of Guevara's figure is a fully gendered one: "But on this point there is no doubt:/He was a true man when he went out" (80). Negm returns a number of times to the scene of battle in order to depict a hero full of life, even in tortured death: "Perished the brave man on his rifle, in the jungle,/In his demise, embodying his struggle" (78). And:

> No comrade to bid him good-bye
> As his moans rise up in the sky

He cries but no one hears
And shrieks from pain that sears
In his belly, the sting of fire. (80)

Against this glorious depiction of Guevara, Negm sketches a contrasting portrait of decrepit and corrupt regime figures: "You ancient relics, so fat/Fleshy and drowning/In your seas of food and clothing!" (79). And:

So polished, such eaters!
You silky dandies,
Taking up every new cause
At your houseboat parties. (79)

Here, Negm accuses state officials of hypocrisy and selling out: in 1965, they had been eager to welcome Guevara and wrap themselves in the flag of Third-World revolution; by 1968, they had become "fat cats," betraying those revolutionary values as they pursued careers of self-enrichment (Negm, *al-Fāgūmī* 375-77).

The poem thus immediately establishes a set of moral distinctions between the revolutionary hero and an array of villains, including, most immediately, those who killed Guevara in Bolivia and also, more allegorically, those in Egypt's political class who have symbolically killed him again by their neglect, insincerity, and empty words. It is here that the metapoetic challenge of the elegy is taken up, with Negm stepping forward to demonstrate another kind of word which, being sincere, has the force of action and serves as an example for others to speak and act. If the radios, churches, and mosques broadcast one kind of news about death, then poetry transmits something else altogether.

The last stanza of the poem presents a repudiation of the shame of hypocrisy and inaction described in the first stanzas, and replaces it with a coherent and comprehensive frame that contains a *diagnosis* of a larger problem:

You, who live in shackles
Who toil in deprivation

Enough [*khalāṣ*], enough [*khalāṣ*]!
You've borne too much! (80-81)

It also contains a *prognosis*: "Nothing but the bullet/Will be your salvation [*khalāṣ*]" (81), and a direct call to action:

So, dear Slaves, here's the lesson
Guevara's cry is always the same
And your choices are but one.
Nothing to do now but declaim
Prepare the army of salvation [*khalāṣ*]
Or be done [*khalāṣ*]. (81)

The starkness of the choice is underscored by the repetition of the same word (*khalāṣ*) no less than five times in this stanza. In the first two instances, it appears as an interjection (enough!), then twice as noun (salvation), then finally as adverb, signaling closure. The ending could not be clearer: the difference between action and inaction is victory or death.

The poem, however, is best known as a song composed and performed by Sheikh Imam (see Sheikh Imām ʿĪsa, "Jīvārā māt"). In an essential study of the Negm-Sheikh Imam phenomenon, Dalia Mostafa draws attention to the musical elements of Sheikh Imam's performance, noting that it begins as a "martial march that suggests that there's a very important piece of news to which the audience should listen carefully" (149). Then, after skewering "supposedly [committed intellectuals] whose actions run opposite to their words" in the third stanza, the poem shifts to a focus on the figure of the dying hero; at this point, Sheikh Imam's song shifts to the "*Zār* rhythm . . . which is the same cadence that women mourners use to lament their dead," accompanied by a simultaneous shift to the melancholic *ṣabā* mode (*maqām*) (150). However, as Mostafa points out, at the last stanza, the tempo and melody turn again, this time to the *al-ʿajam* mode, "which conveys a sense of severity and defiance" (150).

Here we can begin to appreciate the richness of the musical text that supports Negm's words during performance. Typically, during performances at political meetings and concerts, this song

would be saved until the end, so as to conclude the event with the audience singing along with the performers, now at a rousing speed–thus facilitating a natural transition to political action, such as a strike, demonstration, or march. The dialectical aspect of the performance text creates a collective ethos as clear as it is complex: the poem may repeat the line that Guevara has died, but when sung by large groups of boisterous militants on the brink of action, the words emphasize that his cause can never be killed, as long as activists perform their role.

The heroic elegy commonly turns on the death of a specific figure, such as Guevara or Garrāḥi, and thus invites the audience to take up the heroic position vacated by the deceased. In contrast, in Khalili's account, the tragic narrative is more ambiguous in its workings because there is no figure of heroic agency: it recounts the story of death so as to invite pity and sympathy, but not necessarily action. Questions of agency and "what is to be done?" are left unanswered. For Khalili, this suggests a turn away from mobilization, and instead an appeal to outside actors (34). For reasons I hope to show, the elegies under consideration here appear to diverge from Khalili's model: what I will call tragic elegies possess the open-endedness Khalili associates with tragic narrative, but they quite effectively produce affects that, being attached to new objects, can rouse audiences to action.

Part of the opaqueness of the tragic narrative–and elegy–has to do with its subject: what has been killed is not a specific, named individual, but rather something less concrete–a situation, cause, or idea. In a way, this ambiguity mirrors the essential distinction that Sigmund Freud elaborates in "Mourning and Melancholia."[11] The tragic elegy offers no consolation; nor does it even contain an exhortation to action. Yet, when performed in front of a live audience, the tragic elegy easily transcends the text's lack of explicit prescription. Put differently, in terms of framing, the tragic elegy might offer *diagnosis*, but no *prognosis* or call to arms; yet within the context of live performance, answers and direction are easily supplied. Indeed, the open-endedness of the tragic elegy allows for cadres to provide their own answers to the questions raised in the poem, and

allows activists to attach the collective affects raised during the performance to any number of objects or goals at hand.

These dynamics can also be seen at work in Negm's elegy "Ba'arit ḥāḥā," another standard within student repertoires of the era; it represents the shocking Defeat of June 1967 without hero, drama, or struggle.[12] The poem begins in lamentation: "The mourning mourners mourned/Ha-ha's heifer, stout and horned" (Negm, *Ya'īsh* 46). The first line repeats three words from the same root (*n-w-ḥ*: to wail, lament) to create a metatextual dimension: this is an elegy that tells the tale of mourners in mourning. It then recounts the betrayal and tortured death of the mourned cow: she is abandoned by her guards; her milk is stolen by foreign plunderers; she cries for help but is ignored; finally, she falls into a ditch and dies (46-49). After the first couplet, the poem features a choral lamentation–"*ḥā-ḥā*"–which is repeated in each of the following twenty-eight lines. The poem returns to the metatextual frame, underscoring once again that this elegy contains not only a narrative of loss, but also a gesture toward mourning.

Everything in the poem hangs on the saturated symbolism of the cow being mourned, which critics agree is a figure for Egypt itself, with deep folkloric roots. As Mounira Soliman has argued, "For simple Egyptian peasants who own nothing but a dairy cow for their livelihood, the cow is capital. Negm employed this image to express the spoliation and theft of people's wealth" (186). The cow is often portrayed as a long-suffering animal in the Egyptian countryside where it is employed in all sorts of arduous labor. Farīda al-Naqqāsh argues precisely this for the poem: Negm's cow was inspired by "the unending turning of the blinkered cow as it pulls the waterwheel round and round" (Negm, *Baladī* 15). The name of one kind of waterwheel, the *nā'ūra*, evokes the lowing *(n-'-r)* of cattle because of the pained, moaning sounds it makes (Bin Aḥmūda 76; Mostafa 133). The poem also evokes the colloquial adage that goes "*lamma-l-ba'ara tu'a', tiktar sakakinha*" ("When the cow falls, the knives come out plenty"), used to refer to how people may take advantage of someone in a vulnerable position. Finally, the figure of the cow stems also from

passing comments made in the press by the powerful journalist and confidante of Gamal Abdel Nasser Muḥammad Ḥassan-ayn Haykal. During this period, Haykal had urged the regime to avoid conflict with the USA: "Egypt cannot afford to butt heads (*tunāṭiḥ*) with the American bull (*al-thawr al-Amrīkī*)" (qtd. in Negm, *Baladī* 15). Negm turns the reference on its head by making the cow–Egypt–"stout-horned" (*naṭṭāḥa*, literally: "a head-butter") (*Yaʿīsh* 46; 49).

At the heart of this elegy is the accusation against guards who fled their posts–a direct reference to the conduct of some Egyptian military units in the 1967 war. Once raised, the moral rage behind the accusation is abandoned in a fit of spasmodic cries. The poem begins and ends with mourning: it names injustices and elicits pity, sympathy, and anger, but does not explicitly aim in any direction nor call for action. Translated into the terms of framing, this fable-like elegy *diagnoses* a problem (the military is cowardly in war; the enemy is stealing the nation's livelihood–and life), but offers no program, and no call to arms.

Again, this poem is best known not as it appears on a page, but rather as performed by Sheikh Imam (see Sheikh Imām ʿĪsa, "Baʾarit ḥāḥā"). Mostafa points out that the song composition employs the melancholic *ṣabā* mode and the sober 2/4 *zār* (or *Ayyūb*) cadence, while the chorus (and audience) reply to each line with the recurring refrain–"ḥā-ḥā"–delivered with a different melody to create a "dialogic conversation with the singer" (134). It needs to be added that the refrain "ḥā-ḥā" suggests many things. The sound itself–which echoes the braying of donkeys–is used in the countryside to spur those animals on. In this sense, the refrain might arguably be parsed, "Go on, go on!" But it also intimates darker reverberations: a kind of cruel laughter; an urgent, uncontrollable funeral lamentation; or even the death throes of the cow itself.

In its usual context of performance, these other features of the song–the beat, the melody, the repeating refrain–do not exactly clarify the ambiguities of the poem, but they do direct them towards the creation of a shared collective affect of anger. In this light, we might consider some of the most opaque lines which appear just after the cow falls into a hole:

Idiots asked,
"So, why'd she fall?"
"Because of fear!"
"Where does fear come from?"
"From the inability to see." (Negm, *Ya'īsh* 48-49)

In the context of the tragic narrative, the questions appear to miss the point. Likewise, though the responses are measured and calm, they do not answer the questions in any prescriptive or analytical sense. However, they do redirect the conversation toward two topics–fear and ignorance–neither of which appear to have much to do with the tragic narrative. Yet, in performance, these lines break out of the frame of Negm's short elegy and land in the room where the audience sits, creating a conversation. The *topoi* of fear and ignorance may not signify on the diegetic level of the tragic narrative, but they do resonate on the level of student cadres confronting the mendacity and power of the state.

In performance, this elegy could move audiences–and, like the elegy to Che, this song is often performed last during meetings. Consider, for instance, this description of one such performance:

> It was some time around 1971 when friends told me an important visitor was coming to the Faculty of Medicine where I was a student. . . . [The performers] appeared out of place amid the crowd of middle-class medical students. . . . [Sheikh Imam] wrapped his arms around his oud and began to noodle around. Then, without warning, he began to sing, and everyone else began to sing along after him to the music in a collective unison. . . . Sheikh Imam launched into another song, "Ba'arit ḥāḥā," and the crowd would repeat "ḥā-ḥā" right after the singer. . . . Everyone–men and women alike–sang along with Sheikh Imam and stamped on the floor with their feet until the whole auditorium began to shake. It seemed as if the room had turned into a single revolutionary force that might rush out into the streets at any moment. . . . Negm's words and Sheikh Imam's melodies and performance created

a deeply personal, existential sensation of ecstasy and spontaneous collective consciousness. It was rousing and explosive, but there was also a deep Sufi sense of love, as well as a desire to express the patriotic sense of solidarity we felt in our hearts. (al-ʿAmrī 14-19)

The scene is dynamic, with audiences actively participating in the creation of performance. As in so much movement poetry of the period, distinctions between performer and audience break down. This was not the isolated experience of one student: in countless reports of such concerts, other authors describe the same feeling of collectivity.

Elegy for an Occupation

In the days that followed the first daring campus actions, student demands grew. From the very highest ministerial levels, the Sadat regime attempted to contain and coopt the uprising, but to no avail. An extended campus sit-in ended with mass arrests of students on the evening of January 23-24. The next morning, students responded with a mass march–across the same bridge on which Garrāḥi had been martyred–and ended up with 20,000 students staging an occupation of Tahrir Square.

Negm visited the occupation on 24 January and described it as one long poetry slam: "They asked for dozens of poems, and I recited them. We chanted and sang songs, and shouted pro-Egypt slogans" (*Baladī* 20). Activist accounts all attest to the same dynamic: poetry seemed to be everywhere, emanating from the mouth of Negm, of course, but also from the thousands of activists. The carnival was short-lived, however. According to Negm and other eyewitnesses, the repression was brutal:

Suddenly, at dawn [on 25 January], we were surrounded by the Central Security Forces that had been amassing around the entrances to the *mīdān* [square] from the early hours of the morning. Without any forethought or planning, the slogan went up into the sky, "Wake up, Egypt! Egypt–wake up!" (*Baladī* 20)

Riot police drove protestors from the square, beating students and bystanders, arresting as many as they could capture.[13]

In the immediate aftermath, the state press ignored student demands and asserted that, even though student agitation was tantamount to treason, student detainees were exceptionally well treated.[14] Within weeks, January's events fell from public conversation. When state intelligentsia commented on it, it was in the context of theoretical discussions of the "concerns" and "crisis" of "youth," always with the assumption that students had been lacking proper guidance from the older generation (see "Ḥarakat al-shabāb"; "Ḥarakat al-ṭalaba"; Sharqāwī).

Amidst this silence appeared a stunning experimental poem written in the aftermath of the violent ending of the student's occupation of Tahrir Square. Unlike the other poems considered above, Amal Dunqul's "Ughniyyat al-ka'ka al-ḥajariyya" belongs to the page, not the stage.[15] Unlike them again, it was composed in the register of formal Arabic, rather than colloquial Egyptian Arabic. And, in contrast to Negm and Fū'ād, Dunqul was not directly associated with the student movement.

However, this poem, as we shall see, is an elegy composed on the occasion of the movement's apparent "death" on 25 January. Moreover, even if Dunqul was not a social movement activist, he nevertheless had engaged in fierce public dissent against Egypt's military rulers. Importantly, this included accusations that Arab regimes were more effective at killing their own people than fighting the supposed enemy, as in his 1970 poem "Ta'līq 'alā mā ḥadath fī mukhayyam al-Wiḥdāt," which decries the massacres of Palestinians during Black September. Additionally, Dunqul had been experimenting with elegiac form for a number of years, most often under the name of *bukā'iyya* (lamentation), a term he may have borrowed/translated from the *llantos* (laments) of Federico García Lorca.[16] Finally, despite its dense, often opaque, figuration, Dunqul's poem nonetheless marshals the same dynamics of tragic and heroic elegy discussed above.

Dunqul's elegy begins with a startling call to arms: "O you who stand at the brink of the slaughter/Draw your weapons" (24). Where is this "brink"? Is this a reference to those standing–or halting–meant to conjure the classical motif of the abandoned encamp-

ment? If so, Dunqul completely subverts it by asking his companions not to stop and weep, but to draw their weapons. By invoking this classical figure, the elegy seems to invoke the bearing of witness. Here, and elsewhere in the poem, there is the suggestion that witnesses might be simply amoral spectators.

But the force of Dunqul's opening line signals not a place, but rather a moment and event that has not yet happened: on the verge of a slaughter about to take place. We might call this situation simply the present tense. But Dunqul's purpose here is to load that present moment with possibility and pathos.

The poem appears to begin in *media res*, 5 am on 25 January 1972, the moment in which the Tahrir demonstrations were violently extinguished. And it begins by describing the event as an outrage: a savage act of violence carried out by armed policemen against unarmed civilians. The poem then pivots abruptly: "Death has fallen, and the heart, like a string of prayer beads, has come unstrung" (24). The blood-covered sash of the following line suggests that this massacre has something to do with Sadat, who, at this time, had added a sash to his military uniform. And then, some of the most enigmatic lines of the entire poem, which will repeat again at the close: "Homes are tombs/Jail cells are tombs/The horizon is tombs" (24). The first (homes/*manāzil*) suggests life and habitation; the third, a shifting, distant place toward which one may travel, but at which one will never arrive–the furthest reach of the eye, the frontier of vision, dream, and future. And between them, jail cells–dreaded locations of torture associated with the worst abuses of the Nasser regime (which Sadat claimed to have erased from Egypt). And now, all three, places of death and veneration. With this, Dunqul brings us into a funerary realm.

Then, once more, the poem issues a call to arms: "So raise your weapons/And follow me, I am the regret of tomorrow and yesterday" (24). But instead of commands to aim and fire, the poet's persona now names himself "regret." Regret for future and past actions, but critically: not for today. The poem then turns: "My banner: Two bones and a skull. My slogan: The morning" (24). The image of the flag suggests pirates, the embodiment of armed insurrection, not just against the state, but

against all states. The lines that precede and follow this one suggest that by "the morning," the poem is referring to "this morning," as if referring to the present moment of the poem, a sense of "today," this particular morning in January 1972, or a moment called "now." Unlike tomorrow and yesterday, this moment–this morning–is one of no regrets. More importantly, to call it a slogan means that it does more than name a moment in time: it poses a demand and desire.

The sense of the present asserts itself even more directly in the next line: "The weary hour strikes" (24). The motif of the striking clock will repeat eleven more times through the course of the poem. Though each repetition contains variation, each returns us to this moment of the present, and thus underscores the simultaneity of action throughout the poem.

As the clock strikes, two very different scenes then unfold in alternating lines separated on the page by parentheses. In one set of lines, an unnamed mother waits at home, engaged in simple household chores–cleaning and darning socks. In the other, an unnamed man (the woman's son?) is pushed at gunpoint into a police truck, then tortured by a police officer. Dunqul establishes two linked but separate worlds and fates: mother and son; the home and the jail cell; banal routine and extraordinary violation. These two worlds coexist side by side, separated only by the lines on the page. Throughout these sketches, the clock strikes two more times to underscore the simultaneity of these events. At the end of this section, the clock strikes twice again to remind us that we–the mother, the son, the bystanders, those on the brink, and us, the audience– all inhabit this same moment in time.

In the second stanza, the address abruptly shifts once more, this time to the second-person feminine:

> When you go down to the people's square, do not go
>   wishing peace,
> For now they are carving up your young on banquet
>   platters.
> After having set ablaze the nest and the straw and
>   stalks in the field.

And tomorrow morning they'll slay you, searching
    for the treasure in your craw. (24)

The poem thus turns directly to outrage, addressing now another mother whose children are being devoured. The outrage here is not just that the children are being carved up, but that this is happening so publicly, and with such impunity.

Cities climbing the gallows stairs,
The cruel hour strikes,
They have halted in her grim and empty *mīdāns*,
Making a ring around the steps of the
    monument. (24)

Here, the poem projects the image of slaughter across multiple public squares and multiple cities, then regathers it into one particular monument in the center of Tahrir Square, the ornate Italian marble plinth and column that Dunqul nicknames the "stone cake." The clock strikes again, returning us to the same time, which is now not weary but cruel:

Trees of fire
Winds blowing through their silver bloody leaves
Groaning, "*Bilādī, Bilādī*…"
(My far-off country). (25)

The image here is condensed, but resonates with eyewitness accounts from the protests in which student protesters kept warm in the frigid winter air by singing the Egyptian national anthem, which startled the approaching ranks of riot police (Sha'bān, *Inḥazt* 78-79).

Once again, the striking clock initiates a split in the scene: on the one hand, protesters in the square; on the other, two women passing by. They see, but do not give it much thought, nor can they understand what motivates the protests in the first place. Their focus on comfort and their imported automobile mark them as the heiresses of the emerging *Infitāḥ* (open-door policy) order. These two women repeat the theme of the bystander we see at

the opening of the poem, and underscore the moral difference between mere onlooking and witness.

And then the poem shifts back to the striking of the clock: "The cruel hour strikes/The café radio broadcasts its old saws/ About riot rabble-rousers [*du'āt al-shaghab*]" (25). Again, the poem returns us to a sense of now–that all this is happening at the same time. The uncomprehending staring of the bystanders is now joined by the false witness of state media, echoing not just the angry media reaction to the student protests of 1968, but also Sadat's 13 January national address, as well as his public dismissals of students as rabble-rousers throughout their January protest (Abdalla 176-83). Indeed, state media had dismissed the Tahrir occupation as a riot (*shaghab*). And then:

> Meanwhile, they make their circles, catching fire
>   upon the stone cake
> Beneath the column
> Candles of rage
> Flickering in the night, their voice sweeping away
>   the shimmerless gloom
> Singing the song of Egypt's new birth. (25)

Here, finally, the central image of the poem's title comes together: the students become angry, flickering like candles on a birthday cake, the round marble pedestal that stands in the center of the Square. Remarkably, these candles sing, and thus the national anthem turns into a birthday song, the "stone cake song." This image, arguably the most intense of the poem, mixes violence with peace, anger with joy, death with birth.

In the final section of the poem, the poet recounts the end of this gathering, but out of sequence. The section begins with a plea for remembering:

> Remember me, for I have been slandered by the
>   headlines of the treasonous newspapers
> Smeared because of the fact that since June I have
>   had no color
> But the color of loss. (25)

The voice in the final section of the poem again addresses a second-person feminine. If the speaking subject stood outside or on the outskirts of the Square earlier, in this section the voice comes from within: it speaks for the students standing on the stone cake. At the core of the pathos in this section is a recurring plea for memory: "remember me."

It seems critical to note that the poem postpones representing the event, suggesting that this loss had injured the poet's ability to construct any coherent temporal or causal order. Rather, the poet first demands–against all odds–to restore the dignity of those who have been slandered for bearing witness to the event. But more than that, the voice pleads that witness itself not be erased by the onslaught of official denial and silence: "Remember me if I have been forgotten by eyewitnesses,/Unmentioned in the minutes of Parliament,/Left off the published list of charges" (25).

As this voice disappears, chanting "Goodbye!/Goodbye!," the clock reappears: "The clock strikes five" (25). We are, again, back in the same "now," the same present moment we saw by other names–"the weary hour" and "the cruel hour"–in the other sections. At this point, the story of the assault on the students is finally told. Like before, it is presented as a montage cutting between the riot police and the students who continue singing until the very end:

> The soldiers appear like a circle of shields and battle
>   helmets
> There they are now–creeping closer, slowly, very
>   slowly
> Approaching from every direction
> While the singers on the stone cake expand and
>   contract
> Like the pulse of a heart
> Setting their throats ablaze, warming themselves
>   against the brutal cold and oppression.
> Lifting anthems in the faces of the approaching
>   guards
> Young miserable hands interlaced with young
>   miserable hands
> To make bullet-proof fences

And the bullets–"Oh!"–while they sing
"We give ourselves to save you, Egypt, we . . ." (25)

The poet thus recreates a battle scene so mismatched that its outcome is known well in advance: interlocking fingers do not ordinarily stop bullets, nor are most slogans about sacrifice meant to be literal. Finally, in defeat, the poet names the woman to whom he has been speaking, Egypt:

A silenced throat falls to the ground.
And with it, Egypt, your name also falls.
Nothing remains but the crushed body.
And cries in the trounced square
The clock strikes five.
Strikes five.
Strikes five. (25)

The striking clock refrain[17] does not exactly "return" us to the same present moment at which we began the poem. Rather, now it suggests that time has stopped. It is not just that the event of loss overshadows its aftermath, but that they are simultaneous–still happening in a frozen now. It is worth mentioning here that the form of grief posed by Dunqul's poem is feverous, even panicked, and is accentuated by the rhyming pattern of fricatives at the end of most lines. Similarly, the recurring "ah" rhyme in most of the lines creates the impression that the poem is itself a prolonged moan or sigh, broken occasionally by other consonants. This refrain appears to fix in the moment of death in order to preserve it from extinction, and thus to rescue the Tahrir occupation from oblivion, underscoring again the ties linking elegy with the classical motif of witness. Yet Dunqul expands and subverts the motif by welding this sense of loss and outrage with another direct call to arms, which forms the last lines of the poem: "So raise your weapons/Raise your weapons! (25).

The poem thus oscillates between two starkly divergent visions of witness: on the one hand, the tragic figure bearing witness to loss; on the other, the revolutionary or messianic figure urging armed struggle against injustice. No less than Fū'ād's

or Negm's elegies for Garrāḥi and Guevara, Dunqul's elegy reframes the death of the Tahrir occupation within political and moral terms, then ends with a call to arms.

The performative aspect of the other poems considered here gives tangible indication as to how elegy works to frame political questions and mobilize audiences to action. The printed page, in contrast, does not offer such clues about reception and consequence. Yet, when this poem appeared in *Sanābil* in March 1972, there was one reader who quickly imagined how the poem might move audiences: the military censor. As the poet put it later in an interview with Walīd Shumayṭ:

> This poem is what got me expelled from the Arab Socialist Union in 1973, even though I didn't have any direct ties to the students or any political organization or tendency. I don't think I'll ever join any political or literary organization. *Sanābil*, the journal that published my poem, closed with the next issue. It was the first time a journal was shut down on account of a single poem and I consider that a badge of honor. (Dunqul, "Ḥiwār" 12)

It may not be fair to compare the kind of "mobilization" that attends an elegy published in a small literary journal to elegies that are performed as part of live events within an ongoing protest repertoire. The temporality of each form and their very different modes of reception render the one very direct and the other quite diffuse. Even so, Dunqul's poetry did become a core part of protest repertoire, as evidenced during the 25 January Uprising of 2011, in pamphlets and manifestoes, street art and graffiti (Radwan 243).

Conclusion

As I have argued elsewhere (see Colla), poetry readings and concerts have played a critical role in modern Egyptian social movements. Such occasions create circumstances for artists and activists to gather and plan, regroup and recharge, during protracted struggles. Elegies, as I have tried to argue here, are

particularly well suited to these events, providing frames that allow people to grasp the moral and political dimensions of everyday life; they move people to act on those understandings; and they create the kinds of collective experiences that sustain movements over time. In this regard, they perform a paradoxical role in the life of social movements: marking a continuity with, even faithfulness to, the losses of the past, while insisting on redeeming those losses by creating a different future.

Notes

[1] The following account is composed from a number of sources: Abdalla 176-97; As'ad 59-74; Sha'bān, *Inḥazt* 51-75; and Shukrī 110-22. See also Amīn; *al-Intifāḍa al-ṭullābiyya*; *al-Intifāḍa al-waṭaniyya*.

[2] On the "fog of war," see Abdalla 178; Sha'bān, *Inḥazt* 70-71.

[3] All translations from Arabic are by the author.

[4] Throughout the 1970s, Sadat repeatedly voiced his frustration with the culture of wall-magazines (*majallāt al-ḥā'iṭ*) that had emerged on Egyptian campuses, where students would report and comment on current events without asking for permission from university officials. Hand-printed, mimeographed, and machine-printed, these broadsides might be torn down immediately or remain in place for hours, as thousands of students perused them. In their day, these broadsides functioned effectively as a social media platform for the unfettered exchange of information and views.

[5] In English, Aḥmad 'Abdallah Rozza is more widely known as Ahmed Abdalla, the scholar and author of the classic English-language history of Egyptian student politics used in this article.

[6] Abdalla asserts that a third martyred student during the November protests, 'Alī Ṭaha 'Afīfī, was the source for the socialist student character 'Alī Ṭaha in Naguib Mahfouz's 1945 novel *al-Qāhira al-jadīda*, adapted for the screen by Ṣalāḥ Abū Sayf as *al-Qāhira 30* (Abdalla 239, fn. 4).

[7] According to Abdalla, this letter was penned in Garrāḥi's own blood (239, fn. 4).

[8] According to Morsi, it was during the first visit that Egyptians "hypercorrected" the pronunciation of Guevara's name, softening the hard "g" sound into a "j," rendering it "Jīvārā" (152).

9 In an interview with Farīda al-Naqqāsh, Negm spoke about his connection to the figure of Guevara:

> The martyrdom of Guevara was a particularly hard blow, especially since his campaign in Bolivia had made me feel that I was not alone. He was presenting an example of thought and action, and I could take spiritual and intellectual comfort so long as he was there fighting. When Castro announced the news of his death twenty-four hours later, I took up my pen–for that was something else that gave me comfort–and composed "Jīvārā māt." Sheikh Imam set it to music immediately. Within a week, it was making the rounds at the universities. That poem was our pathway to the students' hearts. (Negm, *Baladī* 13)

10 So entwined were these two figures that even the most astute students of radical Egyptian politics might confuse the two men, for instance attributing "Jīvārā māt" to the "poet" Sheikh Imam (Hussein 309).

11 For Freud, the difference between the two terms has to do with the nature of the object that has been lost. Key to melancholia is a lack of clarity:

> The object [of grief] has not perhaps actually died, but has become lost as an object of love. . . . In yet other cases one feels justified in concluding that a loss of the kind has been experienced, but one cannot see clearly what has been lost . . . the patient too cannot consciously perceive what it is he has lost. (166)

12 In his memoirs, Negm recounts the shock of the Defeat and how he composed the poem on 8 June 1967 (*al-Fāgūmī* 399-408).

13 Negm and Fū'ād were both arrested. Over the next weeks, these two poets would pen some of their best-known poems from inside jails. For instance, Negm's "Anā ruḥt al-qal'a," "Salām murabba' li-l-ṭullāb," "Taṣawwurāt 'an al-ḥarb al-sha'biyya," "Al-ḥamdu li-l-Lah," and "Waraqa min malaff al-qaḍiyya" were all written during

the weeks that he spent in various detention locations in the Spring of 1972. During this same period, Fū’ād composed his poem “Ughniyya jadīda li-Fibrāyir” in Bāb al-Khalq Jail.

14 The following news item, published days later, captures the official line:

> Students from Cairo and Ain Shams Universities, who were detained and then released following the recent events, have come forward to express their satisfaction with the wholesome treatment they received at the hands of State Security forces during their detention. They especially praised the accommodations and care they were given, and the way all their needs were met. (“al-Ṭalaba”)

15 As Hazem Shehata has argued, Dunqul’s poetry is deeply visual, characterized by a cinematic technique that is often elusive, with montages of images that are alternatingly dense and fleeting, obvious and solipsistic (55-63). While Shehata’s analysis treats later editions of the poem, many of his observations apply also to the original as it first appeared in *Sanābil*.

16 Consider, for example, Dunqul’s “al-Bukā’ bayn yadayy Zarqā’ al-Yamāma,” “Bukā’iyya layliyya,” “Bukā’iyya li-Ṣaqr Quraysh,” “Bukā’iyyat al-layl wa-l-ẓahīra,” “La ’abkī,” “La waqt li-l-bukā’,” and “Marāthī al-yamāma.”

17 Critics have commonly read Dunqul’s refrain as a reference to the early morning hour when Central Security rushed the student protest on 25 January. Yet, the line also clearly points to Lorca’s famous 1935 elegy “Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías” which is punctuated by the same refrain: “a las cinco de la tarde.” Like other modernist poets of the 1960s, Dunqul was fascinated by Lorca’s work. His 1966 “Bukā’iyyat al-layl wa-l-ẓahīra” also contains a similar image of the striking clock.

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