

## ‘Arafāt’s speech at the United Nations (1974)

### A Perelmanian reading of the text rhetoric

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On November 22nd, 1974, the United Nations General Assembly promulgated resolutions No. 3236 and No. 3237, recognizing the political, cultural, and socio-economic rights of the Palestinian people, and formalizing the PLO’s participation in the General Assembly as an observer. These important resolutions were issued following the historic speech given by the President of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Yāsir ‘Arafāt, on November 13th, 1974, before the United Nations General Assembly. This paper consists in the rhetorical and linguistic analysis of the main argumentative strategies employed by the Palestinian leader in his speech to achieve his perlocutionary goals. Specifically, the analysis is carried out on the basis of the methodological tools developed by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca in *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (1969). The Perelmanian tools are applied to ‘Arafāt’s Arabic speech in order to determine the rhetorical techniques employed to build the audience’s agreement and to persuade them about the necessity to accommodate his people’s requests. From this research emerges the in-depth knowledge that the speaker has of his audience, addressing, from time to time, a particular or a universal audience, in an attempt to reach an agreement that is as broad as possible. For this reason, the speaker carefully chooses the language through which to convey his message, excluding the Islamic formulas and lexicon, which usually characterize his speeches. Furthermore, the agreement with the public is established through the repeated reference to universal values, which allow him to place the Palestinian question in a framework shared by the audience. Finally, the present study illustrates the copious argumentative strategies that ‘Arafāt employs to generate a change of perspective on the Palestinian question, facilitating the process of persuasion.

**Keywords:** discourse Analysis, New Rhetoric, theory of argumentation, political discourse, Palestine, United Nations, Yasser Arafat.

### 1. Introduction

On 13<sup>th</sup> November 1974 Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf ‘Arafāt al-Qudwa al-Ḥusaynī, also known as Yāsir ‘Arafāt, delivered a speech to the United Nations General Assembly as President of the Palestine Liberation Organization (*munazzamat al-taḥrīr al-filastīniyya*, PLO). The speech, given entirely

in Arabic, constitutes a fundamental historical event for Palestine, as well as for the whole international community. Indeed, for the first time in history, not only was a non-governmental organization allowed to address the Assembly which, at that time, was formed exclusively by government representatives, but it also provided visibility to the Palestinian perspective before an international audience. The extraordinary importance of the occurrence is brought to light perfectly by the words of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine magazine, *al-Ḥurriyya*, which stated that “Palestine has re-entered history” (Sayigh 1997: 344). Therefore, the occasion, already charged with meaning, takes on further prominence if we consider the effects achieved through the speech in regard to the speaker’s intended purposes. As a matter of fact, the communicative event<sup>1</sup> marks the beginning of a series of changes that were to lead to the General Assembly resolutions n.3236 and n.3237,<sup>2</sup> which helped, at least partially, to achieve the aims pursued by ‘Arafāt with his 1974 speech. These objectives, according to Nabil Ša‘aṭ, Yāsir’s foreign policy adviser and probable ghost writer<sup>3</sup> of the speech, were mainly two: “to cement the Palestine Liberation Organization’s role as the legitimate representative of Palestinians, and to focus attention in the UN General Assembly on the Palestinian quest for independence” (Birzeit University 2019). Based upon these considerations, the primary purpose of this research consists in identifying, within the Palestine leader’s speech, the main argumentative strategies employed by him to persuade his audience to support the cause of Palestinian independence and to recognize the PLO as the legitimate representative of its people. To do this, the methodological tools developed in *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (1969) of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca were used. The *Treatise*, indeed, constitutes a wide theoretical set of argumentative schemes which aim to restore to classical rhetoric its former splendour, overcoming the Cartesian perspective. Thus, the argumentative techniques presented in the *New Rhetoric* turned out to be fundamental to examine the strategies used by ‘Arafāt in order to obtain the agreement of his audience, as well as to analyse the rhetorical choices used to achieve his persuasive goals. The speech does in fact

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<sup>1</sup> Verbal expression of meanings by the speaker, addressed to multiple listeners. The event holds an important performative meaning, especially in political discourse, as an act pronounced to achieve precise aims (Avallone 2019: 10).

<sup>2</sup> Resolutions approved on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1974 by the UN General Assembly, recognizing the political, cultural, and socio-economic rights of the Palestinian people. The complete texts can be found at the following link:

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/189836?ln=en> (UNDL).

<sup>3</sup> Ša‘aṭ, during a lecture organized by the Political Science Department of Birzeit University on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019, claimed that he had written the first draft of the speech to present it “to a committee of Palestinian politicians, thinkers, and intellectuals who revised it until they were satisfied that it had properly conveyed the Palestinian people’s hopes and dreams” (Birzeit University 2019).

fit into a broader context of which the orator too is an essential part, and which needs to be briefly illustrated to bring about a proper understanding of the communicative strategies employed in it.

## 2. The speaker

According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969: 317-318), “the person is the best context for evaluating the meaning and significance of an assertion [...]” Indeed, what is known about the author provides a reinterpretation of the text in a new context. This is particularly relevant in the case of Yāsir ‘Arafāt, or ‘Abū ‘Ammār, for two main reasons: firstly, his significance to Palestinian people and the Palestinian issue; secondly, the persuasiveness of his non-verbal communication (for instance, his gestural expressiveness, the tone, and the rhythm of his voice, and so forth). These two aspects are often related as can be inferred from Klein’s biography, where, on the one hand, the aura of mystery of the Palestinian leader and his limits are highlighted (such as gaffes in front of the public to get their attention, his distinctly Egyptian dialect, and the occasional lack of credibility), but, on the other hand, his communicative ability is valued (Klein 2019: 1-3). Indeed, ‘Arafāt had managed to become a national symbol and an emblem of the Palestinian armed struggle by emphasizing his figure as a fighter and survivor. He conveyed to his people the image of a person willing to sacrifice his life for their cause through the military decorations he wore and the gun he always kept close for safety, his speeches “that stressed the motifs of jihad, self-sacrifice and martyrdom” (Klein 2019: 3), the ambiguous language and his tendency to tell the listener what he wanted to hear. As a matter of fact, his watch was emblematic of how the President himself played with his own image: it always showed the same time, five minutes to midnight, to symbolize a ceaseless state of threat. The steady creation of a sense of restlessness was a source of criticism, but also a way to justify his “status as a symbol” (Klein 2019: 3-8). ‘Abū ‘Ammār’s rise to power, by means of his ability to merge his image with that of the Palestinian cause, is also successfully described in Aburish’s biography. The Palestinian writer and journalist defines how ‘Arafāt carefully arranged his famous *kūfiyya* every day to resemble the map of Palestine. This operation took about an hour each morning (Aburish 2012: 82-83). Furthermore, the detailed mention of Israeli attacks, combined with the exhibition of photographs of Israeli bombs, destroyed houses and mutilated bodies, contributed to elicit an intense *pathos*.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, as the PLO chairman

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<sup>4</sup> *Pathos* is conceived here in the Aristotelian acceptance of the term, i.e., the emotions, feelings, and passions that the speaker must be able to arouse in the audience. The Greek philosopher considered *pathos*, *ethos*, and *logos* as the main types of argumentations in the broad sense of means of persuasion. *Ethos* consists in the character that the speaker must attribute to himself to win the trust of his listeners (Aristotle 1984: 2194, *Rhet.* 1378a.)

described the sufferings of his people, his voice became lower, thicker, and even stuttering, associated with a sad smile, revealing his ability to arouse emotions (Aburish 2012: 91-93). Moreover, Aburish highlights Yāsir’s precocious skills as a leader and speaker, who knew how to touch “his listeners in a very special and endearing way” (Aburish 2012: 25), but he also mentions how he was able to evade uncomfortable questions, to avoid clarifying his own personal story, and to disguise his lies (Aburish 2012: 91-93). Some of the above-mentioned features can be noticed also in ‘Arafāt’s speech at the UN General Assembly. For instance, the tone of his voice, the way he delivers the speech, with a rhythm recalling a *psalmody*, the pauses, and the repetitions, contribute to make his utterances more vivid, engaging, and intense. Along with these elements, the speaker’s posture, the determination, and confidence with which he delivers the speech, and the fact that he showed himself before the Assembly wearing his military uniform and *kūfiyya*, reflect both the image of a survivor and fighter he had built up and the *ethos* he wanted to display. Indeed, we have to bear in mind ‘Abū ‘Ammār’s complex position at the time of the speech when he had been recognized as President of the PLO by his people. Conversely, the legitimacy of this role, and of the PLO itself, was not taken for granted by the international community. Therefore, its achievement becomes one of the two main objectives that Yāsir intends to reach through this address. As a matter of fact, his very presence at the United Nations General Assembly, which caused the deliberate absence of Israel’s representatives, is a significant step forward in the recognition of the PLO, but also of his person as the spokesperson of his people.

### 3. The historical framework

‘Abū ‘Ammār’s speech must be analysed within the framework of the main historical, political, and socio-economic events of the 1960s and the 1970s. Indeed, it was in 1964 that the Arab League, during its first Summit held in Cairo, approved the foundation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). However, the Organization was conditioned by the Arab League itself, whose choice to support the establishment of a Palestinian organization allowed the Arabs to show opposition to Israel, thus avoiding a direct conflict (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 248). At the head of the PLO was placed Šuqayrī, who was chosen by Nāšir as he had already worked with the Arab states (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 248).

According to Brillanti (2009: 90), a turning point was the 1967 Six-Day War because it allowed the Palestinian resistance to acquire greater autonomy in its struggle. In fact, the notorious Arab defeat in 1967 caused Palestinians to lose faith in the pan-Arab Nassirian perspective of Arab unification as the first step towards Palestinian liberation (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 252-254). On the one hand, the Arab populations were discouraged by the loss of hope in Arab nationalism, on the other hand, they

were not willing to accept a total defeat (Aburish 2012: 70). Thus, a political vacuum was created, which was promptly filled by ‘Arafāt (Aburish 2012: 70) and the movement that he had secretly contributed to establish in 1959 in Kuwait, namely *al-Fataḥ* (*Ḥarakat al-Taḥrīr al-Filastīniyya*, the Palestine National Liberation Movement). Furthermore, the 1967 war reunited the Palestinian majority under Israeli occupation, facilitating the spread of *Fataḥ* in Palestinian society and its growing financial and rhetorical support from the Arab states (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 252-254).

Consequently, in the 1960s, ‘Arafāt and *al-Fataḥ* were able to move from “obscurity to overall leadership of the Palestinian people” (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 247). The effects of the war also affected the leadership of the PLO. As Kimmerling and Migdal (2003: 253) point out, Šuqayrī effectively had never succeeded in controlling the PLO, which underwent several splits. When, in 1967, Šuqayrī resigned and the PLO Executive Committee replaced him with the lawyer Yahyā Ḥammūda, the latter proposed that *Fataḥ* join the PLO for the sake of national unity. ‘Arafāt accepted and, in return, the PLO offered *Fataḥ* thirty-three seats on the Palestinian National Council, the PLO’s parliament. It was not until 1969 that ‘Abū ‘Ammār succeeded Ḥammūda as Chairman of the PLO (Aburish 2012: 77-90), which brought together the majority of Palestinian factions. According to Kimmerling and Migdal (2003: 255-265), what distinguished Yāsir’s leadership in that historical period was his attention to Palestine and his intention to avoid meddling in internal Arab political affairs. Thus, the Chairman assured *Fataḥ* of the support of several Arab countries and managed to draw the attention of the international community to the Palestinian issue. In fact, the PLO won diplomatic recognition from over fifty states and obtained observer status at the United Nations General Assembly after ‘Arafāt’s 1974 speech. This also fits into the broader framework of international historical events.

As will be examined, Yāsir frequently mentions, especially in the first part of the speech, the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, to the point that the cause of his community is identified with the causes of the peoples of those continents. Indeed, the Palestinian leader states:

The question of Palestine belongs, as a crucial element, to the just causes which are fought by the peoples suffering from colonialism and oppression [...]. Therefore, I am here on behalf of every human being struggling for freedom and for the right of peoples to self-determination. [...] For these reasons, I will present our cause within this framework and for this purpose.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> All the passages of ‘Arafāt’s speech in this paper have been translated by the author into English from the Arabic text taken from the website *Mu’assasa Yāsir ‘Arafāt* (<https://www.yaf.ps/>) and integrated with the available audio recordings in the online archive of (UN) *Radio Classics*. However, an English translation of the speech was published by the *Journal of Palestine Studies* 4/2 (1975): 181-194.

What such different countries shared in that historical period was precisely the process of decolonization, the desire to oppose any form of colonialism and neo-colonialism, claiming their own self-determination. In order to realize these intents, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was formally established in 1961 in Belgrade. Further key aims of the Belgrade summit were the “economic development, [...] UN reform, apartheid, and Palestinian rights” (Morphet 2004: 525). It is noteworthy that the NAM’s causes coincide with several lead argumentations that ‘Arafāt employs during his speech, whose persuasive purposes will be examined in this study. Indeed, it is precisely within this historical context that the President of the PLO will gradually succeed in achieving an international visibility the Palestinian question. In this respect, the UN expert, Sally Morphet (2004: 527), states: “the NAM worked together globally and regionally in ways that fostered common interests. African concerns about apartheid were linked with Arab-Asian concerns about Palestine.” The impact of the joint efforts was such that various resolutions (Morphet 2004: 526-527) in favour of Palestine were approved by the UN after 1967. The approval of these resolutions reflects the changing climate of the 1970s, thanks to which it was possible for the General Assembly of the United Nations to embrace, for the first time in history,<sup>6</sup> a representative of an entity different from a state member. The following paragraphs offer an analysis of the main communicative strategies employed by ‘Arafāt to persuade his audience, whose knowledge is a fundamental condition to achieve this aim. Indeed, since argumentation is conceived as the ability to influence the adherence of minds, it is pertinent to listeners.

#### 4. The audience

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969: 19) identify the audience “as the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation.” In this sense, listeners not only represent those who are physically close to the speaker at the moment of the speech but are also envisaged as a mental construction of the speaker, which must get as close as possible to reality. This can be clearly inferred from ‘Arafāt’s speech, throughout which he gradually identifies different hearers: from single political figures to members of the Assembly, to different states, right up to an international audience. In the first place, Yāsir addresses the Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Būtiflīqa (who was also the President of the 29th Session (1974-1975) of the UN General Assembly), thanking and praising him as a “sincere and devoted defender of the causes of freedom, justice and peace.” These values also

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<sup>6</sup> With the only exception of Pope Paul VI in 1965.

coincide with three of the ideals to be pursued in Palestine. Subsequently, on behalf of the PLO and of the Palestinian people, ‘Arafāt turns to Kurt Waldheim (the then UN Secretary-General) and the members of the General Assembly, thanking them for the opportunity. Therefore, the introduction of the speech becomes deliberately formal through the use of terms (such as ‘my sincerest thanks;’ ‘the valiant efforts made;’ ‘respectable members’) which indicate awareness of the importance of the institutional context and of the political and historical act that the speaker is carrying out. In this regard, it is worth emphasizing that Yāsir does not resort to the usual Islamic opening and closing formula ‘in the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate,’ *bi-smi llāhi al-raḥmani al-raḥīmi*, in contrast with what frequently occurs in some of his speeches.<sup>7</sup> This choice aims to shift the attention of the media and of government representatives from the religious problem to the Palestinian political and humanitarian one, as Yāsir will later explicitly declare in his speech:

*wa-min hunā yabda’u ḡudūru al-muškilati al-filastīniyya, ’inna haḏā ya’ni ’anna ’asās al-muškala laysa ḥilāfan dīniyyan ’aw qawmiyyan beyna dīnayni ’aw qawmiyyatayn; wa-laysa nizā’an ’alā ḥudūd beyna al-duwali al-mutaḡāwira. ’Inna-hu qaḏiyyatu ša’bin uḡtušiba arda-h wa- waṭana-h wa-šurrida min ’arḏi-h [...]*<sup>8</sup>

The roots of the Palestine question lie here, and this means that the origin of the problem is not a religious or national conflict between two religions or nationalities, and neither is it a border conflict between neighbouring states. It is the problem of people whose land, whose homeland, has been usurped and who have been expelled from their land [...].

Furthermore, as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca assert, an initial way to come close to the interlocutor’s comprehension can consist in identifying his social group or the *milieu* he belongs to. The exclusion of the Islamic lexicon is consistent with the desire to persuade a vast and heterogeneous

<sup>7</sup> Frisch (2005: 326) has analysed eleven speeches delivered by ‘Arafāt between 1996 and 2001, noticing that the traditional salutation ‘in the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate,’ *bi-smi llāhi al-raḥmani al-raḥīmi*, appears in the written version of all these speeches, followed by the opening verse of the Qur’ān. Furthermore, unlike ‘Arafāt’s speech of 1974, analysed in the present study, his rhetoric after the Oslo II Accords (1995) contains several references to Islam, to *ḡihād*, to Islamic history and formulas, and to *Allāh* as Raphael Israeli’s contribution (2001) points out.

<sup>8</sup> Transliteration carried out on the basis of the oral production of ‘Arafāt which differs, in some points, from the officially widespread written version, both for the pronunciation of some phonemes and for the nominal and verbal inflection and for the inclusion or exclusion of some lexemes. In this passage it is interesting to note: a verb-subject agreement error, since the verb *yabda’u* (‘begins’) is a masculine, while the subject *ḡudūru* ‘roots’ requires a feminine voice (being a plural), differently from what emerges from the written version where the singular *ḡiḏr* ‘root’ appears; the phoneme /ḏ/ commutes in /z/, a typical fact of dialectal realizations, just as the pronunciation [beyna] is dialectal instead of the standard one [bayna]; in the oral version it is said *arḏa-h wa-waṭana-h* ‘his land and his homeland,’ while in the written one the first term does not appear.

international audience to support the Palestinian cause, in a context of strong tension with Israel. This is why ‘Arafāt, fully aware of the stakes and of the uncertainty of the result, seeks to develop a rhetoric based on argumentations that can be embraced by the aforementioned audience.

The leader’s speech falls within the scenario theorized by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, in which the audience is divided into different factions which the speaker is called to consider in the argumentation. At the end of the speech, the continuous adaptation to the interlocutors and their values generates a change in the audience, which will no longer be “exactly as it was at the beginning” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 17-23).<sup>9</sup> To bring about this change, the Palestinian leader addresses several *particular* audiences in the course of his speech. ‘Arafāt directly addresses the United States of America as weapons suppliers to the Zionist movement, but, on the other hand, he constructs the image of American people as that of an empathetic audience, since they share with the Palestinians the experience of the struggle for their national unity and independence. Similarly, the entire speech is a condemnation of Zionism, but the Jews are invited to live with the Palestinians “in a framework of just peace in our democratic Palestine.” Moreover, the international community is solicited to end colonial oppression and support the colonised peoples in their struggle for independence. This appeal to the international community undoubtedly broadens the audience to which it is addressed making it more *universal*. Nevertheless, as Reboul (1996: 103) states, the universal audience is conceivable as a “principle of overcoming”<sup>10</sup> through which the quality of an argumentation can be evaluated. This is why ‘Arafāt comes to involve the rest of the world, depicting the need to make all possible efforts to achieve peace, development, equality, and justice, as if it were a need of the whole world. The construction of the *universal* audience by the leader is functional to ensure that the speech is adequate and convincing even for a wider audience, reachable through the media. In this regard, at the end of the speech he addresses the audience as ‘you’ which, in the first place, includes the UN, but which suggests that he wants to persuade as many people as possible:

[...] I appeal to you to accompany our people in their struggle to attain their right to self-determination [...] I appeal to you, further, to make it possible for our people to return from their enforced exile [...] to live in our country, in our homes and in the shade of our trees and fields, free and sovereign, enjoying all of our national rights.

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<sup>9</sup> Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969: 26-40) abstractly identify the *universal* audience with all reasonable beings. Conversely, the *particular* audience includes at least one interlocutor.

<sup>10</sup> Translated from the Italian expression “principio di superamento.” Refer also to Bartocci (2010) for an interesting insight into the topic.



Despite the incessant construction of different audiences, ‘Arafāt formally continues to keep the General Assembly’s President, Būtifliqa, as his main interlocutor, via the formula ‘Mr. President.’

### 5. Objects of agreement

In order to succeed in his persuasive intent, the speaker will have to count on the agreement of the listeners on the premises, i.e., on assumptions shared by the audience and assumed by the speaker. In fact, the choice of premises and their statement have a strong argumentative power since they are the basis for the persuasive reasoning (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 65). In his speech, ‘Arafāt insists on some objects of agreement which often coincide with the cornerstones of the Palestinian question. In fact, their controversial and problematic essence and the international and diversified audience’s nature makes it necessary, from the very beginning of the speech, to establish a common ground of shareable elements, which foster the approval of the Palestinian position. Such an endeavour is achieved through the use of *facts*, *truths*, and *presumptions* (relating to the *real*) and of *values* and *loci* (concerning the *preferable*). The great heterogeneity of ‘Abū ‘Ammār’s public makes it hard to present the Palestinian historical events as *facts* “which refer to an objective reality” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 67). Nonetheless, it is possible to identify some of them with the Arab Israeli wars and their effects, and the *Nakba*, the ‘catastrophe,’ of 1948 and its consequences. Although the truthfulness of these events represents a real *fact*, it should be remembered that ‘Arafāt includes them in his speech with the intention to persuade the audience about the legitimacy of his cause. For this reason, he corroborates the *facts* by several *loci of quantity*,<sup>11</sup> which enable the speaker to discredit Israel. At the same time, they demonstrate the progressive settlement of Jews in the Palestinian land and, therefore, the cause supported by the Palestinians:

The population of Palestine, when the invasion began in 1881 and before the first wave of settlements, was about half a million people, all Arabs, Muslims, Christians and about twenty thousand Palestinian Jews, everyone living protected by religious tolerance, for which our civilization is known.

‘Arafāt goes on to argue that between 1882 and 1917 another 50,000 European Jews moved to Palestine. Furthermore, within thirty years after the Balfour Declaration, the number of Jewish immigrants in

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<sup>11</sup> This typology of *loci* makes it possible to enhance the superiority of an object for *quantitative* reasons. This prominence also applies to negative values (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 86).

Palestine had increased up to about 600,000 Jews overall in 1947. That part of the population had less than 6% of the fertile land, while the number of Arab residents amounted to about 1,250,000. Moreover, Yāsir uses the *quantity* to elicit an empathetic and emotional response from his audience when he states that 30,000 *šahīd*, Palestinian ‘martyrs,’<sup>12</sup> had died by 1948. The number then reached thousands in the following years. In particular, the speaker leverages the pain suffered by the most fragile people:

Thousands of our people’s sons were massacred in their villages and towns, and tens of thousands were forced, under rifle fire and the bombing of cannons and aircraft, to leave their homes and what they had sown in the land of their ancestors. How many roads were women, children and elderly men forced to travel without any food or water, forced to climb mountains and wander in the desert?!

The *facts* are then further consolidated through recourse to *presumptions*, closely connected to the concept of *normal*.<sup>13</sup> The wars themselves (*facts*) are mentioned to demonstrate the cruelty of the enemy and the atrocity of their actions, which gave rise to the conflicts. The leader’s words are based on the belief that the public considers it normal for every nation to live in peace and security, without suffering constant threats.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969: 70) also point out “the presumption that the quality of an act reveals the quality of the person responsible for it.” In various moments of his speech, ‘Arafāt builds a negative image of *al-‘aduww* ‘the enemy,’ through the reference to several acts of aggression and of *‘irhāb*, ‘terrorism,’ committed by them. An example is provided below:

Mister President:

The small number of Palestinian Arabs who could not be expelled by the enemy in 1948 are now refugees in their own homeland. They were treated by Israeli law as second-class citizens, and even as third-class citizens since Oriental Jews are second-class citizens. All forms of racial discrimination and terrorism have been practiced against them, their lands and properties have been confiscated, they have been exposed to bloody massacres [...] For 26 years, our people have been living there under constant military rule and were denied the right to move from one place to another without the prior permission from the military governor.

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<sup>12</sup> In Arabic it is singular, ‘martyr.’

<sup>13</sup> The meaning of what is *normal* reveals itself in relation to a reference group and, therefore, to concepts that can exceed or be lower than the average value of what the group considers *normal* (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 70-72).

This passage of the speech, that exemplifies others where the same representation is strengthened, clearly reveals the association between the quality of the Zionist actions and Zionism itself.

This negative correlation emerges also from the *truths*, namely “more complex systems relating to connections between facts” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 69) that enable Yāsir to weave an understanding with the audience about the ideologies that are certainly shared by his interlocutors. Some *truths* can be considered *collective* because they concern the international community, while others are *specific*, concerning precise listeners. The first part of the speech is almost exclusively made up of *collective truths* to immediately build a common ground with the audience. The main *collective truths* can be summarized in the following points:

- trust in the United Nations as an institution capable of applying its Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights principles and able to eradicate colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, racism, and Zionism to achieve peace, justice, equality, and freedom
- the need, shared with the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, but also with the rest of the world, to carry out the ideals stated in the previous point
- the need to eradicate hunger, poverty, diseases, and natural disasters, and to reduce the gap between developed and developing countries, also through a more equitable economic system

Once the audience’s agreement with the more general truths has been achieved, they are applied to concrete situations:

- inclusion of the Palestinian question in the framework of the just causes of the Asian, African, and Latin American oppressed peoples with whom there is a commonality of interests and objectives
- pain and disasters caused by wars in Palestine and other Arab countries

Both general and particular *truths* are strengthened during the speech by repeating them. This allows the orator to increase adhesion, but also to maintain a logical and emotional thread in the development of the diverse themes. Furthermore, the discourse, applying the same basic *truths* from the general to the particular, becomes consequential and compact.

As emerges from the identified *truths*, ‘Arafāt frequently recalls *values* such as freedom (*al-ḥurriyya*), independence (*al-istiqlāl*), justice (*al-‘adl/al-‘adāla*), peace (*al-salām*), equality (*al-musāwā*), development (*al-tanmiya*), progress (*al-taqaddum*), hopes (*al-‘āṁāl*), wishes/aspirations (*al-‘amānī*) and democracy (*al-dīmūqrāṭiyya*). According to the *Treatise* authors, *values* are essential in the political field by virtue of their persuasive power. In fact, they not only induce listeners to act, but also provide the reasons to justify them and ensure they are also accepted by others. Therefore, the speaker can opt for

employing each *value* in a broad sense, thus trying to gather *universal* consensus (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 74-83). For this reason, in ‘Abū ‘Ammār’s speech *values* are initially presented as aims pursued by the whole world: “We live in a world that aspires to peace, justice, equality and freedom [...] (*‘innanā na‘īšu fī ‘ālamīn yaṭmaḥu li-l-salāmi wa-li-l-‘adl wa-li-l-musāwāti wa-li-l-ḥurriyya*).” This statement, expressed through a ‘we’ that includes all humanity, illustrates perfectly the leader’s attempt to create unity of *values* for the benefit of the entire universe. And again:

Mister President:

The world needs to make the utmost effort to achieve its ideals of peace, freedom, justice, equality, and development, of fighting imperialism and neo-colonialism and racism in all its forms, including Zionism. This is the only way to realize the hopes of all peoples, including those of peoples whose states oppose this path. It is a way to enshrine the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights principles.

As evinced from the excerpt, *values* and their recurring repetition serve the dual function of developing shared purposes with the audience and demonstrating how colonialism, racism, imperialism, and Zionism are in antithesis with them and with the United Nations’ very principles. Even without explicitly mentioning the Palestinian question, the leader prepares the ground to develop the argumentation in this direction. Indeed, the *values* ‘Arafāt frequently affirms in his speech also represent the *rationales*, which he claims to support and justify the ‘legitimacy’ of the Palestinian cause, as well as of the PLO, *bi-ṣifati-hā al-mumattila al-šari‘iyya al-waḥīda li-l-ša‘bi al-filasṭīniyy*, ‘as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.’ Hence, if the audience initially accepts the above-mentioned values, the speaker will probably succeed in persuading the listeners, or at least some of them, about the legitimacy of the Palestinian cause, since it pursues those same ideals.

## 6. Arguments in favour of Palestinian independence and recognition of the PLO’s legitimacy

A complete and exhaustive taxonomy of each argument employed by the speaker would exceed the possibilities of the present study. Therefore, the analysis is concentrated on the most incisive arguments used by the leader to achieve his perlocutionary objectives. These, as illustrated in the introduction, have two main purposes: that of focusing the attention of the General Assembly on the search for Palestinian independence, and that of establishing the role of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians. Hence, the following paragraph will consist in the study of the

arguments used respectively for the aforementioned objectives. Both *associative* and *dissociative arguments*<sup>14</sup> recur in ‘Arafāt’s speech.

To achieve his perlocutive aims, Yāsir must convince the audience of the good intentions and the correctness of the organization he represents and, conversely, of the illegitimacy of the enemy’s actions. For this reason, in the speech, an ideological and value-based polarization is realised where Israeli and Palestinian actions and perspectives are placed at the extreme poles. These orientations are frequently reflected in the deictics, where the pronoun ‘we’ coincides with the Palestinians and, sometimes, is also extended to the peoples who are fighting against any form of colonialism and inequality. Conversely, the pronouns ‘you’ and ‘they’ are used in both positive and negative senses, respectively to address the General Assembly and Zionism with its allies.<sup>15</sup>

This polarization also emerges by the resort to the dissociative technique through which ‘Arafāt clearly distinguishes the *reality*, which coincides with the Palestinian perspective, from the *appearance*, i.e., Israel’s misrepresentation of *reality*. Indeed, while the *reality* is coherent, the *appearance*, which is a mere “manifestation of the real,” can take on inconsistent multiple forms (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 415-417). *Appearances* can be recognized through the use of the verb ‘claim’ or terms such as ‘errors,’ ‘illusions,’ ‘myths,’ ‘prejudices,’ which “form a screen, a veil, a mask, an obstacle to knowledge of reality” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 436-438).

The *dissociation* of some notions related to the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict emerges from the following terms:

- ‘claim’ (“[...] we do so because present at this very moment in our midst are those who, as they occupy our homes [...] claim that we are ghosts that do not exist, have no inheritance or future”)
- ‘reality’ (“[...] It is because there are among you those—I mean the United States of America and others—who [...] take hostile positions against us and aim to distort the reality of the problem”)

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<sup>14</sup> According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969: 190) *associative arguments* are “schemes which bring separate elements together and allow us to establish a unity among them, which aims either at organizing them or at evaluating them, positively or negatively, by means of one another.” Differently, *dissociative arguments* “have the purpose of dissociating, separating, disuniting elements which are regarded as forming a whole or at least a unified group within some system of thought: dissociation modifies such a system by modifying certain concepts which make up its essential parts.”

<sup>15</sup> Such a peculiar role of pronominals seems to be recurrent in the rhetoric of the Palestinian leader. Suleiman (1999), examining ‘Arafāt’s pronominal choices in the context of two English television interviews as an indicator of self-presentation to the public, identifies a contrast between ‘we’ and ‘they.’ The academic (1999: 110-112) infers that the first-person plural pronoun reflects the shared responsibility of the Palestinian struggle between Yāsir and his people, implying, at the same time, the need for a collective effort. On the other hand, the use of the pronoun ‘they’ “depicts his opponents as a group that is separated from him and the rest of the Palestinian people” (Suleiman 1999: 112).

- ‘lies’: (“Mr. President: Our people suffer intensely when they hear the propaganda which says that their lands were deserted until they were inhabited by foreign settlers, that their homeland was uninhabited, and that the foundation of this colonial entity caused no harm to any human being. No, no, Mr. President, you must refute these lies from this international forum [...]”)
- ‘myths’ (“We are defending the dream of the future, while he [the enemy] is defending the myths of the past”)<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, ‘Arafāt illustrates the expansionist wars waged by Israel in 1956 and 1967, reiterating how the enemy has “exposed world peace to a real danger.” The adjective ‘real’ suggests the distinction between a real danger, that of Israeli wars, which greatly compromised world security, and a false danger, attributed by Zionism to Palestinian actions.

Furthermore, Yāsir uses another *dissociative* technique, the *dissociation of concepts*, to establish a key element of his argument: the distinction between revolutionary and terrorist. In particular, the speaker resorts to the *definition* which aims to establish the true meaning of a notion with respect to its apparent use (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 444):

Mr. President: Those who describe our revolution as terrorism are doing it to deceive world public opinion from seeing the truth, from seeing our face, which represents the side of justice and self-defence, and their face, which [instead] represents oppression, terrorism, and coercion. The side on which the owner of the weapons stands is the one that designates him as a revolutionary or terrorist. To those who take the side of a just cause and who fight for the freedom and independence of their homeland against invasion, occupation, and colonialism, cannot be applied in any case, cannot be applied in any case the terrorist status [...]. As to those who take up arms against the just causes and who wage war to occupy, plunder, exploit and colonize other people’s nations, then those are the real terrorists, those are the people whose actions must be condemned, and the epithet of war criminal falls on them, since the justice of the cause determines the justice of arms.<sup>17</sup>

In this excerpt, the *dissociation* between revolutionary and terrorist is based on the concept of justice of the cause, which condones the use of arms. In fact, although both the notions imply the usage of

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<sup>16</sup> In reality, the term ‘myths,’ *‘asāṭīr*, is used only in the written version of ‘Arafāt’s speech, since in the oral one he uses the term *buṭlān*, i.e., ‘lies,’ which points out the presence of a *dissociation* anyway. Furthermore, considering the myth as a fantastic narration with symbolic value that does not correspond to reality, the terms ‘myths’ and ‘lie’ were considered interchangeable in the speech.

<sup>17</sup> Square bracket added to indicate an integration to the text.

arms and armed conflict, ‘Arafāt dissociates those who resort to arms for self-defence, i.e., by virtue of the ‘justice of the cause,’ from those who exploit arms to oppress other peoples, namely the terrorists. Once again, this distinction is made necessary because of Israel’s misleading representation of reality, which has deceived “world public opinion from seeing the truth” and the Palestinians’ face. In this important passage other arguments can be identified, along with *dissociation*, that mutually reinforce their persuasive force. First of all, Yāsir resorts to the *implication*, which falls under the *arguments by transitivity* (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 229-231). Indeed, if it is agreed that those who fight for their freedom and independence cannot be defined as terrorists, then the Palestinians cannot be considered terrorists since they fight for these same reasons. Conversely, Zionism can be classified as a terrorist movement if one agrees in considering as such, anyone who uses weapons to colonize other peoples’ territories. It is also interesting to observe that the speaker tries to place these concepts close to historical events which are known and important to his audience, so as to strengthen his argument. To be noted furthermore is the use of the *transitive relations* in the following excerpt, which follows the postulate that anyone who fights for their independence cannot be considered a terrorist:

[...] otherwise, the American people, when they took up arms against British colonialism, would have been terrorists; the European resistance against Nazism would have been terrorism, the struggle of the Asian, African and Latin America peoples would have been terrorism, and many of you in this room would have been terrorists.

Clearly, the purpose is to lead to the *implication* that not even Palestinians can be called terrorists as they are fighting for their freedom. This distinction is reinforced during the speech, as Yāsir frequently refers to the Zionist actions with the term ‘terrorism’ and to the Palestinian ones with the word ‘revolution.’

Another key element of ‘Arafāt’s argument is to demonstrate the closeness between Zionism and colonialism. Indeed, assuming that the audience has accepted the universal *values* and *truths* set by the speaker as common goals, they become attainable only after defeating colonialism (of which Zionism is one form). Thus, the speaker resorts to *the argument by comparison* (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 242-247) to state that Zionism has practiced forms of racism in Palestine “more than racists have done and do in South Africa [...]” Hence, trying to make the Palestinian vicissitudes with Zionism closer to facts both known to and poignant for the audience, he explicitly declares:

As colonialism and the settlers used the concepts of “civilization and urbanization” to justify invasion, looting and aggression in Africa and elsewhere, these pretexts have also been used to invade our Palestine with waves of Zionist migrants.

The true essence of Zionism and its association with colonialism are then historically established through the *argument that links the act and the essence*, with which occurrences are related and illustrated by considering them the expression of an essence which is also manifested through other beings or events (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969: 327). Hence, ‘Arafāt refers to the Balfour Declaration and the ‘close relationship’ between Rhodes “while originating his settler-colonialism in southeast Africa, and Herzl, who began to plan and arrange his settler-colonialism in the land of our Palestine.” If Rhodes embodies the essence of British colonialism and imperialism of the late 1800s and early 1900s, Herzl is elevated to the representative of colonialism in Palestine. Therefore, the actions and agreements of Herzl and Rhodes, prove the strong alliance between the essences they represent and their quality.

Equally important in the speech is the justification of the Palestinian struggle, which, in order to be accepted by the audience, must first be understood. The speaker skilfully attempts to strengthen the Palestinian position linking another historical event to an element which is dear to the audience:

[...] this Assembly, at the beginning of its office, on November 29th, 1947, promulgated a proposal for the partition of our homeland Palestine, amid suspicious movements and intense pressure. So, it divided up what it was not allowed to divide: the land of a single nation. And when we rejected that decision, we did so because we are like the true mother of the child who prevented Solomon from cutting in two her child while another woman claimed him.

In this passage, ‘Arafāt uses the biblical episode<sup>18</sup> of King Solomon, *Sulaymān* in Arabic, to elaborate an *analogy* (a *reasoning by analogy* argument) with the Palestinian land. Indeed, *analogy* is “a resemblance of structures, the most general formulation of which is: A is to B as C is to D,” where A and B constitute the *theme* on which the conclusion rests, while C and D represent the *phoros* on which the reasoning develops (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 372). In this excerpt the real mother of the child (C) and her new-born (D) represent the *phoros*, i.e., the best-known elements on which the reasoning is based, while the Palestinians (A) and Palestinian land (B) constitute the *theme*. Through this analogy it is possible to draw the conclusion that the Palestinians are to the Palestinian land, as the real mother of the child is to her son. This rhetorical figure satisfies the needs of commonality and closeness to the

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<sup>18</sup> The episode referred to as “The Judgement of Solomon” is included in 1 Kgs 3: 16-28.



audience since the distance with it is shortened through the comparison with elements close to the public and meaningful for them.

For the same reason, the attention allocated to the damage inflicted by Israel on some religious symbols becomes important by employing *symbolic relation* (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 331-332): “[...] There is no need to linger by mentioning the *al-ʿAqṣā* Mosque, the theft of the riches of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre [...]” Mentioning the destruction of religious sites and monuments can have a strong impact on a large part of the audience, since Jerusalem contains places and symbols sacred to all three monotheistic religions. The city is repeatedly remembered and itself becomes a symbol of the sacredness of the land which, according to the Palestinians, is violated by the occupation and destruction practiced by Israel. Indeed, during the explanation of how Zionism has tried to change the nature of Jerusalem, which has always been characterized by religious tolerance and rich in sacred places for monotheistic religions, ʿArafāt affirms: “It is not strange, Mr. President, that its three celestial messages embrace each other in its heavens and exchange gifts among each other and in their own horizons [...]” This statement is based on a *metaphor*, i.e., “a condensed analogy, resulting from the fusion of an element from the *phoros* with an element from the theme” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 399). ‘Its three celestial messages’ symbolize the three monotheistic religions<sup>19</sup> which, despite the changes brought about by Israel, continue to embrace each other in its heavens and to exchange gifts, almost as if they were resilient human beings who, in their diversity, persist in coexisting in the mutual respect and love.

Furthermore, in this part of the speech, Jerusalem is depicted with passion, referring to it as “the city of peace, the beloved [...]” which “[...] with its splendour and the scent of history that dominates it, witnesses our generations who have crossed it one after the other, leaving eternal traces in every corner, a delicate imprint, a civil touch and an impulse of humanity.” The speaker thus manages to convey a patriotic message and, at the same time, one of hope for a future in which the city of Jerusalem

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<sup>19</sup> It is noteworthy that this *metaphor* is associated with the Islamic prophetic belief. Indeed, it is based on the idea that the divine message was revealed through prophets (Campanini 2016: 8). The word of God was first sent through Adam, followed by Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Each lawgiver prophet was the bearer of a Book disposing of God’s prescriptions (Campanini 2016: 8). Among them, the Torah, i.e., the Book of Moses, and the Gospel, the Book of Jesus, hold particular importance. Several verses of the *Qurʾān* emphasize the value of these revelations (see *Qurʾān* 2:285, 4:136, 4:164, 42:3 and 42:13). As an example, the following verse is quoted: “Say, ‘O Prophet, ‘We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and his descendants; and what was given to Moses, Jesus, and other prophets from their Lord—we make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we ‘fully’ submit” (Quran 3:84, <https://quran.com/ali-imran/84>). As Campanini (2016: 8-9) explains, according to Islamic tradition, the Jews and the Christians have falsified the Torah and the Gospel, betraying the divine message. For this reason, God sent Muhammad with a new Book, the *Qurʾān*.

can fully express its true essence, outside of any conflict. The result is an attempt to entice the audience to support those who have the city at heart and who wish to give it back the opportunity to flourish again as a place of peace and respect for every creed. This attempt is also promoted by means of the *pragmatic argument* that presents the success as a model of objectivity and the reality derived from it as a guarantee of future success (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 266-27). Indeed, Yāsir emphasizes the PLO’s success in scientific progress, in agricultural, cultural and health development of its country, even “while immersed in armed struggle and facing the cruelty of Zionist terrorism.” Hence, the *pragmatic argument* is used to convince the audience that Palestine could become an important cultural centre. These achievements are due to the broad consensus enjoyed by the PLO, given that its legitimacy derives from the Palestinian masses, as well as “from the representation of *each* group, *each* trade union, and *each* Palestinian jurisdiction, either in its own National Council or in its people’s institutions”<sup>20</sup> and with “the support of the *entire* Arab community.”<sup>21</sup> This excerpt represents an *inclusion of the parts in the whole* through which the quantitative aspect is emphasized (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 231). This argumentative tool is then employed once again to prove the positive intentions behind the leader’s words and demands:

[...] when we speak of our common hopes for the Palestine of tomorrow, we include in our aspirations all Jews now living in Palestine and who agree to live with us in peace and without discriminations on the land of Palestine.

An analogous function is also performed by the *arguments with unlimited development* (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 287-292) that attribute value to certain words through the rhetorical figures of *hyperbole* and *litotes*. These correspond respectively to: “an extreme form of expression” and “a manner of expression which seems to weaken the thought” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 290-291). The following statements by Yāsir belong to the first typology of rhetorical figures: “[...] those who live inside the great prison in the *cage of occupation* [...]”<sup>22</sup> “[...] we do not want *a drop of blood* to be shed [...]”<sup>23</sup> “[...] neither do we delight in continuing the struggle *for a single minute*.”<sup>24</sup> The *hyperbole* thus produces a decidedly more intense impact on the audience, which will be induced to empathize with

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<sup>20</sup> Italics added to emphasize the *inclusion of the parts in the whole*.

<sup>21</sup> Italics added to emphasize the *inclusion of the parts in the whole*.

<sup>22</sup> Italics added to highlight *hyperbole*.

<sup>23</sup> Italics added to highlight *hyperbole*.

<sup>24</sup> Italics added to highlight *hyperbole*.

Palestinians and to recognize the goodness of their intentions. Some examples of *litotes* are found in the following excerpt:

*We do not forget, and we will not forget, the catastrophes that struck the inhabitants of hundreds of villages and towns of the plains and mountains in 1948, in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Lydda, Ramle, Galilee, and we will not forget those who suffered terror, moment by moment [...].*<sup>25</sup>

The negation makes it possible to direct the thought in the opposite direction: to argue that the Palestinians will not forget the tragedies suffered in reality means that the memory of them will be everlasting. The pain suffered by the Palestinian people is frequently evoked to persuade the public and, at the same time, to show the atrocity of Israeli actions. An important example is constituted by the *argument by sacrifice*, i.e., a *quasi-logical argument*, which emphasizes the sacrifice that one is ready to make to pursue an objective (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 248-255). ‘Arafāt devotes parts of his speech to extolling the sacrifice made by his people and by the PLO to defend themselves. Some examples follow: “How many roads were women, children and elderly men forced to travel without any food or water, forced to climb mountains and wander in the desert?!” “[...] our people paid in the blood and souls of their sons which cannot ever be refundable in terms of price.” Furthermore, the speaker highlights the value of his own homeland that not only represents a territory to return to, but becomes an identity, a cultural and social mirror in which you can recognize yourself. These reasons make the object of sacrifice dense in value and the martyrs ‘offered,’ the destroyed villages, the souls of the children, the pain suffered by the most fragile subjects, as well as the exodus of the population, increase the prestige and the value of the Palestinians and of the PLO.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that almost every positive Palestinian action and every negative Zionist act illustrated in the speech also constitute *pragmatic arguments*. This argument “permits the evaluation of an act or an event in terms of its favourable or unfavourable consequences” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 266). Hence the *pragmatic argument* is employed to persuade the public to negatively evaluate the consequences, but also the causes of Israel’s actions. Among the numerous examples, a significant one is reported:

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<sup>25</sup> Italics added to highlight *litotes*.

[...] [Zionism]<sup>26</sup> has blown up 19,000 houses over the past seven years (the equivalent of the complete destruction of two hundred other Palestinian villages). The huge number of [Palestinians] maimed by terrorism and torture and those who are in prisons [...].

Finally, Zionism’s negative actions are efficaciously presented resorting to *metonymy*, which creates a *symbolic relation* (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 336-337), arousing an intense *pathos*:

[...] Their terrorism [of the Zionists]<sup>27</sup> even went as far as hatred against the olive tree, the orange tree, the orange tree, and the olive tree in my country, which they considered a proud symbol that reminds them of the indigenous inhabitants of the country, which cries out that the land is Palestinian. So, they sought to uproot the olive tree or to destroy it by carelessness or by making it firewood.

In this passage, the *metonymy* discloses the fury with which the Palestinians are killed. They are symbolized by the olive tree, uprooted to be transformed into firewood with a certain ‘carelessness.’

This rhetorical figure also allows Yāsir to spread the message with an emotional charge much greater than a speech that does not use figurative language.

## 7. Conclusion

The perlocutionary aims pursued by the speaker through the use of the several arguments examined are then made explicit at the end of the speech. ‘Arafāt, indeed, concludes his argument in the first person singular, while making a series of requests “as President of the Organization for the Liberation of Palestine and leader of the Palestinian revolution.” This formula allows him to consolidate the unity of his people and his Organization, but above all to underline his authority increasing his *ethos*. Thus, the requests to return from forced exile and to establish their national authority in Palestine are addressed to a ‘you’ which includes both the members of the General Assembly and the whole audience potentially achievable by his words. Therefore, Yāsir concludes his argument by taking up the initial theme of peace:

I have come to you, Mr. President, with an olive branch in my hand and a revolutionary rifle in my hand. So do not let the green branch fall from my hand. Do not let the green

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<sup>26</sup> Square brackets added to indicate integrations to the text.

<sup>27</sup> Square brackets added to indicate integrations to the text.

branch fall from my hand. Do not let the green branch fall from my hand. War flares up from Palestine, and peace... peace begins from Palestine. Thank you.

The speech ends, in the rhetorical wake of the entire discourse, with another *metonymy*. This makes the speaker's statements extremely intense, but also explicit, revealing his intention to achieve peace on the sole condition that his requests are satisfied.

From the *New Rhetoric* (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969) perspective it was possible to observe Yāsir's ability to use numerous objects of agreement and argumentative techniques in order to position himself on the same value horizon as his audience. This allows him to place his people's problem in the same context of the whole world problems and to situate the arguments on the Palestinian question in a framework shared by his interlocutors, urging the international community to address them jointly.

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