

Al-Muthannā

It didn't report I was dead. That means I'm still alive. I examine the parts of my body and find them all there. Two eyes [ʿaynayn], two ears [udhnayn], a long nose, ten toes below, ten fingers above, a finger in the middle.

—MAHMOUD DARWISH, *MEMORY FOR FORGETFULNESS*

If it is all very good to think of Palestine as a series, we still might wonder: How does that work, really? What does it do? What does one “text” of Palestine mean in relation to its others? What are we actually to make of this idea from the Palestine Project? This chapter begins an answer. It looks at the use of *al-muthannā*, the Arabic grammatical principle of the dual. This way of encoding a relationship between entities is explored as a device, a method of relationship, and a foundation of relations that knit the “texts” of Nasrallah’s Palestine together. The dual codes for a “pair,” as in the Darwish quote above, adding an *ayn* to a noun to indicate that there are two things in a single relationship. In literature, the dual is much more than simply a code for the number of objects. A common trope of Arabic poetics,¹ the dual signifies an indelible connection, where one element might exist as a single entity but is unimaginable without the simultaneous conjuring of a second element. Two elements functioning as one—like a pair of eyes, of hands, of lovers. The function of the device is manifold and is built across several works in the Palestine Project. This begins with a set of twins but expands to capture the unique relationship between pairs more broadly (doubles) and then broadens further to encompass the relationship of members in community. *Al-muthannā* becomes a way of expressing a simultaneous singularity and multiplicity and is used to express relations in the nation.

Take the example of a pair of lovers. Composed of two distinct individuals, in their love they become a pair *ʿāshiqayn* (two lovers), like, say, Layla and Majnūn, Noor and Mohannad, Brad and Jennifer. The relationship forged between the two is particular—legendary, popular, or perhaps infamous. The connection and its meaning (forged out of the coming together of two parts) often outlive the individual elements. The same, in a sense, goes for a hug (two arms) or a kiss (two lips); the thing

(the hug, the kiss) brought of the pair (of arms, of lips) is separate but part of the pair itself and only possible through the parallel action of both. In Nasrallah's works, this many-in-one relationship complicates the broad strokes of the series-as-container. The dual shows one of the many ways that texts within the series can be related and, most importantly, how this relationship persists across both space and time.

Explored here and later in the conclusion, *al-muthannā* marks a fundamental logical principle of relationship in Nasrallah's Palestine. It is a way of understanding how things function as one/many. Thinking through the dual offers a fundamental shift, as Adania Shibli has observed separately, from the dominant configurations of the nation as an ethnonational entity whose foundational binary is I/other. With the dual, as Shibli has described it, emphasis shifts to "I/us."² Rather than the nation as a category of exclusion, the focus here is how (what) elements are related. The ramifications of this grammatical shift are profound. For example, *al-muthannā* builds on and gives national structure and meaning to exilic and diasporic lamentations of hybridity, of what Edward Said called "out of place"-ness, where his one/many identity can be nationally meaningful rather than understood as a "lack" or absence that is doubled (not Palestinian, not American).³ The paradigm of the dual gives a vocabulary of belonging, not only for people-across-spaces but also, as is later explored, the spaces themselves and the "events" that happen within and across them.

The dual, however, takes work—as analysis will show. The first example, of the twin girl characters in *Amina's Weddings* (*A 'rās āmina*),⁴ provides an ideal model. This replicates exactly the dual as Shibli described it: "*Al-muthanna* does not perceive the other as non-I or as a person that is a copy of I, and it is not a higher synthesis/unity of the two."⁵ However, as the second example goes on to show, the different parts of *al-muthannā* exist in a world that is full of power imbalances, which complicate the smooth operation of the I/us relationship. The second section of this chapter looks at the sort of work it takes to keep the I/us in balance, through a story of its failure in *Amina's Weddings'* twin text, *Under the Midmorning Sun* (*Taḥta shams al-ḍuhā*), and its two sets of pairs that end up in a very uneven triangle. The final section goes back to the work of balance but shows how this I/us relation can expand past the pair/dual/twin and include the multiple bodies/spaces/texts of Palestine.

THE TWINS

The ideal *al-muthannā* is achieved in Nasrallah's works through the figure of the twin. In 2004 Nasrallah published a book in the Palestine Comedies under the title:

'Ārās 'āmina
Taḥta shams al-ḍuhā:
Riwāyatān

[Amina's weddings
Under the midmorning sun:
A pair of novels]⁶

Under the title was a subtitle, *riwāyatān*, in which the dual *-an* indicated that there were, in the bound volume, in fact two novels. These works were distinct: no two characters were repeated between them, they were set in different locations, and they each developed their own ideas and symbols. Yet, in being combined in a single bound volume, they were somehow required to be read as one. The “first” novel, *Amina's Weddings* (which can also be translated as “safe weddings,” a double meaning that the text plays with), was marked out with its own title page a few leaves after the publisher information. The same was true for the second, *Under the Midmorning Sun*, which was marked not only with a different title, but different art below it. The images on the two internal title covers were distinct from the image on the “main” cover. The first took place in the Gaza Strip and the second in the West Bank, both set during the Second Intifada. Read together, the works told the story of the Intifada, which happened across discrete locations but was manifest as a single event (a single bound volume). Through Intifada, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank become a pair, *al-muthannā*. The territories are linked despite being territorially separated. This was two stories, one book. At least at first.

In later editions, the novels were published separately in discrete bound volumes, with nary a mention of their shared past. Their connection was indicated only with the series title, *Palestine Comedies*, on the spine. Readers picking up a new edition would never know that the works had once shared a title. If you ask Nasrallah, he would say that by putting the novels in a single bound volume the wrong signal was sent that one should be read “first.” In separating the stories across two bound volumes, he explains, a better balance was achieved; each story could emerge as it should, without order or hierarchy. This was the second example (after the twins) of a successful dual presented by the two works. The twins were such a powerful *al-muthannā* that when one twin died the other was able to keep her memory alive by pretending to be the other sister from time to time. In order to prevent one story from consuming the other (as happened when the dual became unbalanced in *Under the Midmorning Sun* and one protagonist ends up killing the other), they had to be recognized as separate-yet-connected. It is not just producing an “us,” then, that the works signal as important, but the *creation* of “us” alongside its discrete parts. Moving through this process in turns, we examine the twins, the uneven set of doubles, and the work of balance to keep the dual operational.

Nasrallah's twins provide the ideal *al-muthannā*. Randa and Lamis are identical, one embryo that cleaved and created two bodies indistinguishable in appearance. Described as “a *fūl* bean that split” (31),⁸ they are two distinct bodies that can be

read and interpreted at once as an “I” and an “us.” The girls began life as one entity and will forever be associated with those early weeks as a single cluster of cells. This unity haunts all aspects of their lives, so that the experiences of one twin are automatically read into those of the other. While they are identical in appearance, the personalities of the two young women are distinctly different. Randa is a writer, an intrepid, and her actions depict someone adventurous and outgoing. Lamis, on the other hand, stays close to home, is sensitive and timid. But the girls often feel “stuck” in the individual social personalities that their bodies have been assigned. Randa does not always feel brave, or Lamis timid. Both women resist being defined *only* by their individual biographies. They use the fact of their identical appearances to expand these limited roles. The fact of *al-muthannā*—that they exist socially as a unit—actually expands their personal possibilities.

At several points the girls exchange social roles: one twin takes on the social life of the other. For example, Randa, days after her sister witnesses the murder of their neighbor, urges the timid and reserved Lamis to take on her more outgoing personality. Lamis had seen their young neighbor shot dead by soldiers at an Israeli checkpoint, and while she had tried to save him all she could do in the end was look on, helpless. Randa writes of Lamis:

She became sad, so sad that she could no longer bear it, so I said to her, “Lamis, if you want me to be Lamis for a day, or two, or ten, until you feel a little better, then I will be.” And she said to me, “I wanted to say the same words to you, because you are much more sad than I am; you haven’t even cried.” (40)

Each girl sees the other suffering and suggests that being able to grieve or stop grieving will help the other in the days after the killing. In other words, they suggest that the “I” take refuge in the “us.” They can be better, healthier as individuals when they can mobilize the collective and escape the roles they have taken on/been assigned from time to time. Here Randa’s characteristics, the traits that mark her as Randa, become available for Lamis and vice versa.

This special relationship exceeds the lives of the girls. This becomes painfully clear when Lamis is killed. Randa is of course devastated but also faces a critical loss. She has spent her life as part of *al-muthannā*, as part of a duality constituted by the existence of another element. In order to keep the collective—and her whole self—alive, Randa refuses to tell anyone which of the girls has died. Claiming to be Lamis at times and Randa at others becomes a way, not so much to deny the loss, but to maintain the whole that also constitutes her. So long as Randa claims to be Lamis, the collective space of the twin remains, and Randa retains the ability to include the collective within herself. When challenged about this behavior, Randa insists, “I want people to know that she didn’t die” (136); in other words, the world that *al-muthannā* created has remained beyond the life of she who helped constitute it. As Ghassan Kanafani’s brother put it, “The sibling is

a part of you [*al-akh al-shaqīq*],”⁹ even after death. Once conjured into existence, *al-muthannā* exists even beyond its constituent parts. As a grammar of the nation, the dual describes how discrete and distinct entities become part of an irreducible larger unit. Through the dual the “texts” (or I’s) of Palestine remain part of the nation long after the individual parts have ceased to exist on their own.

DOUBLES

Through *al-muthannā* the magical bond of the twin is appropriated for the national collective. Beyond the scenario of identity, however, the “parts” of *al-muthannā* are not always “equal.” In Nasrallah’s novels, the double expands the idea of the twin and explores what can happen when the parts of *al-muthannā* are out of balance. There is here a certain degree of pedagogy on the idea, as when Salwa reads the *Divine Comedy* to show readers the possibilities of the series. In this case, however, teaching happens as a warning. In the story of *Under the Midmorning Sun*, *al-muthannā* becomes a hierarchy, with powerful parts subsuming the “us” into their “I” and then claiming to represent the collective. This happens twice, once in the figure of a corrupt theater director who subsumes the energy and ideas of his assistant, an aspiring actor. The second is a repetition, where the aspiring actor eventually takes over the personality of a former fighter he has written a play about. It is because of the oppression of the writer by the theater director that the writer seeks to oppress the fighter. The unevenness is repeated, passed down the chain. The lesson teaches readers that in *al-muthannā*, parts must always remain distinct and in balance if they are to remain at once “I” and “us” and therefore part of the nation.

A story of the failure of *al-muthannā* unfolds over the uneven and dangerous politics of post-Oslo Ramallah. The Oslo Accords had signed a Palestinian Authority (PA) government into existence; the leader of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, had shaken the hand of Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres on the White House lawn, concluding one phase of the 1990s Peace Process. Ramallah had been declared the de facto capital, and huge bundles of aid dollars poured in to support the would-be state. The PLO became the PA, a pseudo-government of a hoped-for nation-state. Local organizations were displaced by a government made up of “returnees,” which was beholden to a set of unfinished negotiations that left the exercise of sovereignty to an undetermined future. This precarious imbalance is reflected in *Under the Midmorning Sun*’s three main characters: a former *fidā’ī* (freedom fighter), Yasin; a Ramallah native and general “nobody,” Salim; and a theater director known only as al-Duktūr (the Doctor).

It isn’t clear where al-Duktūr is “from,” or what he does beyond run the theater and schmooze with the new Ramallah elite (from which he apparently gets cash to run the theater). The man is cruel and constantly puts Salim (the actor and writer) down, calling him ineffective and irrelevant. Salim, for his part, is alone. Though a

Ramallah native, he is the last of his family in the city; everyone else has emigrated abroad, and he has been entrusted (left with the burden of) the family home to maintain. He has found no role in the new government and says of his life that it passed “without flavor or soul” (25). Until he meets Yasin. Hearing the tale of the former fighter, Salim gets the idea to write the man’s story into a play, a monologue about the trials and tribulations of a man he sees as a quintessential Palestinian hero. As he writes the play, Salim feels the “door to life” (25) open. He has “fallen under the spell of a character” (21) and goes on to produce the play despite Yasin’s objections. The mistreated Salim admits to himself that this is because he “wanted to play [Yasin’s] role on stage, or in truth, in life!” (21). This is the reddest of the red flags indicating that *al-muthannā* is out of balance.

The next warning sign comes through the appearance of a Scandinavian theater troupe and their workshop on Bertolt Brecht’s idea of estrangement. Salim utterly dismisses al-Duktūr’s suggestion that he rewrite the monologue along the rules of “Brecht’s book *The Theory of Epic Theatre*” (21). Hardly a novel theory on the Ramallah stage, estrangement as a tool of political engagement had been taken up enthusiastically in the 1980s by Ramallah’s Balaleen theater troupe.¹⁰ In Brecht’s words, “The aim of this technique, known as the alienation effect, was to make the spectator adopt an attitude of inquiry and criticism in his approach to the incident [so that] the actor must invest what he has to show with a definite *gest* of showing.”¹¹ For Salim, this would mean to stage the fighter critically and encourage the audience to ask questions about the nature of the character and its performance. This is precisely what Salim does not want. He wants to perform the trope of the hero, and to take on the role.

While al-Duktūr suggests the idea to belittle Salim, the young man’s total rejection relates as much to finding a way out from under the thumb of the director as it does his desire to inhabit Yasin. As the playwright reflected to himself following al-Duktūr’s suggestion, “He could not talk about Yasin in the third person as Brecht explained,” because the way he had imagined the performance “from the beginning was [about] the format of speaking, as if it was Yasin al-Asmar who would take over the body of Salim Nasri on the stage, not the opposite” (22). The technique of estrangement would force a critical distance between actor and subject and ask audience members to see and be critical of the unequal dynamics at work in representation.

In an ideal scenario, Salim would have asked what story Yasin wanted to tell. Yasin would have (as chapter 8 details) urged his fellow citizens to take up a new fight and redefine the ideal of the hero. Instead, Salim turns Yasin into a calcified symbol of a glorified fighter that neglects all of Yasin’s personal experiences. Salim in no way respects, listens to, or interacts with Yasin as he writes the play. Failure to create a critical atmosphere of estrangement is seen as the drive to subsume the other. This comes across powerfully in the novel, as Salim is so intent on becoming his version of Yasin that when the real Yasin is arrested by the Israeli military the

playwright's first thought is, "What if Yasin was killed in prison? What if he died under torture?" (15). His wondering is not concern. Rather, with Yasin out of the way there is no one to object to Salim continuing to perform the play, no longer just in Yasin's village, but "in the heart of Ramallah" (119). With no one the wiser, Salim starts to limp when outside of the theater, emulating Yasin's gait, altered by his first experience of Israeli torture in prison. Salim also increasingly forgets to remove the gray hair spray, which makes him look like Yasin—not thirty-something, but like a man in his sixties. When an adoring fan asks, "I want your signature, but not with your name Salim Nasri, but rather with the name of the character you portray" (155), Salim obliges. When someone asks if the character of the monologue is based on someone else, Salim declares, "There is only one Yasin in the theatre, in the world!" (157)—meaning himself. He takes over the idea of Yasin while the real Yasin is being held in a cell.

Circumstance provides one last opportunity for Salim to integrate the voice of his double into the play—to realize *al-muthannā* and avoid a collapse of the I/us relationship. One night when Salim remains on stage after the close of the monologue, he hears a voice ring out in the empty hall and is unsure if what he hears is his own voice adlibbing on stage or if the voice is Yasin's. Salim wonders if Yasin has been released from prison and if it is in fact his voice in the audience that Salim has heard. If this voice is his own, Salim is not sure if the words are his or "if he had heard them from Yasin a long time ago" (159). He is forgetting where he ends and Yasin begins. Unlike the relationship between Randa and Lamis, Salim cannot—does not want to—keep the two "I's" distinct. The next night, the same thing occurs. As before, Salim speaks not knowing if it is him, his memory of Yasin, or Yasin himself who utters the words. The grammar of the text keeps the "true" source obscure:

A voice erupted from the darkness of the audience: Did you forget the role? . . .

It sounds like my voice, Yasin said.

It sounds like his voice, Salim said. (171–72)

Meanwhile, the reader learns that Yasin has in fact been released from prison. He *is* in the audience, where he "found his second self on the stage without having ascended to it" (119). Watching Salim perform, Yasin "saw nothing but his own movements [on the stage,] he felt he was seeing a ghost who looked like him but did not look like him" (171). Yasin is unsure if he should intervene in the hope that making himself present in the theater would break the illusion that Salim had created. Terrified that his illusion of possession will be broken, Salim kills Yasin in the street later that evening, taking on the persona of the fighter (rather than any actual life of Yasin) and obliterating both his own and Yasin's experiences in the process. *Al-muthannā* has collapsed entirely—but not for the reader.

The final pages of the novel move rapidly. Barely has the reader had time to sort out who was speaking in the theater when Yasin leaves the building, angry,

confused, and disoriented. He is having a hard time reconciling his own memories of his past self, his role as a fighter, and the new challenges that continuing resistance to occupation and oppression has been met with in this new Ramallah. Before he reaches any conclusion, the aging fighter, just released from prison, is thrown from his feet by an explosion. Israeli military vehicles have entered the city to put down the uprising, which is as much against the continued occupation as it is the failure of the Oslo Accords to realize a nation-state. Caught in the fire, Yasin is left “on the edge of death” (175). On the ground and trapped under a car, Yasin sees Salim, who has finally closed the playhouse. The actor approaches his muse. Yasin smiles, assuming he will be rescued. Salim hesitates, still wearing his costume and stage makeup, so he perfectly resembles Yasin. He then takes out a gun, which al-Duktūr has furnished him with, and “point[s] its tip toward the middle of that smile, the shot of the gun explode[s], and that smile got wider before it drifted away to nothing” (175). The representation of the fighter has won, and the actual fighter is erased.

The pair—writer and muse—would thus have become one in the person of Salim if it weren’t for the reader who has seen the drama unfold. The reader, despite or even because of Salim’s rejection of a position of distance, of estrangement, has witnessed all aspects of the collapse of the dual and because of this can keep the many figures separate. The reader sees the inequalities at work and can hold these imbalances within the I/us of the nation. While it is difficult at times to understand who says what, it is simple to see Yasin (a character, a play, a man, a prisoner, a fighter, a lover, a returnee) as distinct and related to Salim (the actor, the playwright, the recorder of memories). The question of “who” the characters are at any one moment becomes an issue of the identity being claimed, not one of what they are, distinct but related.

The question of who claims to be what in the context of post-Oslo Ramallah leads inevitably to the question of new government and national representation. The text represents the failure of the PLO to account for diverse national experiences in its new political role as Palestinian Authority. This is al-Duktūr and his presentation of power and authority, which tells Salim he is worthless. It is also the new PA that has channeled the figure of the fighter into the role of the bureaucrat, turning the actual fighters into calcified icons for the sake of creating Palestine as a state.¹² The novel is actually exploring the failure of the PA in its efforts to collapse all of the parts of Palestine into a single teleological representation. The call to read the “play” of the new government through a position of estrangement is one that rehabilitates all of the other parts of Palestine to the national story. It is only through estrangement that the men are separated once again into two unequal parts, trapped in a deathly relationship but—at least—separate so that they can both remain part of a larger national configuration along with the warning that their story encodes. To maintain *al-muthannā*, hierarchies must be acknowledged and taken on as part of a story.

COLLECTIVES

Al-muthannā expands beyond the relationship between individuals when the idea is read across both *Amina's Weddings* and *Under the Midmorning Sun*. Brought into conversation, lessons from one and ideals from the other show how the paradigm of the twin can be balanced across a larger group of people. This happens in both life and death but is always categorized by a sustained balance, where the essence of *al-muthannā* persists over time, even as the individuals who constituted it may come and go. Successful collectives are maintained through the critical gaze of estrangement, so that no member becomes or claims the group as constituent of their "I," thus allowing the I/us to remain in balance.

The first time such a collective is conjured is in *Amina's Weddings* when Randa relates the story of two men, killed together in an Israeli air strike. Though they are two bodies, they become one victim in death, as mourners are unable to distinguish the remains of one man from the other. The description of the aftermath of the strike is gruesomely poignant but shows how, like life, common death can unite individuals into a "whole," creating a collective that confers new and different meaning on all of the individuals involved. The incident is different from the death of the twin or the murder of Yasin, because it is generated by an experience that the two men undergo simultaneously. The experience is the context that unites them, and it is the experience and its ramifications for the identities of the men that the text is concerned with.

Family, community, and onlookers mourn the double tragedy but also seek to honor the two men separately in death. Given the religious necessity to be buried "whole," however, the question arises as to how this might be possible. Randa works through this as she participates in the community mourning:

We spent two days scrubbing [their remains] off the walls and roofs of the houses. When we gathered them into bags, we realized we couldn't tell the flesh of one from the other. We asked ourselves; why not bury them in one grave? They [the community] refused. But tell me Aunt Amina, isn't it better? Why should the martyrs work to find their body parts from another grave on the day of judgement? (56)

The two men are "united" in the experience of the air strike, a reality made inescapable as the bodies become a "single flesh." The air strike has reversed their separate beings into one metaphorical body, a reversal of the *fūl* bean. The men cannot forever be reduced to this one final experience, however. The prospect concerns Randa as she thinks about what will happen next for them.

Islamic practice holds that a man will not be "whole" in paradise if he is not whole in the grave. It is also the duty of a Muslim to ensure that members of the community have a proper burial. In the context of contemporary Palestine, this has come to create a collective responsibility to collect the flesh of those torn apart by military violence. What the community decided, Randa explains, is to collect the bodies of the men and separate them into two graves. As she picks up the pieces,

Randa wonders if it would not be more of a violence to try to artificially separate the parts of the tragic union. The two men are one, she concludes, and not for “man” to separate. Her own reading is that the men must remain as a collective until an unknown point in the future (or indeed, in the imagination), when they can reclaim their own selves—in their case, before god. Their stories are tied, they are individuals but a whole, and harm would be done separating them. Built in, however, is the idea that, at the appropriate time, the men will resume distinct existence.

Just when or how individuals become individuals after they are brought together in a collective is explained and expanded in an extended scene that takes place almost in the background of *Amina’s Weddings*’ main action. In the last chapters of the book, Amina hears a news report about another man hit by an Israeli strike. The details of the victim lead her to believe—to be certain—that it is her husband, Jamal, who has been killed. She goes to the hospital to identify his body and collect it for burial. When she gets there, however, she finds the body unrecognizable. The doctor tells her there are twenty other women who claim that he belongs to them. Amina and the doctor have the following exchange:

—He’s my husband.

—Twenty women have come to see him and said he was their husband.

—Twenty women? No, Jamal has only one wife and that’s me. (90)

Funerals for the unidentified man, Randa narrates, are held across the Gaza Strip (92), with each of the twenty women insisting that the body is that of their missing husband, brother, or son. Amina, who even after Jamal’s death continues to narrate her chapters *to* him, reflects, “They didn’t know if you were you or if you were someone else, some other martyr” (92). While tragic, and certainly emblematic of the wider tragedy under way in the Gaza Strip, uncertainty about the identity of the martyr forges a shared experience between the twenty-one women who claim him as a relative—as if they all join a single family, a collective, as a result.

The twenty-one women, each believed to be the intimate family member of the unidentifiable man, gather as a collective each day in the graveyard where the body is buried. The twenty-one women become one woman: the mother of the fighter, the widow, and the bereaved. They are, in a sense, Ghassan Kanafani’s paradigmatic character, the woman who crystallized the “mother of the fighter” figure, Umm Saad (a figure to whom we return in chapter 6). But, crucially, they also remain their own selves, not solely identified by their relationship with a dead Palestinian youth. This multiplicity-in-singularity becomes apparent when, one by one, the women either find the bodies of their missing husbands, their brothers return home for a brief visit before going into hiding again, or turn up injured in the hospital. Many of the women realize that the buried man is not their loved one. The numbers of mourners at the grave quickly reduces to twelve, but these remaining women continue to practice the ritualized community formed around collective loss, holding the space open that had been created by the original

twenty-one. When one of the younger women, who had stopped attending the grave returns one day sobbing, feeling guilty that she had left, the remaining mourners intervene. A woman explains to Amina that her fiancé had returned, and she had cried for joy, but she then felt guilty about her happiness while there were so many women still at the grave. She promises to continue coming to the cemetery, asking the other women, “How can I go and leave you by yourselves?” (96). The other women, however, tell her, “Don’t come back” (96), and to remain with life instead of being tied to death.

While one woman’s grief had helped create a community, the community remains despite her leaving it and is not weakened by her departure. So, although the women are united by death, becoming the strong specter of the “mother of the fighter,” they are not bound to the symbol. When it is time for life, they say, the shadow must be cast off. Collectives, the examples intimate, codify relationship forged through a moment, or an event, that affects any number of people. This moment is elevated from any of the individuals within it, so that they can stop being constituted by it, and the collective remains. As the example of the women shows, an individual can participate in the event even later, “after” it has taken place. The collective created through the happening no longer needs individuals to sustain it and is not limited to a particular set. For both the slain men and the bereaved women, that moment must not imprison or delimit either the self or others. Those brought into a collective must be kept in balance with all of the other moments and collectives an individual has constituted, passed through, or remains within. These collectives form elements of the nation. They are brought into being and maintained in a delicate balance of forces.