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Breaking the Silence: Pain, Torture, Resistance and Bearing Witness in the writings of Palestinian Prisoners of War and Administrative Detainees (1967 2004)

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**Breaking the Silence: Pain, Torture, Resistance and Bearing
Witness in the writings of Palestinian Prisoners of War and
Administrative Detainees (1967-2004)**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2022

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To my one and only love...

To Palestine...

You are the womb and the tomb

We came from you, and to you we are returning

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Abstract

This thesis explores theoretical approaches underpinning prison writing with a focus on the writings of Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees who mainly spent many years in incarceration and who started writing in the wake of their imprisonment. Many Arab and foreign literary critics find similarities in prison writings' form and content and common formal defects. The question is what these recurrent themes, textual and writing techniques are and, most importantly, *why* they are frequent in prison accounts. Are prison writings "identical" within the same prison system or globally, and do they focus only on prison experiences as their central theme? What are the environmental circumstances and the prisoner-writer state of mind at the time of writing, and how do they affect the process, context, and form of the writing? Finally, why do they write in the first place, and what kind of readers are needed to make the victims' voices heard?

Although the Israeli Zionist Settler Colonial Regime (IZSCR) has been incarcerating a large percentage of Palestinians since 1967, Palestinian prison/trauma writings have not notably received much attention. Thus, I address this neglected area of texts written by Palestinian prisoners of war to help bring public awareness to writings that rarely receive notice or appear in venues with limited circulation.

This thesis examines three types of prison writings: fiction, personal and collective testimonies written mainly in prison and embraced by the Palestinian prisoners' movement that rose soon after 1967 and rapidly declined after the second Intifada in 2000. I study these three categories of prison writings via the Palestinian context and experience, the larger theories of trauma, pain, violence, torture, and resistance literature.

This thesis attempts to redefine the prison literature genre in the Arab World and presents a new approach to reading prison writings in general.

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Introduction

Arab literary critics, such as Nazih Abu Nidal and Samar al-Faysal,¹ like many scholars specialising in prison literature, tend to over-generalise the cultural, historical, and political experiences that shape incarcerated writers' experiences. In her article, "South African Prison Literature," Sheila Roberts goes so far as to claim that the "homogeneity of substance, tone, and mood of prison writing no matter the form comes from the [similar] physical conditions out of which prison literature springs. It makes little difference whether the author or protagonist is a felon, political dissenter or Joseph K.: a prison is a prison."² Similarly, Abu Nidal, in his book, *Adab al-Sujun (Prison Literature)*, contends that prison experiences are "identical."³ He asserts that all differences between political prisoners and torturers are minimal.

The research question is:

Are prison writings written by Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees "identical" within the IZSCR prison system from 1967 to 2004 and do they focus only on prison experiences as their central theme? What are the recurrent themes, textual and writing techniques and, most importantly, *why* are they frequent in prison accounts and how are they represented? What are the environmental circumstances and the prisoner-writer state of mind at the time of writing, and how do they affect the process, context, and form of the writings? Why do they write in the first place, and what kind of readers are needed to make the victims' voices heard?

¹ Samar al-Fayṣal, *al-Sijṅ al-Siyāsi fī al-Rriwāyah al-'Arabiyaḥ* (n.p., 1983).

² Sheila Roberts, "South African Prison Literature," *Ariel* 16, no. 2 (AA RR April 1985): 61.

³ Nazīh Abū Niḍāl, *Adab al-Sujūn* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ḥadāthah, 1981), 119.

Literature Review:

I totally agree with Lachlan Whalen, who asserts, in his book *Contemporary Irish Republican Prison Writing: Writing and Resistance*, that this viewpoint is flawed on several levels: first, it assumes that a uniform state of discipline within prisons exists or is achievable and that each prisoner experiences incarceration physically and mentally in the same fashion. Second, such a model conceives prisoners as helpless victims who behave and write in entirely predictable ways due to unvarying institutional influences and practices.⁴ Although prison administrators strive to sustain consistent disciplinary procedures in both temporal and spatial terms, prisons across the globe vary with each culture and political system. Additionally, all prisons are in constant flux from internal and external influences.⁵

In this thesis, I consider the unique perspective of each individual prisoner based on gender, political and religious affiliations, class, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and educational level. Roberts' view, described above, disregards these factors. Abu Nidal and Al-Faysal emphasise that all the prison writers they have studied are middle-class Arab intellectuals from the same socioeconomic and cultural background. To Abu Nidal, this shared cultural grounding is another reason that explains why their prison experiences are 'identical.'⁶ If one overlooks all or some of these factors, one ignores the very method by which prison administrators frequently classify, segregate, and discipline prisoners.

⁴ Lachlan Whalen, *Contemporary Irish Republican Prison Writing: Writing and Resistance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 2-3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶ Abu Nidal, *Adab*, 119.

The literary critic Ioan Davies addresses the disparities in prison experiences and prison writing by identifying three categories of prison writing: 1) writing produced by incarcerated intellectuals (generally considered politicised before their incarceration); 2) writing by “the writer who operates directly out of prison experience” (i.e., a non-political prisoner); and 3) writings that “merge in a collective of epic and self-critical or ur-epic where oral stories and songs become part of folk history of imprisonment, exile and slavery.”⁷ 4) To these three categories I add a fourth: those produced by working-class freedom fighters and political activists with very little education who started writing in the wake of their imprisonment, as is the case in the Palestinian prison experience. Another disparity that one must recognise is that prisoners of war are often arrested, detained, interrogated and charged under special legislation not utilised with alleged or convicted criminals, as has been the case in various countries, including Palestine, where special laws have been used to arrest and incarcerate freedom fighters, members of the resistance and political activists for over five decades. For example, prisoners stand before a military court and are often charged by virtue of secret evidence that neither the prisoners nor their lawyers can access. In this manner, even before prisoners of war are incarcerated, their experiences and perspectives differ significantly from, for instance, those of the criminal inmate. Therefore, a more nuanced definition of prison literature in Arabic must include not only narratives that reflect the prison experience itself as either a central or marginal theme, as is the case in Abu Nidal’s and al-Faysal’s books but also all the accounts written in

⁷ In footnote 2, chapter 1, Davies states: “By 'ur-epic' I mean the epic of collective consciousness, not written but told. The prefix 'ur-' is used because it comes from the beginning of human history.” Ioan Davies, *Writers in Prison* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 4.

prison.⁸ For instance, the Palestinian prisoners of war have been producing different kinds of texts (e.g., documents, personal and collective testimonies, fiction, letters, political writings, journals, translations, short stories, announcements, pamphlets, and speeches).

Secondly, literary critics must consider the conditions surrounding textual composition when examining prison narratives. Prisoner writings are often censored. Thus, prisoners write with censorship in mind or else they must avoid censorship altogether. As a result, many prisoner texts frequently have to be written in secret and then smuggled out. In certain prisons in the Israeli-occupied territories, especially in the nineteen-seventies and early eighties, writing was wholly forbidden in prison cells. Prisoners faced punishment or worse consequences due to producing such texts for their fellow prisoners or publication outside the prison walls. Prisoners have not only had to conceal their works-in-progress but have had to make more than one copy of their texts to ensure that their writings are not lost if confiscated by prison guards. All these factors complicate the prisoner writing process and make it far more difficult for prisoners to write compared to non-incarcerated writers.

Thirdly, literary critics also must consider that prisoners of war have endured severe psychic trauma more so than other non-prisoners of war who are beaten for misbehaving. Many literary critics overlook the mental and psychological conditions of the authors at the time of writing, which is believed to dictate both the content and form of their narratives, especially those that focus on prison experiences. Critics use literary theories as the only tool to support their analysis and explain their findings. For instance, Abu Nidal (1981), al-Faysal (1983) and

⁸ In this thesis, I use the term *prison writings* instead of *prison literature* because *prison literature* as genre in Arabic literature includes only memoirs, short stories or novels that deal with the prison theme either as a central or marginal theme. By *prison writings*, I mean all the writings that have been written in prison.

D’Affilitto (1998) state that it is challenging to identify the line between the “autobiographical” (the real) and the fictional in Arabic prison literature as many prison novels take the form of a documentary or semi-autobiographical story.⁹ Davies attempts to explain this dominant semi-fictional or documentary element by stating that political prisoner writing, “however it is cast, is neither a novel, nor autobiography, nor epic ... [it is] storytelling.”¹⁰ None of these scholars has inquired about the reason behind the dominant feature of the documentary (literality in narration) in prison writings. Why are certain novelistic features of prison literature present in almost all prison narratives focused on prison experiences? Why is the expression of pain (physical and emotional) absent in most of these narratives? And why are the writing style and structure dramatically different when writer-prisoners write and examine non-prison themes?

In her book, *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry claims that pain is un-sharable and that it resists objectification and destroys language, “bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned.”¹¹ According to Scarry, “physical pain has no referential”, and when writers try to translate it into language, it loses at least some of its “aversiveness.”¹² Furthermore, Scarry states that although “literary representations” of pain are absent in the arts, “[s]till, there are isolated instances [that] provide fictional analogues, perhaps whole paragraphs of words that can be borrowed when the

⁹ Isabell D’Affilitto, “Prison Narratives: Autobiography and Fiction,” in *Writing the Self* (London: Saqi Books, 1998), 148-56.

¹⁰ Davies, *writers*, 9.

¹¹ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (New York & London: Oxford University Press, 1985), 5.

¹² *Ibid.*

real-life crisis of silence comes.”¹³ Scarry, however, does not explain how and why pain is expressed in these ‘isolated instances.’

In her article “Chronic Pain and the Tension between the Body as Subject and Object,” Jean Jackson disagrees with Scarry’s distinction between physical and emotional pain. Jackson argues that the lines are seldom clear phenomenologically because “pain by definition is simultaneously bodily experience and mental-emotional experience.”¹⁴ She also contends that pain has its own unique language and cognitive-affective expression that differs from everyday language. She argues that if everyday language “allow[s] [us] to metaphorise pain, then it becomes adequate to the task — indeed often eloquent.”¹⁵ Pain is freed not only through ‘beauty’, that is, through metaphors and works of art, but also through terror, as Daniel Valentine states in his article “The Individual in Terror.” Terror can free pain from “its static particularity into a domain of inexhaustible virtuality.”¹⁶ Both the victim and his family will be able to understand pain when it extends into terror.¹⁷ None of these three studies, however, explains why pain does not find its way out of its arrested (unsharable) state, even when it finds objectification in verbal recitations or writings of painful experiences, such as the prison experiences studied in this thesis.

¹³ Ibid., 10.

¹⁴ Jean Jackson, “Chronic Pain and the Tension between the Body as Subject and Object,” in *Embodiment and Experience: the Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, ed. Csordas J. Thomas (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 210.

¹⁵ Ibid., 25.

¹⁶ Valentine E. Daniel, “The Individual in Terror,” *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, ed. Csordas J. Thomas (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 245.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Auschwitz survivor and psychiatrist Victor Frankl's book, *From Death-Camp to Existentialism — A Psychiatrist's Path to a New Therapy*, led me to trauma theories that helped me answer the above questions. His book also guided me to view the narratives of the Palestinian prisoners of war that focus on prison experiences as traumatised texts and testimonies of the prison experiences of the authors as well as their fellow inmates. Such a reading has not been attempted yet in Arabic. Frankl observes three phases of the prisoner's reaction to prison camp life: "the period following his admission; the period he is well entrenched in camp routine; and the period following his release and liberation."¹⁸ In the first phase, prisoners are in a state of shock and thus do not fear death, though they feel disgusted with everything surrounding them. They long for family and home and cannot witness or hear the torture of others. The second phase is characterised by apathy in which prisoners achieve "a kind of emotional death."¹⁹ In other words, they no longer have feelings of revulsion, horror and pity, and they become acclimated or numbed to the sights of dying and death. The prisoners build "a very necessary protective shell" around themselves via their emotional numbness.²⁰ In the third phase, following their release, prisoners take time "to again become a human being."²¹ According to Frankl, two feelings characterise this third phase and threaten to damage the psyche of the released prisoners: bitterness and disillusionment. Thus, "a man who for years had thought he had reached the absolute limit of all possible suffering now found that suffering has no limits,

¹⁸ Victor E. Frankl, *From Death-Camp to Existentialism: A Psychiatrist's Path to a New Therapy*, trans. Ilse Lasch (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

and that he could suffer still more and still more intensely.”²² Almost all the narratives of the prison experiences I collected were written when the authors were in the second psychological phase of apathy and numbness, which can explain the absence of pain expression in their writings. The only Palestinian political prisoner narrative that contains an intense expression of pain is written by Nahidah Nazzal (a journalist and a prisoner writer) during her house arrest after her release. I believe that her being in the third psychological phase at the time of writing made it possible for Nazzal to free her pain through metaphors in her narrative (*While Waiting for the Dream*).²³ In this thesis, I am not only interested in defining trauma but also in understanding its surprising impact: to examine how trauma forces the reader as well as the critic to rethink their notions of experience and communication in literature.

By redefining prison literature and taking into consideration the above suggestions (i.e., the specificity of the individual experiencing prison, the conditions surrounding textual composition, the psychological state of the prisoner writer, and the different narratives written by the prisoners), one can explore the diversity of prison spaces and encounter a number of unquestioned assumptions central to traditional Western literary aesthetics, such as the autonomous writer, the formal criteria of closure, and continuity which characterise the ideology of conventional plots and the dispensing of historical background and ideological awareness.

In this thesis, I claim that Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees are traumatised people and victims of prolonged, repeated trauma, including the writers of personal and collective

²² Ibid., 92.

²³ Nāhidah Nazzāl, *Fī Intiḏār al-Ḥulum* (n.p., 1989).

testimonies and fictional and nonfictional prison texts. Laurie Vickroy, in her book *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* and David Healy in his book *Images of Trauma: From Hysteria to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder* assert that “ignorance” about the reactions to traumatic experiences leads many literary critics to misinterpret trauma narratives.²⁴ I think this assertion applies to many of the Arab and non-Arab literary critics mentioned above (i.e., Nazih Abu Nidal, Samar al-Faysal, Sheila Roberts and Isabella D’Affilitto). The inability of many literary critics to recognise the inaccessibility of the survivor’s symbolic world seems to make them dismiss the trauma and its devastating effect on the individual author. In her book *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma*, Kali Tal states that in order to apprehend prison narratives, “we must embrace critical strategies that acknowledge the peculiar position of the survivor-author.” She also contends that it is impossible to produce such strategies exclusively from the field of literary criticism. Thus, critics have to “move into the realms of psychology and sociology, acknowledging the specific effects of trauma on the process of narration.”²⁵

In this thesis, I attempt to educate the non-traumatised (i.e., myself as a researcher and my readers) to expand our horizons through an understanding of the clinical analysis of the effects of trauma on survivors. This understanding will give us access to the writings of Palestinian prisoners of war - survivors. Thus, I minutely explore trauma, its definition and the complex and regular post-traumatic stress disorders. I also study captivity as chronic trauma and attempt to understand perpetrators' mentality and psyche. In addition, this thesis also deals with therapy: stages of healing

²⁴ Laurie Vickroy, *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*, (Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 20. See also David Healy, *Images of Trauma: From Hysteria to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder* (London: Faber, 1993), 107.

²⁵ Kali Tal, *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 117.

and writing as a therapeutic means. Finally, I shed light on the problematic limitations of language in expressing the unspeakable or the ‘real’ in Lacanian terms, as well as the distancing quality of the conventions of reading that may prevent readers from capturing trauma experiences.²⁶

Trauma is a “wound of the soul,” an exposure to overwhelming events or “acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition.”²⁷ These acts or events resist understanding or remembrance and are beyond one’s “frames of reference.”²⁸ Laub continues in defining trauma events by saying that:²⁹

The traumatic event, although real, took place outside the parameters of “normal” reality, such as causality, sequence, place and time. The trauma is thus an event that has no beginning, no ending, no before, no during and no after. The absence of categories that define it lends it a quality of “otherness”, a salience, a timelessness and ubiquity outside the range of associatively linked experiences, outside the range of comprehension, of recounting, and of mastery. Trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attained no closure, and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in

²⁶ Lacan distinguishes the “real” from reality. The “symbolic” register is that of language, which delimits and defines our subjectivity. The “imaginary” is the identity which we assume for ourselves, the ego, how we conduct ourselves in everyday life. The “real” is what cannot be imagined or spoken of. It is best understood as that which falls out of language, but which only exists because of the inadequate language to which we are subject. See: Jacques Lacan, “Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis,” in *Ecrits* (1977): 65.

²⁷ Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 4.

²⁸ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 5.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

every respect. The survivor, indeed, is not truly in touch either with the core of his traumatic reality or with the fatedness of its reenactments, and thereby remains entrapped in both.

Even though Judith Herman (M.D.) differentiates between two types of trauma: the first type is “single acute trauma” such as road traffic accident, hold-up, death of a family member and rape; the second type is prolonged trauma found in the casualties of war, political, sexual and domestic oppression: combat veterans, captives, concentration camp survivors, battered women and abused children.³⁰ She agrees with Noel Walsh and Henry Krystal that the victims of both types personally encounter violence and death because traumatic events generally involve threats to life and bodily integrity.³¹ They confront the victims with the extremities of helplessness and terror and evoke the responses of catastrophe.³²

According to Walsh in his article “Life in Death”, death encounter (i.e., when neither resistance nor escape is possible) in a traumatic situation leads to a state of ‘desymbolisation.’³³ It severely ruptures the human system of self-defence as well as the effort of “the traumatised self to symbolise its continuity and immortality.” Paralyzing the victim’s symbolic functions prevents

³⁰ Judith Lewis Herman, “Crime and Memory,” in *Trauma and Self*, ed. Charles B. Strozier and Michael Flynn (London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 5.

³¹ Henry Krystal, “Trauma and Aging: a Thirty-Year Follow-UP,” in *Trauma: Exploration in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore; London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 81. See also Noel Walsh, “Life in Death,” in *Trauma and Self*, ed. Charles B. Strozier and Michael Flynn (London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 245-54.

³²According to the *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*, the common denominator of psychological trauma is a feeling of “intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation.” N.C. Andreasen, “Post traumatic Stress Disorder,” in *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*, 4th edition, ed. H.I. Kaplan and B.J. Sadock (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1985), 918-24. See also Herman, “Crime,” 34.

³³ For Lifton the death encounter is shattering because the victim’s prior images, symbolism or inner forms cannot absorb or integrate the threat of annihilation of the self. See: Robert J. Lifton, *Protean Self: Human Resilience in an Age of Fragmentation* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 232.

him/her from coping with the threat of death and leads to “profound and lasting changes in psychological arousal, emotions, cognition, and memory.”³⁴

As a result, traumatic symptoms or post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) “have a tendency to become disconnected from their source and to take on a life of their own... and recondition the human nervous system”, as Judith Herman contends in her book “Trauma and Recovery.”³⁵ According to her, traumatic symptoms fall into three main categories: First, the category of “hyperarousal.” It is the first cardinal symptom of PTSD. It reflects a persistent expectation of danger and increases psychological arousal during sleep as well as in the waking state. As a result, the traumatised person startles easily in an extreme way to unexpected stimuli. The traumatised person also intensely responds to specific triggers associated with the traumatic event. In addition, he/she reacts irritably to minor provocations and sleeps poorly.³⁶

The category of “intrusion” is the second cardinal symptom. It reflects the indelible imprint of the traumatic moment. This moment is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time of its occurrence but only belatedly, in its repeated literal and non-symbolic re-enactment in traumatised person’s memories, dreams and actions.³⁷ The traumatized person relives the event as if it was continually happening in the present. It is as though time stops at the moment of trauma. “The

³⁴ Walsh, “Trauma and Self,” 249.

³⁵ Similarly, Abram Kardiner describes the essential pathology of the combat neurosis in similar terms. When a person is overwhelmed by terror and helplessness, “the whole apparatus for concentered, coordinated and purposeful activity is smashed. The perceptions become inaccurate and pervaded with terror, the coordinative functions of judgment and discrimination fail... the sense organs may even cease to function ... the aggressive impulses become disorganized and unrelated to the situation in hand... The functions of the autonomic nervous system may also become dissociated with the rest of the organism.” See: Abram Kardiner and Herbert Spiegel, *War, Stress, and Neurotic Illness* (New York: Hoeber, 1947), 186. See also Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basics) 1992, 34-36.

³⁶ Marton, 35.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 38. See also Cathy Caruth. Introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 3.

traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep.”³⁸ Thus, any little reminder can evoke these memories with the intensity and emotional force of the original traumatic event in the traumatised person, regardless of being in a usually safe environment or not.³⁹

Traumatic memories appear to be based on an “altered neurophysiological organization.” This explanation justifies some of their unusual qualities. They have a frozen, wordless quality. “They are not encoded like ordinary memories of adults in a verbal, linear narrative that is assimilated into ongoing life story”, but rather they lack verbal narrative and context. They are usually encoded in the form of vivid sensations and images.⁴⁰

Traumatic dreams share many of the unusual features of the traumatic memories that happen in waking states. They are often literal and experienced with terrifying immediacy, as though they are occurring in the present. They are usually identical and occur repeatedly. Small environmental stimuli arouse violent reactions in these dreams or nightmares.⁴¹

Traumatised people relive the trauma not only in their waking states and nightmares but also in their actions. Children and adults feel forced to re-create the traumatic moment, either in

³⁸ Under extreme conditions, existing meaning schemes may be entirely unable to accommodate frightening experiences, which causes the memory of these experiences to be stored differently and not available for retrieval under ordinary conditions: it becomes dissociated from conscious awareness and voluntary control. Bessel A. Van Der Kolk and Onno Van Der Hart, “The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma,” in *Trauma: Exploration in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore; London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 160. See also Herman, *Trauma*, 36.

³⁹ Herman, *Trauma*, 36.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

literal or disguised form. Some re-enactments put the traumatised at risk; others are adaptive—meaning that they help the traumatised persons to integrate the reliving experiences in a positive way in their lives, and others are fantasised in a way that changes the outcome of the dangerous encounter. Some of them are consciously chosen; others are not.⁴²

Old and recent theories conceptualise intrusion as an attempt to integrate the traumatic encounter. However, traumatised people try to avoid it to spare themselves intense emotional distress. This avoidance aggravates PTSD and often results “in narrowing of consciousness, a withdrawal from engagement, and an impoverished life.”⁴³

Constriction (numbness) is the third cardinal symptom of PTSD. According to Herman, It is a state of total surrender in which the traumatised people escape the traumatic moment by changing their state of consciousness rather than by actions in the real world. “Perception may be numbed or distorted, with partial anaesthesia or the loss of particular sensations.” The sense of time also changes, “often with a sense of slow motion.” The traumatic moment may lose its quality of ordinary reality. “The person may feel as though the event is not happening to her, as though she is observing from outside her body, or as though the whole experience is a bad dream from which she will be shortly awakened.” Usually, these alternations in consciousness are accompanied with a feeling of freeze or paralysis, indifference, emotional detachment, and “profound passivity in which the person relinquishes all initiative and struggle.”⁴⁴ They are

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 41. See also Pierre Janet, *Psychological Healing*, vol.1, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (New York: Macmillan, 1925), 603.

⁴⁴ Krystal, “Trauma and Aging,” 81.

considered as self-defences against “unbearable pain.” They are “similar to hypnotic states.”⁴⁵ However, at the same time, these altered states narrow and deplete the quality of life and “prevent the integration necessary for healing.”⁴⁶

Herman continues to explain that a “dialectic” relation between the two opposing psychological states of intrusion and constriction is established in the aftermath of the traumatic event.⁴⁷ Since neither one leads to full integration of the traumatic experience, they alternate. The instability produced by these periodic alternations “further exacerbates the traumatized person’s sense of unpredictability and helplessness.”⁴⁸ This dialectic relation “undergoes a gradual evolution” with time. The intrusive symptoms are prominent in the first days or weeks (up to six months) following the trauma. After this period of time (it could be longer if the exposure to traumatic events continued for a long time), they start to diminish, and constrictive symptoms become dominant. Traumatized people in this dialectic of trauma feel alienation and inner deadness. “Only the repeated reliving of the moment of horror temporarily breaks through the sense of numbing and disconnection.”⁴⁹

These feelings of alienation and disconnection pervade “every relationship, from the most intimate familial bonds to the most abstract affiliations of community and religion” because traumatic

⁴⁵ Herman, *Trauma*, 43.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 45-47.

⁴⁷ See also Mark S. Greenberg and Bessel A. van der Kolk, “Retrieval and Integration of Traumatic Memories with the Painting Cure,” in *Psychological Trauma*, ed. Bessel A. van der Kolk (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, 1987), 191. Also see Saul Friedlander, “Trauma, Transference, and ‘Working Through’ in Writing the History of Shoah,” in *History and Memory* 4 (1992): 51.

⁴⁸ Herman, *Trauma*, 48.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

events shatter both the systems of attachment and meaning that link individual and community and the psychological structures of the self.⁵⁰

This damage of self-structures leads traumatised people to lose their “trust in themselves, in other people, and in God.” Experiences of humiliation, guilt and helplessness assault their self-esteem. “Their capacity for intimacy is compromised by intense and contradictory feelings of need and fear.” Trauma also destroys the identity they have formed before the traumatic event.⁵¹

Herman claims that every individual has his/her own reactions to traumatic events, even the same ones. Thus, the development of PTSD depends on the nature of the traumatic event itself and the resilience of the traumatised person. In addition, individual differences play an important role “in determining the form that the disorder will take.” Every man, she says, has his “breaking point,” some break more easily than others do. People with high resilience can maintain social connections and active coping strategies to protect themselves to some degree against the later development of PTSD. On the other hand, people with low resilience are more vulnerable, paralysed, or isolated by terror.⁵²

These two types of people need a supportive response from others to integrate the traumatic event and heal. Both need to rebuild the sense of self that the trauma has destroyed. “That sense can be rebuilt only as it was built initially, in connection with others.”⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid., 52

⁵¹ Ibid., 56.

⁵² Ibid., 58-60.

⁵³ Ibid., 62.

First, they need to rebuild a form of minimal trust. Second, they seek safety assurance and protection from immediate family and friends. Third, after establishing a sense of safety, survivors need the help of others in rebuilding a positive view of self. This requires tolerance from others for “the survivor’s fluctuating need for closeness and distance, and some respect for her attempts to re-establish autonomy and self-control.”⁵⁴ Fourth, they have to renew their “self-respect.” Survivors need others to assure their struggle to overcome their shame and “to arrive at a fair assessment of [their] conduct.” The attitudes of those close to the survivors are highly important. “Realistic judgments diminish the feelings of humiliation and guilt.”⁵⁵ That is, when others listen to the survivors without ascribing blame, the survivors can accept their own failure to live up to ideal standards at the traumatic moment. “Ultimately [they] can come to realistic judgment of [their] conduct and a fair attribution of responsibility.”⁵⁶ Finally, survivors need others to help them grieve and mourn their losses. There is no healing without completing the normal process of grieving. If this support is absent, the survivors will experience “pathological grief and severe, persistent depression is extremely high.”⁵⁷

Herman contends that sharing traumatic experiences with others is a precondition for restoring a sense of a meaningful world. The survivors seek help not only from those closest to them but also from the wider community. The community’s response has a powerful influence on the ultimate resolution of the trauma. The community needs to acknowledge the traumatic event

⁵⁴ Ibid., 63.

⁵⁵ By realistic judgment, Herman means “the recognition of the dire circumstances of the traumatic event and the normal range of victim reactions. They include the recognition of moral dilemmas in the face of severely limited choice. And they include the recognition of psychological harm and the acceptance a prolonged recovery process.” Herman. See: Ibid., 65.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 68.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 70.

and “must take action to assign responsibility for the harm and to repair the injury” in order to rebuild the survivors’ sense of order and justice.⁵⁸ In case of a lack of formal recognition or institution from the community, survivors have to find their own way to restore their sense of connection with the broader community. Herman states that there is no sufficient data about the number of survivors who had succeeded in this task. However, she adds that the survivors who “recovered most successfully are those who discover some meaning in their experience ... by joining with others in social action.”⁵⁹

Prolonged trauma happens in occurrences of captivity when prisoners (in prisons, concentration camps, and slave labour camps) cannot run away from danger or evil and are under the “coercive control” of the perpetrator.⁶⁰

In imprisonment and captivity, the perpetrator is the most powerful person in the victim’s life. He shapes the psychology of the prisoners according to his own actions and beliefs. However, secrecy and silence are the perpetrator’s first lines of defence.⁶¹ Little is known about his mind.⁶² Herman states that “ordinary concepts of Psychopathology fail to define or comprehend him”

⁵⁸ Ibid., 71

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰This is also true in case of religious cult members, battered women, and abused children who are victimized by a combination of force, intimidation, and enticement. See: Ibid., 74-75.

⁶¹ “Secrecy is societies euphemism for racism, chauvinism and ethnocentrism, and is most often perpetuated by what Lorde would call an institutionalised rejection of difference where we have all been programmed to respond to the human difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if this is not possible copy it if we think it is dominant or destroy it if we think it is subordinate.” See: Audre Lorde, *Age, Race Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference*, in *Ethics: A Feminist Reader*, ed. Elizabeth Franzer, Jennifer Hornsby and Sabina Loviond (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992), 213-14.

⁶² Herman, “Crime,” 12. See also, Herman, *Trauma*, 75. And Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious: Trial and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 22.

because visible normality is his most consistent feature in both the testimony of prisoners and observation of lawyers and psychologists.⁶³ In his book “The Nazi Doctors”, Robert Jay Lifton tries to understand these doctors' mentality and their transformation from healers to killers through their participation in mass murder. He concludes that these perpetrators live in a state of ‘doubling.’

Doubling is an adaptive potential in humans. It usually occurs in extremity and in relation to death. Doubling could be lifesaving and life enhancing in the case of inmates who must undergo a kind of doubling to survive. At the same time, doubling can become precariously unrestrained under certain conditions.⁶⁴ Lifton asserts that doubling has five characteristics: first, there is a dialectic between two selves in terms of autonomy and connection.” Each doctor needed his “Auschwitz self” to psychologically function in an environment opposite to his previous criteria. Nevertheless, he needed his “prior self to continue to see himself as a humane physician, husband, and father.”⁶⁵ Second, there is a holistic principle in doubling. The Auschwitz self was inclusive and had the ability to connect with the entire environment of the concentration camp. “It rendered coherent, and gave form to, various themes and mechanisms.” Third: doubling “has a life- death dimension;” the perpetrator sees his Auschwitz self as a kind of psychological survival in a death-dominated environment. Thus, creating a killing self was paradoxically a necessity for the perpetrator’s healing and survival. Fourth, another characteristic is “guilt avoidance:” the ‘Auschwitz self’ had performed the atrocities. Nazi doctors avoided guilt by transferring the requirements of conscience to the Auschwitz self. These requirements were placed within its own

⁶³ Herman, *Trauma*, 75.

⁶⁴ Robert J. Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books. 1986), 420.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 419.

criteria of good, such as duty, loyalty to the regime, and improving the camp's conditions. By so doing, they freed their original self from responsibility for their brutal actions. They protected their entire self from awareness of its own guilt and its own death because "doubling is evil in that it represents one's own death." Finally, "doubling involves both an unconscious dimension and significant change in moral consciousness."⁶⁶

Perpetrators are aware of what they are doing. However, each one of them doubles differently. Doubling depends on the prior self of the perpetrator, his specific history and his psychological mechanism.⁶⁷ Lifton concludes that most doctors of most peoples under certain conditions have the capability to do what the Nazi doctors had committed.⁶⁸

Perpetrators, as Laub states in his article "Psychoanalysis and Genocide," claim a position of grandiosity, "to which no conventional rules apply and for which impunity reigns."⁶⁹ They also dehumanise their victims to protect themselves from any kind of empathic urges toward them. The steps toward objectifying the victim are to divide his/ her body into parts so that these parts in isolation no longer look human, to reduce the prisoner to a number, and to see the prisoner as subhuman—rats or lice are killed, not people.⁷⁰ In addition, they distort reality through the "abuse

⁶⁶ Ibid., 420-21.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 425

⁶⁸ Ibid., 427.

⁶⁹ Dori Laub, "Psychoanalysis and Genocide: Two Essays," in *Genocide Studies Program*, 20-21 (New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 2002), 13.

⁷⁰ Mark Ledbetter, *Victims and the Post Modern Narrative or Doing Violence to the Body: An Ethic of Reading and Writing* (Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), 61. See also Laub, "Psychoanalysis and Genocide," 13.

of language.” As a result, perpetrators deny the infliction of torture and other enormities during their occurrence by calling the torture session a “party”, for instance.⁷¹

The perpetrator’s first target is to enslave his victims by exercising coercive control over all aspects of the victims’ life by depriving them of liberty and isolating them in order to achieve a profound total submission.⁷² Jean-Paul Sartre, in the preface to Henri Alleg’s book “The Question”, adds that the perpetrator needs to humiliate the victim, “to crush [his] pride and drag [him] down to animal level. The body may live, but the spirit must be killed.”⁷³

To achieve this goal, the perpetrator inflicts a systematic, repetitive psychological trauma on his victims. Herman says his techniques “are designed to instill terror and helplessness and to destroy the victims’ sense of self relation to others.”⁷⁴ Organised methods of continual state of fear accompanied by death threats and threats of serious harm to the victim, other inmates, or family members are usually utilised by the perpetrator. Fear is intensified by the sudden outburst of violence and unpredictable “enforcement of petty rules.”⁷⁵ By using this technique, the perpetrator seeks to convince his victims not only that he is omnipotent, that any resistance is useless, but also to be grateful for being allowed to live. Many victims, Herman states, view their perpetrators, paradoxically, as their saviours after “several cycles of reprieve from certain death.”⁷⁶

⁷¹ Laub, “Psychoanalysis and Genocide,” 13. See also Scarry, *The Body*, 44.

⁷² Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 237. See also Herman, *Trauma*, 75. And Whalen, *Contemporary*, 35.

⁷³ Jean-Paul Sartre, Preface to *The Question*, By Henri Alleg (New York: George Braziller, INC., 1958), 33.

⁷⁴ Herman, *Trauma*, 79.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

In addition to the constant fear, the perpetrator tries to destroy the victim's sense of autonomy to shame and demoralise him/her. He achieves this goal by surveillance and control of the victim's body functions. He decides and supervises the victim's clothes, food, sleep time, bath time, exercise etc... to weaken the victim's body.

Furthermore, the perpetrator tries to undermine the psychological resistance of his victims by offering them capricious small indulgences, such as a kind word, a shower, a cigarette or a hot cup of coffee or tea. This technique, according to Herman, is more effective in weakening the victims' psychological resistance than incessant deprivation and fear. She also states that prisoners, who are aware of these techniques, strive to maintain their sense of autonomy.⁷⁷

They limit the perpetrator's power by maintaining their sense of autonomy and connection with others. As a result, perpetrators try to destroy all the prisoners' attachments with others and the outside world, such as sources of information (newspapers, letters, TV) and emotional support from other inmates or family members. In fact, the perpetrator attempts to destroy the prisoners' "internal images of connection to others" by depriving the prisoners of "any objects of symbolic importance."⁷⁸ Prisoners, who are aware of the perpetrator's methods of coercive control, retentively struggle to keep their connection with the outside world by invoking mental images of the people they love or even risking their life for the sake of "a letter, a photograph or a wedding band."⁷⁹ Under prolonged isolation, prisoners' 'transitional objects' are necessary to conserve their sense of connection to others in order to avoid losing their selves.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 78-79.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 80.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 81.

Isolation makes the prisoners dependent on the perpetrators for survival, basic bodily needs, information, and even emotional sustenance. Herman contends that the more frightened the prisoners are, the more they are enticed to stick to the only available relationship, i.e., the relationship with the perpetrator. “In the absence of any other human connection, [they] will try to find humanity in [their] captor,”⁸⁰ Herman adds that prisoners are aware of the risk of having a human relationship with their oppressors, and they understand that they are at risk of developing such a relation. Thus, “they protect themselves only by uncompromising refusal to enter even the most superficial social relationship with their adversaries.”⁸¹

Perpetrators may succeed in creating a submissive prisoner by utilising techniques of terror, occasional rewards, solitude and enforced dependency. However, the final stage in the psychological control of the prisoners is to make them betray their own moral principles and fundamental human attachments. Herman states that this is the most destructive technique. At this point, when the prisoners under threat partake in the sacrifice of others, they are really ‘broken.’⁸² Prisoners feel shame and defeat because they realise that their perpetrators “have usurped their inner life.”⁸³ All prisoners understand that everyone has his limits, and under terror and violence, anyone can be broken. Herman contends that they discern two stages: the first is a reversible stage, which is reached when the prisoners abandon their autonomy, connections with others, and moral principles in order to survive. Prisoners in this stage describe themselves “as having been

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 82.

⁸² Ibid., 83.

⁸³ Ibid., 84.

reduced to a nonhuman life form.”⁸⁴ Prisoners also “describe alternating between periods of submission and more active resistance.” The second stage is when the prisoners lose their will to live. This stage is irreversible, and it means absolute passivity and submission.⁸⁵

Victims of prolonged, repeated trauma, Herman states, develop “an insidious, progressive form” of PTSD. They may feel that they have changed forever, or they may lose the sense of having any self. They suffer from intensified hyperarousal symptoms of PTSD when the trauma repeats itself. They “are continually hypervigilant, anxious, and agitated.” They feel as though their bodies have turned against them. They no longer have “physical calm or comfort.” They also start to complain of enormous kinds of somatic syndromes. The common ones are “Tension headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances, and abdominal, back or pelvic pain.” The less common symptoms are “tremors, choking sensations, or rapid heartbeats.”⁸⁶

Survivors of prolonged, repeated trauma suffer also from the persistent of the intrusive symptoms of PTSD. Herman argues, “these symptoms may persist, with little change for many years after liberation from captivity.” The majority of these survivors continue to have “nightmares, persistent flashbacks, and extreme reactions to reminders of [their prison] ...experiences.”⁸⁷ However, avoidance or constriction becomes the most exaggerated feature of PTSD in victims of prolonged, repeated trauma. Psychological constriction applies to all the aspects of life, such as relationships, activities, emotions, thoughts, memories, and even sensations. This psychological constriction, as Herman states, has many features: first, it is adaptive in

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 85.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 85.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

captivity because the victims are reduced to “a goal of simple survival.” Second, it deteriorates the suppressed psychological capacities. Finally, it leads to the “over-development of a solitary inner life.”⁸⁸

Prisoners learn to change agonising reality through the practice of dissociation, intentional thought suppression, minimisation, and sometimes through absolute denial, says Herman. She also states that the best name for “this complex array of mental manoeuvres, at once conscious, and unconscious” is “*doublethink*.”⁸⁹ Doublethink and trance states have two things in common: the ability to hold opposing beliefs simultaneously and the ability to change awareness. Prisoners usually teach each other how to enter such states through praying, singing and exercising simple hypnotic techniques. In addition, they consciously apply these techniques to withstand painful realities, such as hunger, cold, and severe pain. Prisoners exposed to prolonged confinement and isolation “develop trance capabilities ordinarily seen only in extremely hypnotised people.” In addition, they develop the capacity to form both negative and positive hallucinations and the ability to dissociate parts of their personalities.⁹⁰

Prisoners use trance states and develop their ability to willingly suppress their thoughts, especially thoughts related to the future. In order to avoid any feelings of yearning and hope that

⁸⁸ Ibid., 86.

⁸⁹ Italics are in the source. In Orwell’s definition: “*Doublethink* means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one’s mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. The [person] knows in which direction his memories must be altered; he therefore knows that he is playing tricks with reality; but by the exercise of *doublethink* he also satisfies himself that reality is not violated. The process has to be conscious, or it would not be carried out with sufficient precision, but it also has to be unconscious, or it would bring with it a feeling of falsity...Even in using the word *doublethink* it is necessary to exercise *doublethink*.” See: George Orwell, *1948* (New York: New American Library, 1949), 176-7.

⁹⁰ Herman, *Trauma*, 87-88.

may lead to disappointment, despair and even pain, they consciously narrow their thoughts by focusing on limited goals. The future to them does not exceed a few hours or days.

Not only is the sense of the future destroyed, but also the sense of the past. Prisoners who resist confinement and isolation consciously nurture memories from their past as a survival mechanism. However, when their resistance crumbles under extreme oppression, they lose their sense of continuity with the past because memory, like hope, brings back the longing for all that has been lost. As a result, the prisoners live in a perpetual present. This “rupture in continuity between present and past frequently persists even after the prisoner is released.” Psychologically Prisoners remain trapped in the timelessness of prison even though they may look like going back to ordinary times. Consequently, released prisoners continue to exercise doublethink and be concurrently in two realities. The experience of the present is frequently obscured and dulled, while the intrusive memories of the past are intense and clear.⁹¹

Herman asserts that in conjunction with the change in time sense comes a limitation in initiative and planning. Within the boundaries enforced by the perpetrator, the initiative is increasingly narrowed. Prisoners stop to think of how to flee instead of how to adjust to the brutal conditions of the prison and how to stay alive. Victims of prolonged, repeated trauma are often described as passive or helpless because of the constriction in their abilities for active engagement with the world. Herman adds that this behaviour “becomes habitual with prolonged captivity, and it must be unlearned after the prisoner is liberated.”⁹² This behaviour does not mean that the victims have surrendered. On the contrary, they have learned through their prison experience that

⁹¹ Ibid., 88-89.

⁹² Ibid., 90.

all their actions will be watched, that most of these actions are not allowed, and that they will pay a heavy price for any fault. They will see any use of their own initiative as disobedience. They will scan the surroundings and expect retribution before they commence any action. Prolonged captivity, says Herman, weakens “or destroys the ordinary sense of relatively safe sphere of initiative, in which there is some tolerance for trial and error.” In the eyes of the chronically traumatised prisoners there is no room for mistakes; every action has possibly terrible costs.⁹³

The enforced relationship with the perpetrator during captivity becomes a part of the prisoners’ inner life and continues to occupy their attention after release. This relationship represents a major alternation in the prisoners’ relational world. Herman contends that “released prisoners often continue to track their captors and to fear them.” prisoners who have not been completely isolated, however, connect with their inmates who share the same fate and by so doing, they may alleviate their evil relationship with the perpetrator. These prisoners “know the generosity, courage, and devotion that people can muster in extremity.”⁹⁴

In the case of isolated prisoners, where there are no inmates to bond with, prisoners develop attachments with their captors. Even after the release of these prisoners, they will be unable to reconstitute relationships of the kind that existed before the imprisonment because, as Herman argues, no stable relationship “offers the same degree of intensity as the pathological bond with the abuser.”⁹⁵

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 91.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 92.

Prolonged captivity, Herman states, interrupts all human relationships and strengthens the trauma dialectic. “The survivor oscillates between intense attachment and terrified withdrawal.”⁹⁶ Basic trust is crucial to chronically traumatised prisoners after their release. When people fail to the survivors’ exacting tests of trustworthiness, the prisoners isolate themselves and tend to withdraw from relationships.

Prolonged captivity also causes an alteration in the prisoners’ identity. Herman argues that all the psychological structures of the self that give a person a sense of coherence and purpose have been systematically destroyed and shattered, such as the image of the body, values, ideals, and images of others. The dehumanisation process is carried out to imply the complete elimination of the prisoners’ previous identities and their total submission to their perpetrators. Herman continues to assert that the survivor prisoners cannot assume their old identity, even after liberation. The memory of the survivor prisoners’ enslaved selves will be included in any identity they develop after release. The new identity, for most survivors, is a “contaminated identity” that is accompanied by feelings of “shame, self-loathing, and a sense of failure.”⁹⁷ In the most severe cases, survivors hold on to the dehumanised identity of a prisoner “who has been reduced to the level of elemental survival: the robot, animal, or vegetable.”⁹⁸

These profound alternations in the self and relationships lead to questioning the fundamental codes of belief. Herman says that most survivors feel God abandoned them and ultimately lose their faith. However, there are extraordinary few survivors with robust and secure

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 93.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 94.

faith systems who can tolerate the brutality of imprisonment and emerge with their faith intact or strengthened.⁹⁹

Herman concludes that every single aspect of the experience of prolonged trauma works to intensify depressive syndromes:

The chronic hyperarousal and intrusive symptoms of depression [produce] what Niederland calls the “survivor triad” of insomnia, nightmares, and psychosomatic complaints. The dissociative symptoms of the disorder emerge with the concentration difficulties of depression. The paralysis of initiative of chronic trauma combines with the apathy and helplessness of depression. The disruption in attachment of chronic trauma reinforces the isolation of depression. The debased self-image of chronic trauma fuels the guilty ruminations of depression. And the loss of faith suffered in chronic trauma merges with the hopelessness of depression.¹⁰⁰

The severe rage of the prisoners at their perpetrators also increases the depression. Herman states that prisoners during their imprisonment do not express their anger against their captors in order not to endanger their survival. Even after liberation, survivors may fear revenge or may be slow in expressing this anger. In addition, survivors have anger against all the people who are indifferent to their fate and fail to help them. Infrequent outbreaks of anger may further push survivors away from others and thwart restitution of the relationships. As a result, survivors may isolate themselves as an attempt to control their fury or direct their anger against themselves and even become suicidal. In other words, they continue to carry out their captor’s destructive purposes with

⁹⁹ Ibid., 94.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

their own hands. Long after release, survivor-prisoners tolerate the psychological scars of captivity. They suffer not only from a classical PTSD but also from profound alternations in their relations with God, with other people, and with themselves.¹⁰¹

After this detailed clinical analysis of trauma, PTSD and the mentality of perpetrators, one realises the importance of written or oral testimonies in allowing the traumatised to speak up and be heard, and in providing new byways to human connections. Moreover, one learns that in approaching trauma narratives, one has to take into account: 1-The psychological state of the writer at the time of writing. 2- The goals of the writing. 3- Its therapeutic components. 4- The writing environment: whether the writing took place under duress or in a safe place. 5- How all the above affect the content and the narrative styles and techniques employed by the survivors-authors.

In addition, one has to be aware of the fact that language bears a heavy burden in the theorisation of trauma. It can heal, and at the same time, it can fail to represent trauma fully.¹⁰² Paul Fussell suggests in his book *The Great War and Modern Memory* that it is the death of metaphor that embodies the distance between the language of the survivor and that of the non-survivor reader.¹⁰³

It is possible to understand the process of translating trauma experience into the language from the description of Emile Benveniste of the dual semiotic and semantic functions of language.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 95.

¹⁰² Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography - Trauma and Testimony* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 6. See also Suzette A. Henke, *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), xv. And Krystal, "Trauma and Aging," 97. And James Pennebaker, *Opening Up: The Healing Power of Confiding in Others* (New York: Avon, 1992), 193. And Tal, *Worlds*, 200. And Laure E. Tanner, *Intimate Violence: Reading Rape and Torture in 20th Century Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 54.

¹⁰³ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 131.

Benveniste in his article “The Semiology of Language” claims that “the sign” must be recognised, while the “discourse” must be understood. “The difference between recognizing and comprehension refers to two distinct faculties of the mind that of discerning the identity between the previous and the present, and that of discerning, on the other hand, the meaning of a new enunciation.”¹⁰⁴ He also states that “two systems can have the same sign in common without being, as a result, synonymous or redundant; that is to say, the functional difference of a sign alone matters, not its substantial identity.”¹⁰⁵

Trauma survivors have the same set of signs as their non-traumatized peers. However, traumatic experiences transform the meaning of the signs that survivors utilize to express their experiences. Both groups use the same words but understand them in different ways. This dislocation in meaning is indistinguishable until one notices the survivors’ cries. “What can we do to share our visions? Our words can only evoke the incomprehensible. Hunger, thirst, fear, humiliation, waiting, death; for us these words hold different realities. This is the ultimate tragedy of the victims.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, survivors’ writings are characterized and distinguished from other genres by the multiple meaning encoded in a particular “loaded” signifier, such as blood, suffering, terror etc.

Moreover, critics and readers do not need a sharp and attentive eye to recognize the silences of the traumatic narratives but rather an “educated eye, a revised, renewed way of looking.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Emile Benveniste, “The Semiology of Language,” *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*, ed. Robert E. Innis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 242.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 235.

¹⁰⁶ Elie Wiesel, “To Believe or not to Believe,” *From the Kingdom of Memory* (New York: Summit, 1990), 33.

¹⁰⁷ Louis Althusser, *Lire le Capital*, vol. 1, (Paris: F. Maspero, 1968), 26.

These silences are evidence that there are missing details of what is for necessity repressed because it is too painful or memory is too unreliable for the past to be fully known or reconstructed. Silence is not only represented in what is not said, what the characters avoid or cannot say in trauma narratives, but also, it is textually represented with the page layout or section breaks. It can express a traumatic gap, a withholding of words because of horror, guilt, or oppression.¹⁰⁸

Not only does the limitation of language in expressing traumatic events negatively affect the reader's full engagement in trauma narratives, but so do reading conventions and their distancing quality. Laure Tanner in her article "Intimate Violence" argues that the conventions of reading distance the reader from the body (the object of torture). By entering the fictional universe, the reader loses his body and s/he "approaches the novel violence not as a body without consciousness but rather as a consciousness without body." This disembodiment, she asserts, contradicts the experience of violence that is usually defined by the "overwhelming presence of the body." In addition, readers maintain a sense of coherence while the experiences of the victims are chaotic and fragmented. Readers perceive the acts of violence from a viewpoint outside the text and they can, when threatened by the violence in the text, postpone the act of reading- an advantage that the victims of violence do not really enjoy.¹⁰⁹

Readers of trauma narratives, like therapists, also experience a range of defensive feelings, such as total paralysis, anger directed at the victim – character or narrator, numbness, fear, bestowing a kind of sanctity on the victims, or obsession with fact-finding. They need to control

¹⁰⁸ Vickroy, *Trauma*, 202.

¹⁰⁹ Tanner, *Intimate*, 37.

these feelings and be aware of them if they want to break the silence and unfold the victims' stories.¹¹⁰

Trauma narratives need a critical and “empathic reader.” Dominick La Capra in his books “Writing History, Writing Trauma” and “The Bonds of Race” argues that literature has value in conveying the emotional experience of traumatic events. However, a fictional narrative must not allow too much identification with the protagonist, too much fidelity to trauma, or the dead. The text, La Capra adds should present a working-through process that differentiates readers from text and experience. Empathy is important in attempting to understand traumatic events and victims.¹¹¹

Methodology:

Thus, equipped with the tools of torture, pain and trauma theories, especially the medical discourse of traumatic stress, the awareness of the limitation of language in expressing trauma, and the importance of being an empathic reader/ critic when discussing trauma narratives, I am ready to proceed to the next stage which is a close reading and analysis of personal and collective testimonies of Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees in the first chapter. I use torture, pain and trauma theories to prove that the authors of these testimonies suffered from an acute post-traumatic stress disorder and examine how this PTSD is engaged with the testimonies and impacts them, in terms of form, content and recurrent narrative devices, and how testifying sustains the sanity of the authors in a hostile environment and turns to an act of resistance among other things.

¹¹⁰ Felman and Laub, *Testimony*, 72.

¹¹¹ Dominick La Capra, *The Bonds of Race: Perspectives on Hegemony and Resistance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1991), 77. See also Dominick La Capra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 95.

As for the second chapter, I closely read fictional works - what I define as ‘prison literature’- written in prison by inmates who discovered their literary writing ability in the wake of their imprisonment to examine the representations of trauma and resistance in this literature, and how these representations affected form and content and the dominant themes. I also focus on the role that writing plays in the context of communication of traumas and resistance.

The Primary texts selection:

I have chosen the primary texts for this thesis from among more than a hundred published works and manuscripts that I succeeded in collecting over the years using four criteria. First, by selecting authors from diverse political backgrounds. All of them belonged to the working class and started writing in the wake of their imprisonment. None of them had any previous experience or expertise in literature or writing in general before their incarceration. Second, by selecting published books for the reason that, in many cases, it was hard to read the manuscripts due to unclear handwriting, low ink density or missing words because of bad photocopying. Third, I prioritise authors who attempted multiple fictional or/and non-fictional narrative representations of trauma and texts written mainly in prison or shortly after the author’s release.

The Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees (as members of the National Liberation Movement) are not only engaged in the struggle against the Israeli occupation and its oppression but also in traditional social, political and literary codes. Resistance literature “call[s] attention to itself as political and politicized activity,” as Barbara Harlow indicates in her book *Resistance Literature*.¹¹² This chapter examines the extent to which

¹¹² Barbara Harlow, *Resistance Literature* (New York and London: Methuen, 1987), 28.

this resistance/political element serves as a fundamental aesthetic quality in structuring Palestinian resistance literature. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon writes that the “crystallization of the national consciousness will both disrupt literary styles and themes, and also create a completely new public.”¹¹³ Out of this perspective, I explore how the artistic form of literature is influenced when a liberation struggle intensifies the ideological content. In *When Bullets Begin to Flower*, Margaret Dickinson points out that these changes in themes and styles fashion their own forms “shaped by new dialectic created by revolutionary conditions.”¹¹⁴ This chapter discusses the extent to which the content of these narratives is encased in and interrelated to form “in an indissoluble unity” and whether the writers are consciously aware of the nuances of the form they utilise to express the content of a particular phase of the struggle.¹¹⁵

Special terminology:

In this thesis, I prefer to use the term prisoners of war rather than ‘political prisoners’ or the term ‘political detainees’ that Nahla Abdo and other scholars like better.¹¹⁶ First: the West Bank and Gaza Strip were occupied by Israel in 1967 and according to the international law; these territories are considered occupied territories. In addition, according to Article 4 of the Geneva Convention III, which Israel ratified in 1949.¹¹⁷ Moreover, members of the resistance,

¹¹³ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1966), 93.

¹¹⁴ Margaret Dickinson, *When Bullets Begin to Flower* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Publishing House, 1972), 30.

¹¹⁵ A. Bushmin, “Analytic Approach to the Work of Art,” *Social Science* (October 1971): 145.

¹¹⁶ Nahla Abdo, *Captive Revolution: Palestinian Women’s Anti-Colonial Struggle within the Israeli Prison System* (London: Pluto Press, 2014), 9.

¹¹⁷ “Convention (III) Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War,” *ICRC*, accessed July 13, 2020, <https://ihl.databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Treaty.xsp?documentId=77CB9983BE01D004C12563CD002D6B3E&action=openDocument>.

army or militia who were captured by the enemy are classified as prisoners of war, and should be treated accordingly.¹¹⁸ Second, in this thesis I try to give a voice to the traumatized writers to express their silenced and hidden stories rather than further deprive them of a language in which to speak of their victimization. My subjects use the terms *asīr/asrā*

(captive/s or prisoner/s of war) in their writings and many of them emphasise that they should be recognised as such.¹¹⁹ I chose to be faithful to the language of my primary texts when I translate terms from Arabic into English. It is also worth noting that even the Israeli Zionist settler colonial regime (IZSCR) uses the term ‘*asīrīm biṭḥoniyīm*’ (Prisoners for security reasons) rather than ‘political prisoners’ to address the Palestinian prisoners of war.¹²⁰ As for the

¹¹⁸ “Geneva Convention III,” *UN.org*, accessed July 13, 2020, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.32_GC-III-EN.pdf.

¹¹⁹ Marwān al-Barghūtī, *Alf Yawm fī Zanzānat al-‘Azl al-Infirādī* (Bayrūt: al-Dār al-‘Arabiyya lil-‘Ulūm Nāshirūn, 2011), 233.

¹²⁰ I use the term Israeli Zionist Settler Colonial Regime (IZSCR) to define the state of Israel. This term has been circulating in Western and non-Western Academics recently by many Palestinian, pro-Palestinian scholars and the B Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. I was introduced to it by the Israeli new historian Professor Ilan Pappé in a public lecture in Haifa in summer 2016 during my fieldwork period in Palestine. Then I found out that Nahla Abdo in her book *Captive Revolution* uses it as well. She adds to it two more adjectives “racist” and “racial.” Also, in the interview: Jewish Nation State Law: Q&A with Adalah’s Hassan Jabareen that was published on July 26, 2018, in Palestine Square a blog of the Institute for Palestine Studies, Attorney Hassan Jabareen the general director of Adalah - the first non-profit, non-sectarian Palestinian-run legal center in Israel - states that a change should take place in the academic and political discourse. The Israeli state according to Adalah should be defined as a colonial system within and outside of the green line rather than a deficient democratic regime because under the International Law a colonial system is illegal and illegitimate while a “deficient democratic regime” is still legal. Finally in order not to be accused as biased or propagandist it is worth noting to mention that prominent Zionists such as Haim Arlosoroff and even Jabotinsky had compared “the Zionists to “the Pilgrim Fathers, the first real pioneers of North America” and the Palestinian-Arabs and Eretz Yisrael to the “Sioux and their rolling prairies.” In fact, Jabotinsky’s fundamental revisionist argument – that a peaceful resolution with the Palestinians is not possible – was based on his frank recognition that “all natives resist colonists”. As Arnon Degani states in his article: “Opinion /Israel Is a Settler Colonial State - and That’s OK” that was published in Haaretz on Sep 13, 2016. Thus, it is the time to break the silence in the Western academia that for decades has been adopting the terminology of the oppressor and preventing many scholars from exercising their academic freedom.

See: Arnon Degani, “Israel Is a Settler Colonial State- and That’s Ok,” *Haaretz.com*, September 13, 2016, <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-israel-is-a-settler-colonial-state-and-that-s-ok-1.5433405>. See also Rami Mansour, “Jewish Nation State Law: Q&A with Adalah’s Hassan Jabareen,” *Palestine Square*, July 26, 2018,

term ‘administrative detainees,’ it applies to those prisoners who are held in the prisons of the IZSCR without trial based on confidential materials that neither the prisoners nor their lawyers have access to. These so-called ‘secret evidence’ determine the period of detention and its continuous renewal thereafter.¹²¹

Research time frame:

This research looks mainly at prison texts that have been written in prison and published between 1967 and 2004. Around this year, a new phase of the constant struggle inside the prisons started. The prisoners’ collective movement began to decline and gradually lost its power inside the different jails because of releasing many of its members after signing the Oslo Accords. Besides, most prisoners and detainees after the burst of the second Intifada in 2000 were ordinary young Palestinians who barely had any ideological background or political affiliation. It was challenging for the senior prisoners to reach out to all the new prisoners who outnumbered them. All this coincided with unifying all the different prison administrations under one central authority. This new prison Authority seized this excellent opportunity to deprive the prisoners of many of the usurped rights they have reclaimed and enjoyed over the years and dictate its rules and discipline without facing any collective resistance as before. Thus, the Palestinian prisoner of war and detainee lost the protective shield that the prisoners’ collective movement used to provide and found himself, once again, fighting the whole hostile prison system of the IZSCR all alone. Thus, the most prominent new resistance tactic that a small number of prisoners decided to use during

<https://palestinesquare.com/2018/07/26/jewish-nation-state-law-qa-with-adalahs-hassan-jabareen/>. And Abdo, *Captive*, 14.

¹²¹ “Administrative Detainees,” Addameer Prisoners’ Support and Human-Rights Association, accessed December 8, 2018, http://www.addameer.org/the_prisoners/administrative_detainees.

this phase was undergoing a solo-prolonged hunger strike until either death or release. Testimonies that bear witness to this new phase of the struggle are very scarce. Academic research that deals with the decline of the prisoners' collective movement and its impact on the battle in prison, the prisoners' psyche, mental health, interrelations with each other's and with their perpetrators, etc., should be conducted in the future.

Gathering the primary texts:

Most of the primary resources collection occurred from January to May 2004, when I was conducting my fieldwork research in the West Bank as a graduate student at the University of Michigan. In the beginning, I looked for published prison writings in bookstores in Ramallah and Occupied Jerusalem, Ramallah Public Library and Birzeit University library. However, the number of texts available in these places was small. Thus, I contacted the former Asra Ministry, the Palestinian Prisoners clubs in Ramallah and Bethlehem, and Palestinian human rights organisations in Ramallah, such as Addameer and al-Haq. I used to call the Palestinian telephone directory to get the phone numbers of these institutions. After getting the numbers, I would call them and set appointments.

During the meetings, I received copies of their publications and reports about the Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees for free or for a modest donation to the organisation. Many of these organisations' employees either were released prisoners and detainees or acquainted with the issue by virtue of their work. As a result, they provided me with new names of prisoners-writers, titles of published prison writings, and other institutions, such as the former Abu Jihad Center (currently Abu Jihad Museum of prisoner movement affairs) and the General Union of Palestinian Writers. I continued to call the released prisoners-writers and family members of the incarcerated ones. I would shortly explain my research, ask if I could get

a copy of their works, offer to pay for it, and set a time for a meeting. I used to meet with authors or their representatives at work or in public places. I received some writings free of charge and had to pay for others. Many of the authors did not have a copy of their prison writings. They would call friends and family members to get a copy for me. Others had only one copy of their writings. In these cases, I used to borrow the books, make a photocopy of them and return the books to the authors. At times, it was challenging to find the contact info of a particular author, as was the case with Nahidah Nazzal, for instance. The person who gave me her name mentioned that she used to work as a journalist in al-‘Awdah Magazine in Occupied Jerusalem. I went to the magazine headquarters in Salah al-Din St. the workers there informed me that they did not have any information about her.

While I was leaving the building, I met a man who directed me to the floor on which the magazine office was located earlier, and we had a short conversation. I told him what had happened and to my surprise, the man informed me that he had been working in the building for many years and he remembered Nazzal. He added: “you could contact her if you go to her husband's store on the same street.” I could not believe this coincidence. I thanked the man and rushed to the store. The husband was not in the store. I asked the worker to call the house and check if Nazzal would be willing to talk to me. He called the house, and she asked him to give me the phone. She informed me that she did not have a copy of her book and that she would borrow it from her friend, the writer Hana ‘Awwad and call me back. After a few days, I received a call from her husband saying the book was available at the store. The following day, I went back to the store. I borrowed the book, made a photocopy, and returned it to the store.

I faced many difficulties while collecting the sources: I could not move freely from place to place in the West Bank and Occupied Jerusalem due to closures during Jewish religious or

national holidays or for security reasons. It was impossible to reach Gaza Strip, which was under siege back then. However, thanks to the secretary of the Ministry of Prisoners of war and administrative detainees in Ramallah at that time. He called his colleague at the Gaza branch and asked him to send via the mailing system of the Ministry copies of all their reports as well as any published prison text written by released prisoners from Gaza that he could get, which I received a month later.

I had hard times waiting and experiencing the daily humiliations Palestinians went through at the Qalandyah checkpoint every time I had to meet with a released prisoner in Occupied Jerusalem and Bethlehem or visit my family in Galilee at weekends. I remember that my life was at stake one time after I crossed the Qalandyah checkpoint and took a service taxi to my rented apartment in alBeirah- a small town next to Ramallah; few meters away from the checkpoint, some Palestinian youth started stoning the soldiers on the other side of the street, and the soldiers replied by live shooting. The taxi was stuck in the middle between the two parties. I remember falling to the ground of the cab and covering my head with my hands. Still, the taxi driver continued driving normally, and none of the other passengers freaked out or panicked as I did. For the first time in my life, I felt that death was physically very close to me and that it missed me by a miracle.

Moreover, at that time, I had not been a Canadian citizen yet, so I was entering and exiting the West Bank with my Israeli I.D. According to the Israeli regulations of the time, Israeli citizens were not allowed to enter the Occupied Territories. If by chance, there were Israeli police officers at the checkpoint –which is usually handled by soldiers- at the time of crossing, these citizens would either be arrested or pay a fine of 2000 ILS. Luckily, I had no such encounters. I was also lucky to avoid three possible arrests during these five months. Twice at

the Qalandyah checkpoint, where I interfered in two incidents and the third time at the Aqsa Mosque.

One of these incidents took place when I was waiting in the queue to cross the checkpoint. A 5-year-old boy was playing near the soldier's post and ignoring the soldier's hand movements requesting him to go away. Suddenly, the young soldier came out of the post, grabbed the boy from his chest like a potato sack, then threw him inside the wooden post and locked him in. The post was around 70 cm in length, 50 cm in width, and 200cm in height. The soldier stood behind and pointed his rifle at the people who crossed the checkpoint. The little boy freaked out, and his screams wounded my heart. I find myself walking toward the soldier and yelling at him in Hebrew in a loud voice: "Shame on you, how you dare do such a hideous thing to a little kid? Release the kid immediately." The soldier silently freed the boy. I hugged him and calmed him down. I asked his older brother, who was working as a porter, carrying the by-passers luggage, for a charge to keep him away from the post. However, after crossing the checkpoint, I looked back at the post, and there I saw the same boy teasing the soldier by playing the same game of advancing and withdrawal.

At this stage of collecting the primary resources, I was very ignorant of how to deal with such writings and their authors. What was important to me was asking about the Author's background, education, when s/he started writing in prison and during which stage of his/her imprisonment. I also remember asking 'silly' questions. For example, I remember asking 'Ata al-Qaymari, who spent 16 years in prison: 'you mention the word 'suffering' hundreds of times in your book. What do you mean by suffering?'" I remember how his voice changed. It became louder and sharper. His body and face constricted, and he murmured, "suffering... every minute in prison... every second is suffering." Now I am aware that this word is loaded with meanings

that are not available to me as a reader who did not experience similar experiences. After all these years that have passed since I met with him, I feel that I need to apologise to him for causing him pain at that moment of miscommunication, and I feel that I owe him a box of fine chocolate. He was deprived of eating chocolate, his favourite dessert, for 16 years while in prison and for which he developed an overeating disorder after his release, as he informed me.

After the end of the fieldwork period, I returned to the U.S.A. I kept checking Palestinian news websites and Arab T.V. channels that promote the issue of Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees for any new publications of Palestinian prison writings. Family members and friends bought some writings upon my request and mailed them to me during these years. After joining the graduate program at SOAS in 2015, I had another year of fieldwork during the 2016-2017 academic year. This year I spent between the West Bank and Israel, where I primarily focused on collecting reports from Israeli human rights organisations to support my claim that what is written in the personal and collective testimonies reflects the reality of the prisons. On the other, it supports one of my conclusions that is trauma has devastating effects on many Palestinian prisoners especially the ones who did not communicate their traumas via writing, to show the therapeutic effect of writing on the writer-prisoner and his/her resilience.

Personal statement:

With the completion of this thesis, the quest that I took 22 years ago in search of my true self and identity comes to an end. As an indigenous Palestinian born inside the state of the IZSCR, I was systematically abused, and emotionally traumatised by this regime, primarily through its education system. It physically separated me from my people, my heritage, and my history by imposing on me a distorted, false, and contradicting identity called 'Israeli Arab.' I

was forced to give up my real self. Consequently, I could not develop feelings of belonging and suffered from anxiety and helplessness. I lived with a divided self the artificial self that wanted to fit at any cost and the forbidden self that refused to disavow reality. In my adolescence, I was confused about myself and wanted desperately to know who I am. I chose exile to flee this crisis of identity later in my life. In the US, while pursuing a Ph.D. degree, I started to connect with my true self and reunite with it through the most painful and the most empowering Palestinian reality- the experience of the Palestinian prisoners of war in the IZSCR prisons. I did not finish the degree there because of the lack of academic freedom. I could not betray the real self that I just reunited with and everything I stand for and represent to obtain a degree. As the authors of the studied testimonies in this thesis, I refused to submit, silence my voice, and compromise my self-respect. I moved to England to SOAS to accomplish my goal. This journey was a healing process for me. Now I feel that I have the right to exist, that I have a voice that no one has the right to silence. I accept my existential fate that what happened cannot be undone. I have mixed feelings, now. I feel relief after completing this research. However, this feeling of relief is mixed with bitterness because around 5000 Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees are still in prison. I also feel disturbed because their perpetrators do not acknowledge their own moment of evil or even the degree to which they have been a part of an evil project.

First Chapter
Personal and Collective Testimonies

In the seventies of the twentieth century, a genre of prison literature was introduced in Arabic Literature after the publication of the book *Adab Al-Sujun*. Since then, every published text in the Arabic language that dealt with prison experiences has been automatically treated as literary fiction.¹²² Several scholars (e.g., Abu Shareifeh 1983;¹²³ Abu Nidal 1981; D'affilitto 1998) have only studied the autobiographical dimensions and artistry of Arabic Prison narratives. Literary critics, as a result, would be preoccupied with categorising the text in terms of literary genres and would focus more on evaluating the text's form and content by these genre guidelines. Although they notice certain common features reflected in many prison texts, they still do not attempt to discover why these features are recurrent. Instead, they rush to conclude that prison texts are identical. This phenomenon is not limited to Arab literary critics. As I mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, it echoes in other world literature like South Africa, where Sheila Roberts claims that prison writings are identical whether an established writer or a felon writes them.¹²⁴ Such a misleading approach narrows the research scope of prison texts in the Arab World in particular and vandalises the healing process of the individual writers and their communities.

Since the end of the 1967 War, the IZSCR have interrogated and detained more than eight hundred thousand Palestinians. Many of these prisoners of war and detainees have written hundreds of texts. In most of these narratives, the writers bear witness not only to their own prison experiences but also to their inmates' experiences and the atrocities of the coloniser inside

¹²² Many of these works were written by Arab established writers or poets.

¹²³ Abdel Qader Abu Shariefeh, "The Prison in the Contemporary Arabic Novel" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1983).

¹²⁴ Robert, "South African," 61.

and outside the prison walls. They mainly document and write the history of the individual and the collective struggle of the Palestinian prisoners' movement against the hostile settler colonial power represented by the different prison authorities.

The majority of these writers, before their detention, were freedom fighters or political activists. Their detention turned them into national heroes. This powerful status enabled them not only to reconnect and guide the resistance through their writings from their cells but also to shape the Palestinian national myths, to politically and morally educate the younger generation and prepare them to continue the struggle, to criticise the Palestinian political leadership and even to suggest solutions to the conflict and present their views regards the future Palestinian sovereign state.

Until this day, most of their writings are still inside the jails. Many of them have been confiscated and destroyed by the prison authorities. However, the prisoners have succeeded in smuggling samples of their writing out of prison throughout the years. Hundreds of notebooks also have been released with or without their writers after Oslo accords with the release of many prisoners. The public has access only to a small number of these notebooks because there is an ongoing process to archive them by the Palestinian Authority.

Moreover, since 1967, dozens of these writings have been published in a very limited number. They are unavailable in bookstores, public or university libraries, in some cases, not even in the hands of their writers. Even though few were printed at the expense of Palestinian research centres associated Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Amman and Beirut, they have been secretly and mainly distributed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In addition, as a result of the cultural, intellectual, social, economic and political detachment from the Arab World and the blackout that the IZSCR has been imposing on Palestinians, most Palestinian writers and poets are not famous or even known in this world, whether they were writers and poets before their detention or they have discovered their writing talent in the wake of their imprisonment. For all the above reasons, Palestinian prison texts are absent or do not have enough representation in the academic research of the Arabic prison literature written by Arab literary critics and even Western scholars.

Over the years, I collected one hundred texts written by Palestinian prisoners of War and detainees. In this thesis, I exclude political writings, personal letters, poetry and scholarship because I want to focus on texts that deal with prison experiences and fiction written mainly in prison or shortly after the prisoners' release. I found out that the remaining texts could be divided into three main categories personal testimonies, collective testimonies and literary fiction (mainly short stories and novels). By personal testimonies, I mean testimonies that are written in the first-person pronoun. In these testimonies, the writers bear witness to their own prison experiences and the experiences of other inmates they met in prison.

As for collective testimonies, these are testimonies that bear witness to the life of the prisoners in the collective cells. Some of these testimonies focus on a violent struggle or clashes between the prisoners' collective and the prison authority that had taken place in a specific prison or number of prisons and led to a significant change in prisons' physical layout and improved imprisonment conditions in general. Other collective testimonies bear witness to the daily survival tactics, activities, strict rules and guidelines that the prisoners in the collective cells have set and rigorously adhered to in order to thwart all the continuous attempts of the prison administration to turn them against each other and cut off all their connections with the outside

world, their people, and their revolution. These testimonies lack any personal references to the writers; instead, the personal 'I' is replaced with an illusory collective 'I' that represents all the prisoners.

Literary fiction written in prison by some Palestinian prisoners of war can be thematically divided into three types. The first type is traditional prison fiction where prison experience is a central theme. In the second type of fiction, the prison and/ or any element related to it is marginal. In contrast, the prison theme and all its components are absent in the third type of that fiction.

It is worth noting that chapter one focuses only on three personal testimonies and two collective ones, while chapter two deals with types two and three of the fiction mentioned above because these two kinds are excluded from what is defined as 'Prison Literature' in the Arab World. Other collective testimonies are used in different parts of the first and second chapters to provide the readers with first-hand eye-witnessed historical information and background about the prison experience of Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees in IZSCR prisons, detention camps, and interrogation centres to grasp the studied writings fully

In addition, reading these prison texts from the point of view of pain, torture and trauma theories has not been attempted yet. Thus, this chapter of the thesis seeks to read the primary texts as testimonies that bear witness to experiences of a relentless struggle between a systematic oppression system (the IZSCR) that aims via inflicting pain and torture to control individuals/ a group of people (Palestinian Prisoners of war and detainees) and resisting annihilation and complete submission by the survivor individuals/ group via maintaining their voice and giving voice to the dead, silenced and the ones who are denied a voice.

Thus, if one looks at the big picture, prison experiences look similar, and one can understand how some literary critics (Roberts and Abu Nidal) reached such assumptions. In part one of this chapter; I focus on the struggle's first party, e.g., the IZSCR torture structure. I engage theories of pain and torture trauma, human rights reports and treaties, and research that is done on the occupation system of the (IZSCR) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, psychological medical reports, perpetrators accounts and mentality as well as the five primary texts to rebut this claim. I show that, in essence, the structure of torture and the mindset of perpetrators are the same, but the IZSCR torture structure has its particularity, like any other oppression system. It is neither static nor uniform and constantly develops according to the resistance it encounters.

Moreover, one should remember that the five primary texts I use in this chapter bear witness to only three subjective personal experiences and two collective battles that took place in a specific historical moment of the prison struggle. They cannot represent the whole picture of this torture structure that more than eight hundred thousand Palestinians have been experiencing in prison since 1967, within which these testimonies and other prison texts have been produced. For that reason, I had to fill this Gap by looking at further research or books IZSCR personnel wrote. In addition, I use Herman in this part of the chapter to show the impact of the utilized torture tactics on the victims. I support her statements with findings from psychological and legal research done in Israel and Palestine that prove the pathological effects of this torture structure on its victims. By so doing, I support the claim I set in the second part of this chapter that the survivor-writers are traumatised people. Their state of mind and being in a hostile environment at the time of writing should have influenced their testimonies regarding content, form and narrative devices.

In the second part of this chapter, I attempt to deepen my knowledge via an understanding of the clinical analysis of the effects of trauma on survivors. This understanding will make it possible for me as well as for my readers to access the writings of Palestinian prisoners of war - survivors. Hence, I meticulously examine trauma, its definition and the complex and regular post-traumatic stress disorders. In addition, I investigate captivity as a chronic trauma. Moreover, this part of my thesis also deals with therapy, i.e. the prisoners' mechanisms of survival and coping strategies, the stages of healing, and writing as a therapeutic means. Lastly, I highlight the problematic limitations of language in giving voice to the unspeakable or the "real"¹²⁵ in Lacanian terms and as the distancing feature of the reading conventions that could ward readers off apprehending trauma experiences.

The first personal testimony is *While Waiting for the dream*, written by Nahidah Nazzal. At the time of her arrest, Nazzal was a journalist working at *al-'Awdah* Magazine in East Jerusalem. She had a B.A. in Media and Journalism from the Yarmuk University of Jordan. In addition, she was affiliated with Beirut Arab University, where she studied philosophy and sociology for two years by correspondence.¹²⁶ Her personal testimony was published after her release and while living under house arrest. She completed writing her testimony in November 1989, as indicated at the end of the testimony.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Lacan distinguishes the "real" from reality. The "symbolic" register is that of language, which delimits and defines our subjectivity. The "imaginary" is the identity which we assume for ourselves, the ego, how we conduct ourselves in everyday life. The "real" is what cannot be imagined or spoken of. It is best understood as that which falls out of language, but which only exists because of the inadequate language to which we are subject. See: Lacan, "Function," 65.

¹²⁶ I received this information during a phone call with Nazzal herself in 2005.

¹²⁷ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 82.

Nazzal was not the only Journalist poet detained during the first Intifadah. Countless Palestinian intellectuals, journalists, poets, writers and political activists were also arrested because the IZSCR occupation was aware of the danger of the words and ideas of these intellectuals on their occupation and the role they could play in inciting the crowds to join the Intifada.¹²⁸ The main reason for their arrests was to terrorise them and to make them lose their voices; the goal was to either silence them or make them adopt the voice of the occupation. Many of them wrote and published their personal testimonies. However, these testimonies were published as novels or literary fiction because the authors were established novelists, poets, journalists and writers long before their detention; some of these works include *Raml al-Af'a* written by Al-Mutawakkil Ṭaha and *Rasā'il Lam Taṣīl Ba'd* written by 'Izzat Al-Ghazzawi.¹²⁹

Ṭaha, in his introduction to Nazzal's Testimony, as I mentioned earlier in the introduction, states his inability to categorise the testimony under any available literary genre, and he suggests publishing it as 'Hikayah.' At the same time, the testimonies of Qatamish and al-Barghuti (because they are not established writers/poets) do not stir up such an argument. This inability of an author and a literary critic like Ṭaha to determine the literary genre of a text supports my claim that Nazzal's book is a pure personal testimony, as I show in part two of this chapter. It is simply a testimony written in the first-person pronoun by a poet and a writer-journalist. Nazzal's testimony consists of two parts. In the first part of the book, Nazzal bears witness to the experience of her

¹²⁸ Such as: al-Mutawakkil Ṭaha, As'ad al-As'ad, Jamal Banourah, Ibrahim al-'Alam, Samir Shihada, Izat al-Ghazzawi and others.

¹²⁹ al-Mutawakkil Ṭāha, *Raml al-Af'ā- Sīrat Katsi'out Mu'taqal Ansār 3* (al-Quds: Bayt al-Maqdis lil-Nashr wa- al-Tawzī', 2001). See also 'Izzat al-Ghazzāwī, *Rasā'il Lam Taṣīl Ba'd* (al-Quds: Dār al-Kātib, 1994).

six-month administrative detention in several interrogation centres and prisons of the IZSCR occupation (it started on the 27th of March 1988 and ended on the 26th of August 1988). In the book's second part, she narrates her experiences after release while living under house arrest in her hometown of Qalqilyah on the West Bank. Her house arrest started on the 12th of March 1989, and it was not over by the time her book was completed in November 1989.

I choose to analyse this book in this chapter firstly because it is written by a female prisoner of war and mainly focuses on the prison experience in the collective shared cells. The experiences of Palestinian female prisoners of war differ in many aspects from their Palestinian male inmates primarily because of their small number over the years. Secondly and more importantly, due to the fact that out of around a hundred published and unpublished works written by female and male Palestinian detainees and prisoners of war, this book is the only one that intensively expresses pain. The expression of pain is not only manifested in its poetic language, metaphors and structure but also in the silent areas represented by the ellipses punctuation mark that consists of two periods (..) and frequently recurs in the text.

The second personal testimony I intend to focus on in this chapter is *La Lan Albasa* 'Aba'atakum by Ahmad Qatamish.¹³⁰ This personal testimony bears witness to Ahmad's third arrest and interrogation experience in 1992. He finished writing this testimony in mid-1995 while he was an administrative detainee in the Naqab prison (Katsi'out), according to his endorsement

¹³⁰ Aḥmad Qatāmish, *La Lan Albasa* 'Abā'atakum (Dimashq: Dār Kan'ān lil-Dirāsāt wa- al-Nashr, 1980). The first edition of this testimony was published with a slightly different title. That is "*La Lan Albasa* *Ṭarbūshakum*" which is translated into English as 'I will not wear your fez' and it figuratively means 'I will not submit to you.' In the second edition that was published in Damascus 1998 the word *Ṭarbūshakum* was replaced by 'Aba'atakum because the word *Ṭarbūsh* has a positive connotation in Syria and other parts of the Arab Homeland. I received this information from the author himself whom I met in winter 2005 in Ramallah.

at the end of the book. At the time of this third arrest, Ahmad was one of the political leaders of the Palestinian Communist Faction PFLP (The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) in the West Bank. He mentioned in his testimony that he was detained for six months in his youth. He was also arrested and imprisoned for a second time for another four years, from January 1st 1972 to December 31st 1975, for being nominated in internal elections for a leadership position in the PFLP.¹³¹ In June 1976, he became wanted by the occupation forces once again after another prisoner mentioned his name in his confession. However, he went underground in Feb 1976 after two months of his release.¹³² He managed to hide in the town of Ramallah for 17 years until he was arrested for the third time in 1992. He had been interrogated and tortured for around four continuous months then detained for another eight years as an administrative detainee from 1992 to 2000. This testimony covers only two stages of Qatamish's prison experience, i.e., the arrest and the four-month interrogation period. I chose him, firstly, because of his political affiliation. In this thesis, I analyse testimonies written by authors from different political and ideological backgrounds to show later on how these backgrounds affected their coping strategies on the one hand. Conversely, how they were reflected in their testimonies demonstrates that prison writings are not identical. Secondly, this testimony was chosen because of its comprehensive content, where Qatamish testifies in detail about his interrogation experience. Thirdly, additional reasons that interested me in his personal testimony are his belonging to the working class and his limited official education. Qatamish has a teacher college certificate, and before his first detention, he was not affiliated with any creative writing

¹³¹ Ibid., 33.

¹³² Ibid., 14.

activity. Finally, he is an autodidact intellectual and one of the few writers who continued to produce books in the wake of his imprisonment. He wrote two political books and two novels in addition to his personal testimony.

As for the third personal testimony, I decided to look at Marwan al-Barghuti's *Alf Yawm fi Zanzanat al-'Azl al-Infiradi* (One Thousand Days in Isolation). Marwan al-Barghuti is a political leader of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah) and an elected Palestinian Legislative Council member. In the first two chapters of this testimony, Marwan bears witness to his second interrogation experience that started on April 15th 2002 and lasted around four months.¹³³ The third chapter is dedicated to the illegal trial that issued a verdict of five life sentences in prison against him. In the following two chapters of his testimony, he mainly focuses on the one thousand days he spent in isolation and details his mechanisms of survival and coping strategies. He devotes the sixth chapter to his wife.¹³⁴ In this chapter, he expresses his love, respect and gratitude for her sacrifices, endless support, and her continuous efforts via national and international activism and campaigns to spread awareness about the Palestinian prisoners of war to promote solidarity with their cause and to call for their instant release including her husband's. In the last chapter, Marwan talks about the General Security Services (GSS) and the phenomenon of 'the birds.' This term means a group of collaborating

¹³³ His first experience was when he was in high school in 1978. See: al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 20.

¹³⁴ I use the term 'isolation' rather than 'solitary confinement' because the latter is used as a disciplinary measure and as common practice during interrogation, whereas, isolation is used by the Israeli Occupation Prison Service (IOPS) or the General Security Service (GSS) when they determine that the prisoner of war would risk the Israeli security if allowed to be in contact with other prisoners. In other words, the isolation measure is used against the Palestinian political leaders in IOPS to prevent "them from contributing to internal facility and external community political discourse." Sahar Francis, and Kathleen Gibson, "Isolation and Solitary Confinement of Palestinian Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Facilities," in *Threat*, eds. Abeer Baker and Anat Matar (London: Pluto Press, 2011) 213-19. See also Ruchama Marton, "The Impact of Isolation on Mental Health," in *Threat*, eds. Abeer Baker, and Anat Matar (London: Pluto Press, 2011), 231-2.

inmates that the interrogators and prison authorities use as a weapon against the prisoners who survive the interrogation without confessing and as problems, tensions and conflicts makers in collective cells. I chose to analyse his testimony mainly because it focuses on isolation. This stage of imprisonment is a different experience from the interrogation (Qatamish) or imprisonment in collective cells (Nazzal). In addition, he belongs to a different political affiliation and has no writing experience before his incarceration.

The fourth testimony *Dawlat Majiddu* is a collective testimony.¹³⁵ This testimony bears witness to the opening of the detention camp ruled by the IZSCR military service and intelligence in May 1988. The purpose behind opening this detention camp was to accommodate the detainees of the first Intifada. This testimony bears witness to how the detainees as a collective succeeded within a year in establishing a counter-order inside the camp. A general struggle committee was elected soon after opening the camp. It managed the struggle of the detainees against the prison authority by organising the physical clashes against the soldiers' terrorist attacks on the unarmed prisoners setting up the resistance tactics used by the detainees to improve the prison conditions and turning the camp into a revolutionary and organisational base for national mobilisation. The author, a member of the general struggle committee, was imprisoned twice. The first time was in 1967 when he was only ten years old and spent five years in incarceration, where he finished his high school studies. After his release, he pursued his journalism studies and obtained a bachelor's degree from the University of Baghdad. After the burst of the first Intifada in 1987, he was detained for 18 months. The author finished writing this

¹³⁵ 'Abdullāh 'Awwād, *Dawlat Mjiddu: Tajribat al-Binā' al-Tanzīmī wa-al-Muwajahah fī Mu'taqal Majiddu* ('Amman: Dār al-Jalīl lil-Dirāsāt wa- al-Nashr, 1992). See also 'Abdullāh 'Awwād, *al-Shabh* ('Amman: Dār al-Jalīl lil-Dirāsāt wa- al-Nashr, 1992).

testimony and a novel titled “al-Shabh” (Stress Positions) shortly after his release.¹³⁶ However, the IZSCR Military Governorate panned their publication in the Palestinian Territories occupied in 1967. Thus, both were published after three years in Amman, Jordan.

The last testimony is *al-Zanzānah Raqam 704* (Cell Number 704), written by Jebril al-Rajjub.¹³⁷ This testimony bears witness to the struggle of the Palestinian prisoners and their leadership represented by the general struggle committee in the newly opened Ijneid prison operated by the IZSCR prison service. This struggle took place in 1984 to improve prison conditions. It led to a turning point in the history of the constant struggle of the Palestinian collective prisoners against this prison service. The prisoners used innovative tactics that avoided all past mistakes and took advantage of the points of weakness of the prison service. They succeeded via planning, managing the hunger strike and handling the negotiations with the Interior minister, the head of the prison service and the prison chief and their representatives to achieve all the demands of the struggle for the first time in the history of the collective prisoners’ movement.

The writer was detained for four months in 1986 when he was 16. In prison, he received a recommendation to join the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (FATAH), an underground movement at that time, from one of its imprisoned members. In 1970 he was arrested after throwing a bomb on a military bus and was sentenced to life in prison. In May 1985, he was freed via the Jibril prisoner exchange; and was arrested in November of the same

¹³⁶ As the author informed me when I met with him in April 2005 and received a free copy of the testimony that was not available neither in bookstores nor in public and university libraries in the West Bank.

¹³⁷ Jebrīl al-Rajjūb, *al-Zanzānah Raqam 704: Tajribat Asrá al-Thawrah al-Filastīniyah bayna Nafḥah wa-Ijnaid* (n.p., n.d.). Rajjub had only one copy of the testimony. Thus, I had to borrow it from his office in Ramallah for a few hours in 2005. I made a photocopy and returned it back.

year for seven months. The testimony was written in prison. It is loaded with original documents the general struggle committee had distributed or received before, during, and after ending the 13-day hunger strike. Some of these documents are letters and announcements that were sent to the interior minister and prison authority, the press, Israeli parliament members, the UN, the lawyers, and the Palestinian people through its different organisations, as well as letters of update, mobilisation, and instruction to the prisoners of Ijneid prison. I chose these two collective testimonies because they bear witness to two different collective prison experiences in terms of the oppression system (the prison authority, the prison layout, the tactics used to achieve the goals and the extent of their violence) and how the prisoners and their leaders confronted and handled the struggle against the prison authority.

Part one: Bearing Witness to the Structure of Torture in the Israeli Zionist Settler Colonial Regime (IZSCR) Prisons and Its Manifestations in Personal and Collective Testimonies written by Palestinian Prisoners of War and Administrative Detainees

“They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. And they did not love their lives so as to shy away from death.”(Revelation 12:11).

"وهم غلبوه بدم الخروف وبكلمة شهادتهم ولم يحبوا حياتهم حتى الموت." (رؤيا يوحنا اللاهوتي 12:11)

The Israeli Zionist settler colonial regime (IZSCR) considers the West Bank and Gaza Strip as an additional part of the land of Israel (Eretz Yisra'el- ארץ ישראל). It would not constitute a “foreign occupation.” The Zionists believe that Jews have historical rights in these areas and that no other state has a sovereign claim over them. Thus, even Jordan and Egypt were occupants. According to this Israeli Zionist interpretation of the international and human rights laws, Israel was administrating these disputed areas rather than occupying them. In her book “Courting Conflict,” Lisa Hajjar states, “the Israeli state has made prodigious use of law to maintain and legitimise its rule over Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and also to punish and thwart resistance.” Hajjar continues to explain that the Israeli state cling to this strategy because it takes the law and the state’s image as law-abiding into consideration. ¹³⁸

In 1987, the Israeli government appointed a commission of inquiry headed by Moshe Landau, a retired judge of the High Court of Justice (HCJ), because of two scandals involving General Security Services (GSS) officers that had come to the Israeli public’s attention. This commission issued a groundbreaking report on the activities of the GSS. The mission of the Landau commission was to uncover any illegal actions committed by the GSS and to restore Jewish Israeli public confidence in the security establishment, which these two scandals had damaged.

The Landau commission report confirmed that the “GSS agents had used violent interrogation methods routinely on Palestinian detainees since at least 1971 and that they had

¹³⁸ Lisa Hajjar, *Courting Conflict: The Israeli Military Court System in the West Bank and Gaza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 49

routinely lied about such practices when confessions were challenged in court because they had been coerced.”¹³⁹ The Landau Commission harshly criticised the GSS fabrications. However, it adopted the GSS’s position that the tactics of coercive interrogation were indispensable in the struggle against “hostile terrorist activity.” The Landau Commission acknowledged the broad definition of terrorism used by the GSS, which included acts or threats of violence and almost all activities related to Palestinian nationalism. The Landau commission described GSS interrogators as “ideological criminals” who had made mistakes while doing their “national duty.”¹⁴⁰ By so doing, Hajjar claims that the Landau Commission wanted to avoid the affliction of torture label by euphemising the endorsed tactics as “moderate physical pressure.” The reasoning of the Landau Commission that “moderate physical pressure” does not rise to the level of “torture” traces back to British interrogation methods used on IRA prisoners. These tactics include “stress positions, protracted sleep deprivation, isolation, prolonged hooding, sensory manipulation (e.g. excruciatingly loud noise), and painful cuffing.”¹⁴¹

In November 1987, the Israeli government accepted the recommendations of the Landau Commission and officially approved “moderate physical pressure.” Thus, Israel came to be the first state in the modern world to recommend openly the use of painful, humiliating, and inhumane interrogation methods as a “legal right” of the state.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Ibid., 70.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 71.

¹⁴¹ Lisa Hajjar, *Torture: A Sociology of Violence and Human Rights* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 31.

¹⁴² Ibid. See also Hajjar, *Courting Conflict*, 72.

In response to the Israeli government's authorisation of tactics and treatment widely regarded as torture, some Israeli and Palestinian lawyers and human rights activists established the Public Committee against Torture in Israel (PACATI) in 1990. This committee waged a decade-long battle in Israeli courts to end the use of "moderate physical pressure." In 1999, the committee won the legal battle when the Israeli High Court of Justice ruled that detainees' "routine" abuse was unacceptable and prohibited. Israeli interrogational abuse of prisoners did not stop completely (PCATI 2003), but that court decision made it illegal.¹⁴³

Article five of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 states that "no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment."¹⁴⁴ In addition, according to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984:¹⁴⁵

Torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third party information or confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or

¹⁴³ Hajjar, *Torture*, 32.

¹⁴⁴ "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," Un.org, last modified November 30, 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

¹⁴⁵ "Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment," United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, last modified August 24, 2018, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CAT.aspx>.

suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

The IZSCR signed this convention on October 22, 1986. The Knesset (Israeli Parliament) ratified it in August 1991, and the convention became valid on November 2, 1991. Signing this convention made the policy of using “moderate physical pressure” more legally problematic. However, the Israeli occupation government justified disobeying this convention in its conduct concerning the Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip based on the Israeli interpretation of their political status. “[T]he political status of these areas remained to be determined, a line of legal reasoning that drew on the Israeli distinction between “administration” and “occupation.”¹⁴⁶

In 1998, Eitan Felner of B’Tselem wrote:

In Israel, torture is institutionalized, with its own routine and systematic bureaucracy. Torture is governed by detailed regulations and written procedures. A whole contingent of public officials participate in the practice of torture: in addition to the GSS interrogators who directly perpetrate torture, doctors determine whether a detainee is medically fit to withstand the torture, a ministerial committee headed by the Prime Minister oversees the procedures, state attorneys defend the practices in courts and finally the High Court of Justice has effectively legalized torture by approving its use in individual cases without ruling on its legality in principle.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Hajjar, *Courting Conflict*, 73.

¹⁴⁷ Eitan Felner, “Legally Sanctioned Human Rights Violations,” *B’Tselem Human Rights Report 6* (1998): 15.

Torture structures, methods and tactics inflicted on Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees have constantly been changing and developing. Prisons, interrogation centres, detention camps and torture structures were not created overnight after the Six-Day War in 1967.¹⁴⁸ They were set up and used by the Ashkenazi Zionist settler terrorist gangs before establishing their colonial regime in Palestine in 1948.¹⁴⁹ These variations of torture structures, methods and tactics are well documented mainly in the testimonies of Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees who were taken as captives during the Nakbah or had been arrested during the Israeli Zionist settler colonial military rule that took place between 1948-1966 or have been detained after occupying the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 up to the present time.¹⁵⁰

The primary purpose of using torture as the first coordinator of the activities of the IZSCR occupation in the West Bank and Gaza (1967-74) Shlomo Gazit states in his book *The Stick and The Carrot* is breaking the spirit of Palestinians and compelling them to confess to their interrogators and to collaborate with them.¹⁵¹ This means as Elaine Scarry contends in her book *The Body in Pain*, that the use of torture is an indication of an unstable regime.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ al-Barghūti Marwān, Abd al-Nāsir ‘Īsa and ‘Āhid Abū Ghalamah, *Muqāwamat al-I’tiqāl* (Filasṭīn: Mu’assasat al-Ayām, 2010), 110.

¹⁴⁹ Muṣṭafá Kabahā, and Wadī ‘Awāwdah, *Asrā bilā Ḥirāb: al-Mu‘taqalūn al-Filasṭīniyūn wa-al-Mu‘taqalāt al-‘Isrā’ ilīyah al-Ūlā 1948-1949* (Bayrūt: Mu’assasat al-Dirāsāt al-Filasṭīniyah, 2013).

¹⁵⁰ Hishām Sharābi, *Ṣāliḥ Barānsi al-Niḍāl al-Ṣāmit- Thalāthūn Sanah Taḥta al-Iḥtilāl al-Ṣahyoni* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ṭalī‘ah lil-Ṭība‘ah wa al-Nashr, 1981).

¹⁵¹ This is the right title of the book. Marton by mistake translates it as *The Carrot and the Stick*. See: Shlomo Gazit, *The Stick and the Carrot: The Israeli Administration in Judea and Samaria* (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 1985), 279. See also Ruchama Marton, “The Impact of Isolation on Mental Health,” in *Threat*, eds. Abeer Baker, and Anat Matar (London: Pluto Press, 2011), 225.

¹⁵² Scarry, *The Body*, 27.

In the following pages, I will use pain and torture theories in addition to human rights reports and research that was done on the ruling system of IZSCR in the Palestinian Occupied territories in 1967, as well as the five primary resources to describe the structure of torture in this system, its tools, the mentality of the perpetrators and the fundamental objectives it aims at achieving. This detailed overview is crucial to understanding how this systematic structure of torture made the writers suffer from acute prolonged trauma. Thus, writing their testimonies at a certain stage of their imprisonment or after a short period of their release was an existential necessity to survive, as I argue in the second part of this chapter.

The first stage of torture is the arrest:

The arrest is the first stage of torture and the main stage of the detention process. It should be sudden, brutal, terrorising, and hostile. On the one hand, it aims at creating a demonstration of power when a massive force of soldiers attacks the detainee's house. It strives to terrify the detainee himself/ herself to weaken his/her resistance and to prepare him/her for a total collapse in the interrogation centre. On the other, a sudden and brutal arrest would spread fear in the hearts of the detainee's family members and neighbours and act as a deterrence tool. The forces of the IZSCR hope to use this tool to prevent the people from joining the resistance and working against the occupation to avoid such a horrible fate. In the case of Nazzal, she was kidnapped from her house around 10 p.m.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ The occupation usually sends many of its soldiers to arrest and kidnap Palestinians. These forces are usually accompanied by artillery. The arrests take place late at night or very early in the morning when people are in deep sleep. The soldiers use lots of aggression and noise to make sure to terrorize not only the arrested subject but also the whole neighborhood and all the detainee's family members. They use this tactic to prepare the arrested subject for a fast break down as soon as s/he arrives at the interrogation centre and as a tactic of deterrence for the rest of the people.

" لعلّ السّاعة اقتربت من العاشرة مساء سمعت الجنود الذين يشهرون بنادقهم في وجه اللّيل"

"Maybe the time was about 10 p.m. I heard the soldiers pointing their rifles at the face of the night."¹⁵⁴

She mentions that curses accompanied the arrest.

"سمعتهم يتقيأون الكثير من الشّتائم والتّوبيخات ولأنّي لا أعرف العبريّة ظننت أنّهم يوجّهونها لأحد غيري"

"I heard them vomiting a lot of curses and rebukes, and because I don't speak Hebrew, I assumed that they are addressing somebody else."¹⁵⁵

During her transfer, Nazzal was exposed to a death threat. This kind of threat is another method the perpetrator utilises to intensify the fear.¹⁵⁶

"تحركهم رغبة حقيقيّة في إطلاق الرّصاص نحوي- أو هكذا شعرت-"

"They have a real desire to open fire on me- or this is how I felt."¹⁵⁷

al-Barghuti does not mention the arrest details. He begins his testimony by saying:

"كانت قرابة الرّابعة عصرًا يوم الإثنين 15\4\2002 عندما وجدت نفسي داخل غرفة التّحقيق"

¹⁵⁴ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 26.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

¹⁵⁶ Herman, *Trauma*, 77.

¹⁵⁷ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 25.

“It was around 4 p.m. on Monday the 15th of April, 2002, when I found myself inside the interrogation room.”¹⁵⁸

Since his arrest, al-Barghuti started to experience time differently- I will discuss this new time experience later in the next chapter. Thus, when he decided to write down his testimony, he had to set the timeframe of the experience like any other testimony. Therefore, he chose to begin it with the last time he had experienced time as a normal person or the only exact time that his traumatic memory could remember. It could also be that he suffered from memory loss because of his one thousand days in isolation.

As for Qatamish, he narrates that it was September 1, 1992, around 8 p.m. He heard a deafening breaking sound while putting his daughter in her bed to sleep. Within a fraction of a minute, 12 to 16 fully armed soldiers aggressively broke into the apartment on the third floor. Qatamish went towards the front door to see what was happening to spare his two-year-old daughter the shock. He approached the soldiers. They violently pushed him to the side, forcing the rest of the soldiers to invade the apartment and search it. Three soldiers pointed their guns and rifles to his chest and asked him to sit silently then they handcuffed him and covered his eyes. He informed them that there were women and kids in the apartment. After half an hour, they photographed him from different angles. They let him change his pyjamas. Before leaving the apartment, they let him say a quick goodbye to his wife and two-year-old daughter, and then they handcuffed him again and covered his eyes. When Qatamish complained, saying that he would not run away, he was told that the soldiers were surrounding the building and that this was

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 17.

the exact way he was supposed to leave the place with them.¹⁵⁹ Such a scary and humiliating image completes the horror scene. It shows the spectators the miserable fate of anyone who decides to fight against the occupation or refuses to comply with it.

Al-Barghuti does not talk about his arrest and admission to al-Maskubiyah. He begins his testimony with:

"كانت قرابة الرابعة عصرًا يوم الاثنين 15\04\2002، عندما وجدت نفسي داخل غرفة التحقيق، في معتقل المسكوبية في مدينة القدس المحتلة."

"It was around four in the afternoon on Monday, April 15, 2002, I found myself inside the interrogation room in al-Maskubiyah interrogation centre in the occupied city of Jerusalem."¹⁶⁰

However, he mentions in detail the transfers and the admissions to another six detention centres and prisons during his interrogation and the one thousand days of isolation. This lack of information could result from memory loss because prisoners who spend long periods of time in isolation suffer from such a condition.¹⁶¹

Usually, the transfer to the interrogation centre is accompanied by verbal abuse (insults and curses), as in the case of Nazzal, and physical abuse, such as beatings by using hands or rifles, kicking and slapping, as documented in other prisoners' testimonies. Qatamish was taken

¹⁵⁹ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 8-10.

¹⁶⁰ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 17.

¹⁶¹ Marton, "The Impact," 228.

to the main interrogation centre in Ramallah, which was within a short distance of his apartment building. As a result, he was not beaten during the transfer.¹⁶²

The second stage of torture is prison admission:
As for Nazzal, she was transferred after handcuffing her hands to al-Maskubiyah interrogation centre in Jerusalem. She was left for a long time in a small dark room. She was not physically tortured but exposed to the screams of other tortured inmates.

"صرخات الألم تقيح القلب"

"The screams of pain fester the heart."¹⁶³

Herman states, "it is not necessary to use physical violence often to keep the victim in a constant state of fear."¹⁶⁴ Witnessing the torture of others is often as effective as being physically tortured. This is one of the techniques that the perpetrator uses to disempower the victims and detach them from others. A dehumanisation process is carried on to invade and systematically break down the victims' sense of coherence and purpose and to reduce them to the level of "elemental survivals: the robot, animal, or vegetable."¹⁶⁵

Nazzal was moved handcuffed from one cell to another.

"الزنازين الرطبة ذات البعد الواحد .. والجدران الهشة شواهد على المسلخ البطيء للجلود البشرية...أيمكن حصر الجرح ضمن هذه الحدود اللا إنسانية"

¹⁶² Qatamish, *La Lan*, 11.

¹⁶³ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 24.

¹⁶⁴ Herman, *Trauma*, 77.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

“The humid cells that look alike.. The fragile walls that bear witness to the slow slaughter of human skin.. Is it possible to contain this wound within these inhumane boundaries?”¹⁶⁶

"فكّوا قيد يداي¹⁶⁷.. حاولت العثور على التفاصيل في غرفة شبه نافذة إلى العالم السفلي.. بين فتات خبز جاف.. وجرذ ميت.. جدران متعفنة مؤشرات مختلفة على أنّ الزائر الأخير لم يحظ بمعاملة الكلاب.. لا بأس فهنا جنوب أفريقيا أخرى.

“They removed the chains from my hands.. I tried to find the details in a room that looks like a window that overlooks the underworld.. [I tried to find the details] among dry bread crumbs.. and a dead rat.. moulded walls [all these are] different indications that the last visitor has not even had the honour to be treated like dogs.. [well] never mind here is another South Africa.”¹⁶⁸

Then she was moved to a better room where she was strictly searched by two female wardens who

"يصادران¹⁶⁹ فيها كلّ ممتلكاتي "ساعة يد وقلم"

“Confiscated all my belongings, a watch and a pen.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 28.

¹⁶⁷ A grammatical mistake in the source--it has to be يدي rather than يداي.

¹⁶⁸ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 29.

¹⁶⁹ A grammatical mistake in the source--it has to be تصادران.

¹⁷⁰ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 31.

After the search, she was given a mattress with a dirty cotton blanket, which prevented her from sleeping all night:

"رائحته كريهة جداً ويبدو أنّ مادّة ما التصقت به تعيق مجرى التَّنَفّس."

"It [the blanket] has a nasty smell, and it seems that a certain material that obstructs breathing adheres to it."¹⁷¹

After arriving at the interrogation centre, the first step is to visit the prison clinic for a complete medical check-up. Qatamish was taken to the clinic. He noticed that the doctors were professional, and some sympathised with him. He thought such a procedure was one of the prisoners' achievements throughout the years. He did not know that these doctors would submit a report to the GSS explaining the new detainee's medical condition and fill out a "medical fitness form" before detainees were interrogated. This form would provide the interrogators with an assessment of the detainees' health conditions. It would recommend to the interrogators the duration and some instructions about the methods of torture that could be used. Some of these recommendations are the length of the isolation period and if there are restrictions on tying the prisoner up, putting a head/eye cover on his/her face and head, and making him stand in a stress position for a long time, etc.¹⁷²

This medical fitness form was found by Tamar Peleg, a Jewish Israeli lawyer, in 1993. It was left by mistake in one of her clients' files. The revelation of this form was scandalous because it clearly implicated doctors in torture and ill-treatment, thus constituting a violation of

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 32.

¹⁷² Hajjar, *Courting Conflict*, 195.

the code of ethics and Hippocratic Oath and the 1975 Tokyo Convention against Torture, of which the Israeli Medical Association is a signatory.¹⁷³

Apparently, when a patient is helpless and in the custody of the security forces, the focus on his or her wellbeing often is weakened, and the demands of the security authorities play a significant and inappropriate role in some doctors' considerations regarding the patient. The Israeli Public Committee against Torture published a "Briefing Note" on November 24, 2011.¹⁷⁴ This report reveals significant evidence arousing the suspicion that many doctors ignore their patients' complaints, that they allow Israel Security Agency interrogators to use torture, approve the use of forbidden interrogation methods and the ill-treatment of helpless detainees, and conceal information, thereby allowing total impunity for the torturer.

After the medical check-up, they collected Qatamish's personal items consisting of a hand watch. Then, he was asked to sign a declaration in the Hebrew language of depositing the hand watch. Qatamish who did not know how to read, speak, and write in Hebrew, refused to sign.¹⁷⁵ In the case of al-Barghuti, the interrogation started immediately after arriving at the interrogation centre. It seems that the admission process and the health check-up are totally eliminated from his traumatic memory.

The third stage of torture is the interrogation:

¹⁷³ Ibid., 194-5.

¹⁷⁴ "Briefing Note: Human Rights of Palestinian Detainees and Prisoners Held in Israel, with Relation to the Struggle against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment," Adalah - Public Committee against Torture in Israel, last modified October 24, 2011, <https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/upfiles/2011/Palestinian%20Prisoners%20and%20Detainees%20Final%20Briefing%20Paper%20Oct%202011.pdf>.

¹⁷⁵ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 15.

Torture uses different processes to inflict pain on the prisoners. This pain destroys language. Torture, also, “mimes this language destroying capacity in its interrogation.”¹⁷⁶ In other words, the purpose of torture is not to extract “needed information but visibly to deconstruct the prisoner’s voice.” Torture not only presents “visibility on the structure and enormity of what is private and incommunicable, contained within the boundaries of the sufferer’s body”, but also it falsifies and denies “the reality of the very thing it has itself objectified by a perceptual shift which converts the vision of suffering, to the torturers and the regime they present, into the wholly illusory but wholly convincing spectacle of power.” The transformation of absolute pain into “the fiction” of absolute power takes place by the aid of “self-conscious display of agency.” Scarry adds that the “agent displayed is the weapon.” Every regime has many weapons. These weapons are repetitive and have “endlessly multiplied acts of display” that torture is built on to produce “a fantastic illusion of power.”¹⁷⁷

Interrogation “is internal to the structure of torture.” It has “intimate connections to and interactions with the physical pain.” In *The Body in Pain*, Scarry claims:

Pain and interrogation inevitably occur together in part because the torturer and the prisoner each experience them as opposites. For the torturers the human agony is made invisible, and the moral fact of inflicting that agony is made neutral by the feigned urgency and significance of the question.

For the prisoner, his agony will make neutral and invisible the significance of any question as well as the significance of the world to which the question refers. It is

¹⁷⁶ Scarry, *The Body*, 21.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 21-29.

for this reason that while the content of the prisoner's answer is only sometimes important to the regime, the form of the answer, the fact of his answering, is always crucial.¹⁷⁸

She contends that “[b]oth pain and death are radical and absolute.” In both of them, “the contents of consciousness are destroyed.” Each one of them occurs “because of the body.” They represent “the most intense forms of negation, the purest expression of the anti-human of annihilation, of total aversiveness though one is an absence and the other is a felt-experience, one occurring in the cessation of sentience, the other expressing itself in grotesque overload.” She concludes that “[r]egardless of the context in which it occurs, physical pain always mimes death, and the infliction of physical pain is always a mock execution.”¹⁷⁹

Thus, to resist “death” and stay alive, “the voice becomes a definitive source of self-extension; as one is speaking, the self extends out beyond the boundaries of the body and occupies a space much larger than the body.”¹⁸⁰

The intense pain of torture rather than confession leads to the loss of the victim's world, self and voice. As Scarry states:

The prisoner's confession merely objectifies the fact of their being almost lost, makes their invisible absence, or nearby absence, visible to the torturers. The confession is a

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 29-30.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 31.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 33.

way to saying, yes, all is almost gone now, there is almost nothing left now, even this voice the sounds I am making, no longer form my words but the words of another.¹⁸¹

The interrogation comprises two sections; “the question and the answer, each with conventional connotations that wholly falsify it.” The “question” is mistakenly considered as the “motive.” Whereas the answer is wrongly perceived as “betrayal.” This wrong perception justifies and explains the cruelty of the perpetrator. On the other, it makes the voice of the victim rather than the pain itself the cause of the victim’s “loss of self and world.” Scarry also believes that “[t]hese two misinterpretations are obviously neither accidental nor unrelated. The one is an absolution of responsibility, the other is a conferring of responsibility; the two together turn the moral reality of torture upside down.”¹⁸²

The perpetrator does not recognise or identify with the pain that he/she bears its presence, inflicts it, and sustains it for a prolonged time. Thus, while the prisoner experiences “annihilating negation” all over his own body, the perpetrator experiences the lack of this annihilating negation because the prisoner’s experience cannot be sensed by anyone else. Thus, in order to make what is occurring in terms of pain happen in terms of power, both annihilating negation and the absence of negation are translated into “verbal realities,”¹⁸³ i.e., questions and answers. This makes the interrogation essential to the perpetrator. Questions and answers represent “the

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 35.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 36.

fact that while the prisoner has almost no voice, the perpetrator and the regime have doubled their voice since the prisoner is now speaking their words.”¹⁸⁴

In other words, the perpetrator:

uses the prisoner’s sentience to obliterate the objects of the prisoner’s sentience, he uses the prisoner’s aliveness to crush things that he lives for. The confession that displays the fact that he has nothing to live for now obscures the fact that he is violently alive. The torturer’s mime of expanding the world-ground depends on a demonstration of the prisoner’s absence from the world.¹⁸⁵

The perpetrator also uses physical objects as weapons in his actions and language. These weapons occupy the “basic unit of shelter” – the interrogation room/ cell. These rooms “represent the world in its most contracted form.” These rooms are weapons by themselves and agents of pain in addition to where torture takes place and where weapons and torture tools are stored.

As Scarry explains:

All aspects of the concrete structure are inevitably assimilated into the process of torture, so too the contents of the room, its furnishings are converted into weapons. Made to

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 37.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 38.

participate in the annihilation of the prisoners, made to demonstrate that everything is a weapon, the objects and the fact of civilization are annihilated.¹⁸⁶

I disagree with Scarry, who insists on distinguishing between physical and emotional or psychological pain. I find Jean Jackson's argument more convincing in her article "Chronic Pain and the Tension between the Body as Subject and Object." Jackson states that phenomenologically such a distinction is "highly ambiguous" and is rarely that clear.¹⁸⁷ Also, as I will show later in this chapter, many of the torture tactics that are used against the Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees are psychological. Some of these psychological torture methods are exposing these prisoners to recorded or live screams of other tortured inmates, verbal death threats, threats to arrest family members or/and threats for raping mothers, wives or daughters of detainees as well as humiliations, curses and insults. In addition, Scarry introduces torture from the perpetrator's point of view and shows how inflicted severe pain affects its victim. However, she totally neglects how the victim reacts, resists and survives severe pain. By so doing, she completely avoids the fact that inflicting severe pain is traumatic and world-destroying.

The interrogation in the Israeli Zionist settler colonial prison could last up to three or four months, as in the case of Qatamish and al-Barghuti. The interrogation's purpose is to break both the body and spirit of Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees. As Shlomo Gazit states in his

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 39.

¹⁸⁷ Jackson, "Chronic." 201, 211.

book *The Stick and the Carrot*, interrogation aims to break the prisoner to make him/her confess and cooperate with his/her interrogators through total isolation.¹⁸⁸

"בידודו המוחלט של הנחקר (ממשפחתו, מעורך-דין, מאנשי הצלב-האדום ואפילו מעצורים אחרים) בשלב הראשון של המעצר והחקירה."

"To completely isolate the detainee from (his family, his lawyer, Red-Cross representatives and even other inmates) in the first stage of detention and interrogation."¹⁸⁹

Both al-Barghuti and Qatamish underwent a continuous interrogation that lasted more than one hundred days.¹⁹⁰ Al-Barghuti summarises his experience in three interrogation centres in 45 pages (2 chapters of the testimony), while Qatamish covers his detailed experience in five different interrogation centres and prisons in 168 pages. They found that torture methods and tactics have developed since their first detention experiences in the seventies. Many essential modifications have been done to make them "smarter and less physically violent" because of forbidding the use of physical torture and allowing the use of "moderate pressure tactics."¹⁹¹

"لم يعد تكسير الأضلاع والعصا والكهرباء وفرك الأعضاء التناسلية مستخدماً إلا قليلاً."

"[methods such as] breaking ribs, using clubs, electricity and chafing sexual organs are rarely used now."

¹⁸⁸ Maher S. Talhami, "Breaking the Body and Spirit: Palestinian Prisoners and Detainees Held by Israel," trans. Shaul Vardi, in *Physicians for Human Right (PHR)-Israel* (n.p.: n.d.), 11.

¹⁸⁹ Gazit, *The Stick*, 297.

¹⁹⁰ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 22, 25. See also Qatamish, *La Lan*, 169.

¹⁹¹ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 73-74.

The physical layout of the interrogation centres has changed as well:

"فكم تغيّر مركز تحقيق المسكوبيّة في غضون عقدين."

"How al-Maskubiyah interrogation centre had changed within two decades."¹⁹²

The interrogators are now younger than those he interacted with in the seventies. The interrogators of the nineties were more educated and carried university degrees:

"كان قد عرّفني على نفسه كحامل شهادة ماجستير من الجامعة العبريّة."

"He had introduced himself to me as a holder of a Master's Degree from the Hebrew University."¹⁹³

They are more professional than the interrogators in the seventies. In addition, they speak Arabic fluently and are acquainted with the Palestinian traditions, religious beliefs and political, social and economic situations.

Each interrogator has his role, such as "aggressive", "good", "bad", "friendly," and "empathetic."¹⁹⁴ They work as a team and rotate in shifts. They will hide their real names and use either Arabic or Hebrew/English nicknames to protect themselves from future legal processes against them or retaliation:

¹⁹² Ibid., 36.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 37.

¹⁹⁴ Talhami, "Breaking," 5.

"دخل غرفة التّحقيق عدد من المحقّقين، عرّفوا عن أنفسهم بأسماء عربيّة في الغالب، ما عدا بعضهم...مثل "جابي"،
"إيميليو"، آدم."

"Several interrogators entered the interrogation room, in most cases, they introduced themselves [by using] Arabic names except some of them ...like "Gabi", "Emilio", "Adam."¹⁹⁵

The number of the main interrogation team is usually eight officers. However, the number of participant interrogators could reach more than thirty.¹⁹⁶ Each one of them will begin his session from the last point his previous colleague has reached, and every new session will continue to develop and complete the former session.¹⁹⁷ They follow a studied flexible plan that could be changed and adjusted accordingly to achieve their ultimate goal: extracting a confession from the prisoner and obtaining his total submission.¹⁹⁸

All the interrogation sessions are videotaped; cameras are also installed in all the cells.

The detainees are monitored and observed 24/7:

"على الأرجح أنّهم كانوا يراقبون سلوكي، إذ أنّني أفترض وجود عدسة مستورة في كلّ غرفة وجهاز تنصّت في كلّ زنزانة."

¹⁹⁵ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 22.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 30.

¹⁹⁷ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 59.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 184.

“Most likely, they have been monitoring my behaviours because I assume there is a hidden camera in every room and eavesdrop device in every cell.”¹⁹⁹

The physical and mental situation of the detainee is observed and evaluated regularly. Interrogators look for points of weakness and wait for the right opportunities to attack the prisoner in order to fulfil their dirty job.

The tactics of interrogation and the methods of torture:

Both Qatamish and al-Barghuti underwent an ongoing interrogation that lasted around four months. During this time, they were isolated from the rest of the world, stripped of everything except their willpower, beliefs and principles. The interrogation sessions last many hours and are accompanied by pain infliction.

Stress positions (الشَّبْح):²⁰⁰ one of the meanings of the verb "شَبَحَ" in Arabic is to stretch the skin of an animal by pegs or stakes.²⁰¹ The Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees use this term to describe a method of torture that usually demands standing or sitting uncomfortably for prolonged hours while the hands and feet of the prisoner are in shackles, and the head is covered with a stinking fabric bag, or the eyes are covered with a blindfold. In the case of Qatamish, he experienced different stress positions during and between the interrogation sessions.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 27.

²⁰⁰ In human rights reports “Shabh” is translated as stress position. See: “Al MoscabiyeH Torture in the Heart of Jerusalem,” Addameer Prisoners’ support and Human Rights Association, last modified September 19, 2018, <http://www.addameer.org/puplications/al-moscabiyeH-torture-heart-jerusalem>.

²⁰¹ *Al-Munjid fī al-Lughah wa-alA ‘lām*. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Mashriq, 1986), 397.

"أدخل الكيس في رأسي وجرّني بتمهل... وأجلسني على مقعد منخفض في مردوان طويل"

"He covered my head with the bag and slowly dragged me... and made me sit on a low seat in a long hallway."²⁰²

"وأقعدني على كرسيّ صغير بينما يداي مربوطتين بقيد من الخلف وقيد آخر يربطه بحلقة معدنيّة مثبتة في الجدار، وقدمي مربوطتين بقيد أكبر وقيد آخر يربطه بأرجل الكرسيّ"

"He made me sit on a small chair, and my hands were handcuffed behind my back, and the chair was tied to a metal ring in the wall, and my feet were enchained by a bigger shackle attached to the chair legs by another chain."²⁰³

Staying in the wardrobe cell for a certain period of time is another method of Shabh. It is a small cell (coffin shape) with urine and excrement on its floor and a horrible smell. The prisoner would be locked in it for hours. Qatamish fainted and had a nervous breakdown after he was imprisoned in this cell for the first time.²⁰⁴

Sitting on a small chair for a long time while both hands and feet are in shackles during the interrogation session is another method of stress position.²⁰⁵

Additional stress positions are standing while the hands are shackled behind the back and tied to either a high or low metal ring in the wall, and sitting on a small chair, which has an acute angle

²⁰² Qatamish, *La Lan*, 32, 82

²⁰³ Ibid., 33, 85.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 47.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 59.

back all night long to prevent the prisoner from having some sleep and increase his headaches and stress.²⁰⁶

The purpose of using these stress positions is to overstress the body to turn it into a weapon against the prisoner. As a result, Qatamish suffered from spasms, horrible pain in his shoulders and posterior, numb wrists, rashes and skin infections in his buttocks due to the continuous contact between them and the chair. It is worth noting that some of these symptoms would last for a long time after the end of the interrogation. Qatamish mentions that he continued to suffer from these symptoms for many months after the end of the interrogation.²⁰⁷

As for al-Barghuti, he names this method “breaking the back” tool "كسر الظهر". For forty days in al-Maskubiyah interrogation centre and long hours daily, al-Barguti has been seated on a small chair made of either iron or plastic.²⁰⁸ This chair is fixed to the floor and has an obtuse back. When sitting on this chair, the back of the prisoner will be in an arched position, his feet will be tied to the legs of the chair while his hands are connected to the back of the chair, and his eyes are blindfolded. In addition, the seat itself has four sharp protrusions that cause horrible pain and even bleeding and make it unbearable to sit on it for a long time. An obtuse-backed chair was preferred over an acute-angled one because the interrogators knew from the medical check-up report that al-Barghuti suffered from herniated disc condition and infection in his back and neck. Consequently, he had severe and constant pain in the right side of his body. After a

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 90, 115.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 72-73.

²⁰⁸ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 25.

month, he had bruises on his body due to sitting on these chairs for continuously long periods, his haemorrhoid infection worsened, and he suffered from constant bleeding.²⁰⁹

Sleep deprivation for weeks at a time is the second torture method: This method can lead to loss of consciousness, nervous breakdown, exhaustion and migraines resulting from acute headaches and pains “similar to knives’ diggings.”²¹⁰ The interrogation team prevented al-Barghuti from sleeping and even closing his eyes for weeks. During his forty-day interrogation in al-Maskubiyah interrogation centre, he was moved to a cell only three times for less than three hours.²¹¹ The rest of the time, he was tied up to an obtuse-backed chair while an intense light was shed upon him.

“Every time “وكلمًا حاولت أن أنام، كان الضابط المناوب على حراستي يقوم بضرب الطاولة بشدة كي أفيق.”

I tried to sleep, the officer on duty would violently bang the table to wake me up.”²¹²

“وإذا ما غافلت المحقق للحظات أو هنيهات يقوم بالضرب بقضته على الطاولة صارخًا بأعلى صوته لأستيقظ فرغًا

مرعوبًا”

“And if I fell asleep for seconds or a fraction of a second, he would spank the table with his fist while loudly screaming so I would wake up panicked and terrified.”²¹³

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 26.

²¹¹ Ibid., 23.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid., 23.

Qatamish as well suffered from sleep deprivation for weeks. As a result, he had severe headaches, eye infections and stomach disorders.²¹⁴

"صداعي يقرع جدران رأسي بقوة"

"The headache is violently knocking the walls of my head."²¹⁵

The headache increased with time "صداعي تهادى"²¹⁶ One time, towards the end of the interrogation; he fell from his chair onto the floor because of lack of sleep. They moved him to a room, and a warden kept kicking the door to prevent him from falling asleep, even for a few minutes. Qatamish comments on this, saying that the warden did not need to do that because he had enough hammers knocking on the walls of his head to keep him awake.²¹⁷

Starvation and mal-nutritious small meals are other long-term methods of torture. The food that is offered to the prisoners is minimal for their survival and it is provided in small portions to weaken the body and cause ailments and even death in the long term, especially if the prisoner spends years in prison due to the lack of nutrients that the body needs to function normally and in a healthy way. During the interrogation, this method adds additional pressure on the prisoners to make them cooperate with their interrogators and confess. As a result, starvation will make prisoners lose much of their weight shortly after their detention. Breakfast consists of

²¹⁴ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 166.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

four small slices of bread and one-half tomato or cucumber. Dinner and lunch may have different kinds of food; still, the quantity is minimal.²¹⁸

As for Qatamish, he was not served food until the fifth day of interrogation.

"وانتهى اليوم الثاني وكان لافتاً للانتباه عدم شعوري بالجوع أو التعب"

“The second day ended, and it is worth noting that I did not feel hungry or sleepy.”²¹⁹ The first meal he received in al-Maskubiyah interrogation centre consisted of one egg, one spoon of jam and some olives. Another meal consisted of a tasteless cold soup, half a cup of cold rice, four bites of sausages or a chicken wing and bread without a spoon.²²⁰

“Shaking” “الهزّ” أو “الرّجّة” is another method of torture. While the prisoner is tied up to a chair in the interrogation room, the interrogator either takes hold of the prisoner by the collar or stands behind the chair and grabs the prisoner’s head, and then he shakes it violently to the sides and back and forth for over a minute, then he releases it. After that, he continues with his questions, and if the prisoner does not cooperate, the interrogator repeats the violent shaking several times during the interrogation session. This method could cause severe pain in the neck, dizziness, concussion, serious and irreversible brain damage and even death.²²¹

²¹⁸ Ibid., 23.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 32.

²²⁰ Ibid., 45.

²²¹ According to the statement of Dr. Robert Kirchner in Addameers Report about torture in the Israeli prisons. Also the same report mentions that the prisoner Abdl Summad Herisat died in April 1995 as a result of shaking. “Report: Torture in Israeli Prisons,” *addameer.org* - Prisoners’ Support and Human Rights Association, last modified on October 13, 2008, <http://www.addameer.org/detention/torture.html>.

Qatamish describes this method one time in his testimony:

فالتفت من ورائي وقبض على رأسي وأخذ بليّته يسارًا ويمينيًا، وضغط ظهري مائلًا على حفة الكرسي، وثنى لي رأسي، وصرخ بأذني، وكلّ هذا جعل صداعي يتعاضم والدم يتصاعد في رأسي، فمتى ينفجر سوف ينفجر لا محالة، ولكنّه فجأة يتوقّف، ويدفع رأسي وجسمي للأمام كي آخذ وضعي الطبيعيّ، ويقبض ضغطي من خلال عدّ نبضات الدّم في رسغي فيما ينظر في ساعته، ويبدأ بتدليك رقبتي وأكتافي...ومارس الطّقس ثانية ... ومارس الطّقس الثالثة... ولكنّه رمى بثقله كما لو كان يخوض معركة أخيرة، فيما روجي كان معلّقة بشعرة فعلاً، فوجيب قلبي يتصاعد ولهائي يتسارع وقواي تخور، وجسمي يدور... وآلام رأسي لم ترحمني والجديد أوجاع عضلات رقبتي... وشعرت بدوخة ورغبة بالتقيؤ ... وقبل أن ينفجر رأسي يكفّ، ما هذه السّادية، ما هذا الجنون، فجدعي يكاد ينشقّ وعضلات رقبتي أنهكت، ولكنّه يعيدني للوضع العادي ويدلّك رقبتي إنه مجنون فعلاً ، أو أدقّ يلعب لعبة مجنونة، وألتقط أنفاسي.

He went around me, grabbed my head, and started turning it left and right; he pressed my back towards the edge of the chair, bent my head backwards, and then shouted in my ear. All this had worsened my headache and made the blood rise to my head; when would it explode? It certainly would. However, he suddenly stopped and pushed my head and body back to the normal position, and he checked my blood pressure by counting the pulse on my wrist while looking at his watch. Then he started massaging my neck and shoulders... then he repeated the ritual once again... and he did it for the third time... but he used all his strength [this time] as if he was going through his last battle, while my soul was connected [to my body] with a hair indeed as my heart beatings were soaring. My breath was accelerating, and my strengths were declining... my headaches worsened [in addition] to the new pain in my neck muscles... I felt dizzy and was about to vomit... and before it [my head] exploded, he stopped; what kind of sadism is this? What kind of insanity is this? My ass was about to tear off and my neck

muscles were exhausted, but he returned me to the normal position and massaged my neck. He was really insane, or more specifically, he was playing a crazy game, and I picked up my breath.²²²

Insulting and degrading tactics: One of these tactics is preventing the detainees from their natural right to use the toilets and change underwear daily or shower and aims at insulting, hurting and treating the prisoner as a subhuman by forcing him to urinate or defecate on himself, and be dirty most of the time.²²³

"في الصّباح سألت: هل ممكن أن أذهب للدّورة؟ قال الضّابط، تكلم أوّلاً، قلت: هل أنا رخيص إلى هذا القدر، إن لم تخرجني "In the morning I asked: can I go to the toilet? The officer said: First, confess. I said am I unworthy to this extent? If you do not take me to the toilet I will urinate on the floor."²²⁴

Qatamish did not change his clothes for one and a half months. "فأنا لم أغيّر ملابسني منذ شهر. "I did not change my clothes for one month and a half, and even the colour of my underwear had changed and had become dark."²²⁵ Detainees cannot have a daily shower; if they are taken to the shower, the time allowed in the bathroom would be too short to have a good shower. Moreover, the shower cell is usually filthier than the detainees' cells.²²⁶

²²² Ibid., 165.

²²³ Addameer, "Report: Torture," 3.

²²⁴ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 26.

²²⁵ Ibid., 128.

²²⁶ Talhami, "Breaking," 15.

"في المراض توجد ماسورة للماء الساخن، فيتاح للمنازل الحمام الساخن مرّتين أسبوعياً بصابون مقبّيت ونصف بشكير ذلك "in the toilets, there is a pipe for hot water, the detainee can have a hot shower twice a week with a detested soap and half a towel because the other half will be used by another detainee, as for the time devoted for the shower it is around five minutes."²²⁷

Serving food in the toilets is another tactic used to humiliate the prisoners. This tactic hurts the prisoners and agitates their anger.

" في زنازين رام الله حجرة الطّعام هي المراض، وحينما دخلته ...، انتابتني مهانة عالية ولعنت التّحقيق والمخابرات وراودتني فكرة إعلان إضراب عن الطّعام."

"In Ramallah prison, the dining room is the toilet. When I entered it... I felt highly insulted, cursed the interrogation and the intelligence [services], and thought about declaring a hunger strike."²²⁸

"أن يضعوا هذا الطّعام الحقيّر في مكان حقير كدلالة على تحقير إنسانيّة المناضل، وهذا أوجعني وأغاظني بحقّ وحقيق، ومجرّد تذكّري ذلك يفور دمّي وأشعر بمهانة معنويّة."

"To put this disgusting food in a disgusting place as an indication of the degradation of the prisoner's humanity, this really hurt me and agitated my anger, when I remember that I get angry and I feel morally insulted."²²⁹

²²⁷ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 46.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., 73.

Cursing: is another way to humiliate the prisoner. The interrogators use dirty and obscene words to curse the prisoner and his/her family members, especially the women in the family. Many prisoners are susceptible to curses and are deeply hurt by them. Herman states that verbal abuse can hurt certain personalities no less than physical abuse.²³⁰ The interrogator aims to humiliate the prisoner, make him/her feel unworthy and emphasise his/her state of helplessness to demonstrate his dominance.²³¹

Both al-Barghuti and Qatamish do not mention the whole phrases of the curses. al-Barghuthi leaves out a few letters from the dirty words while Qatamish replaces them with an ellipsis (...). On the one hand, they consider the feelings of their readers. On the other, this could indicate the profound effect of these words on both of them. "كنت أشعر بدرجة عالية من الغضب والغليان في الصدر والرأس جراء تلك الشتائم البذيئة التي أتعرض لها والتي يصعب على المرء التّفوّه بها أو تسجيلها في هذه السّطور"

"I used to feel very angry and agitated due to hearing these obscene curses which are very hard to utter or register in these lines."²³² As for Qatamish, if he were cursed, he would curse the interrogator back. Still, reacting in this way does not mean that he was not hurt by these curses.

"قال: نحن لا نغتالك يا حقير. قلت: أنت الحقير. قال: أنت وشعبك ال... قلت: أنت ال... قال: شايف حالك يا ... قلت: أنت ... وتبادلنا عدّة شتائم... قلت: أنت تتصرّف كأزعر وليس كضابط مخابرات."

He said: worthless; we don't [attempt to] assassinate you. I said: you are the [one who is] worthless. He said: you and your people are ... I said: you are the ... he

²³⁰ Herman, *Trauma*, 189. See also Talhami, "Breaking," 5.

²³¹ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 27. See also Al-Barghuti and 'Isa, *Muqawamat*, 13

²³² al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 27.

said: you... are arrogant...I said: you are the ... and we exchanged several curses... I said: you are behaving like a scoundrel rather than an intelligence officer.²³³

Stripping the prisoners naked in front of prison personnel or /and inmates is another degrading tactic, especially because Palestinian society is conservative, and nudity is not practised or accepted in public. When Qatamish returned from court, he was ordered to take off all his clothes to undergo a security check:

قال: اخلع بدننا نفتشك، قلت: ليش؟ قال: لا يوجد نساء هنا، كنا²³⁴ رجال. وهذا استفزني، وخلعت ملابسي على عجل وهي بنطال وكالوت وبلوز البيجاما الفرنسية... وفتشوها ولم يعثروا على شيء، فيما جسمي بدون فجوات سرية، وبينما كنت عارياً كما ولدتني أمي، قال لي الضابط: البس بسرعة.

He said: take off your clothes we want to search you. I said: why? He said: there are no women here; all of us are men. This provoked me, and I took off my clothes in a hurry: trousers, underwear, and the top of the French pyjamas...they searched them and did not find anything; my body too did not have any secret holes. While standing naked, the officer said: put them [the clothes] on fast.²³⁵

²³³ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 34.

²³⁴ A spelling mistake in the source. It should be كُنَّا.

²³⁵ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 37.

Prisoners are also exposed to deafening music and noise for long periods of time in order to prevent them from having some sleep between interrogation sessions, to irritate and stress them out, and make it impossible for them to think or focus.²³⁶

"في المساء شبحوني في المردوان بالقرب من الستيريو الذي يطنّ بصوت عالي في طبقات الأذن ترهق الأعصاب وتستفرّ النَّفس."²³⁷

"In the evening, I was seated on a small stool while my hands were tied behind my back in the hallway near the loud stereo tape whose [sound] was loudly ringing in my eardrums and [consequently] exhausting the nerves and provoking the soul."²³⁸

Threats are another method of psychological torture. They are largely used during the interrogation to instil fear in the hearts of the prisoners in order to speed up their psychological collapse and lead to total cooperation with their torturers. The interrogators would threaten to arrest all or some members of the detainee's family, especially the females and torture them and rape them in front of the prisoner's own eyes. Other kinds of threats include the threat to kill and the threat to cause one to lose one's mind. After the interrogators' failed to force al-Barghuti to cooperate with them, they started to threaten to kill him or drive him crazy. "ستبقى على هذا الحال" "you will stay under these conditions until you either lose your mind or die."²³⁹ In another incident, they informed him that they did not have time to investigate every

²³⁶ Al-Barghuti and 'Isa, *Muqawamat*, 130.

²³⁷ A grammatical mistake in the source. It should be عالي rather than عال.

²³⁸ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 82.

²³⁹ A grammatical mistake in the source. It should be هذه الحال rather than هذا الحال.

²⁴⁰ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 37.

piece of info with him and that he should either die or confess. They also warned him that his son Qassam would be either assassinated soon or arrested and imprisoned for the rest of his life.²⁴¹

As for Qatamish, the interrogators lied to him by informing him that they had arrested his brothers and wife, and, in order to set them free, he had to cooperate with them and confess.²⁴² During his interrogation, they arrested his wife twice, and she was interrogated to put pressure on him and make him feel guilty for being responsible for her detention. One day they brought her to the interrogation room to make him believe that she was under arrest and that her release depended on him. He treated her as an acquaintance and kept denying their marital relationship.

فمدت يدها نحوي غير أنني تمنعت، فقالت: علشاني، فصافحتها وعانقتها على عجل،... وقالت كلامًا مفيدًا ومختصرًا "أنا أزواج" ... وبعد خروج سهى سألتني: ما صلتك بسهى؟ قلت: لا صلة لي بها، قال: أليست زوجتك، قلت: لا، قال: ولكنها تقول إنها زوجتك، قلت: لها أن تقول ما تشاء ولي أن أقول ما أشاء.

She extended her hands towards me, but I refrained [from shaking her hands]. 'She said: for my sake.' I shook her hands and gave her a quick hug... she said a few words that meant 'we are a couple'... after Suha left, he asked me: 'what is your relationship with Suha?' I said: 'I have no relation with her.' He said: 'Isn't she your wife.' I said: 'no.' he said: 'but she says that she is your wife.' I said: 'she is free to say whatever she wishes, and I have the freedom to say whatever I want.'²⁴³

²⁴¹ Ibid., 38-39.

²⁴² Qatamish, *La Lan*, 43.

²⁴³ Ibid., 54-55.

Qatamish was exposed to death, insanity and hallucination threats and came close to death more than once during his interrogation. Death encounter is another tactic of torture.

"قال: اسمع أنا اللي قتلت إبراهيم الزاعي، قلت وهل تفخر بذلك، سوف أقتلك مثله، قلت: تستطيع وأعرف ذلك جيّدًا.²⁴⁴

“He said: listen, I am the one who killed Ibrahim al-Ra‘i.’ ‘I said: are you proud of that,’ ‘I will kill you like him.’ ‘I said: you are capable, and I know that very well.’”²⁴⁵

Towards the end of the interrogation, Qatamish was informed by one of the interrogators that "We made a mistake; we should have killed you rather than arrested you." After a while, the same interrogator added

"حتى لو صمدت وخرجت من السّجن نستطيع قتلك ودفنك على بعد عشرة أمتار تحت الأرض، فلا أحد يعرف مصيرك."

“Even if you endure [all this] and are released from prison, we can kill you and bury you ten meters under the ground, and no one will know your fate.”²⁴⁶

Qatamish encountered death several times during the interrogation stage, and he realised towards the end that these experiences are made up by the interrogators to traumatise him and break his inner soul. The first time was around the third day of his detention. Qatamish, with a bag covering his head, was transferred to the Shabh room- a cell equipped with fixed small

²⁴⁴ Ibrahim al-Ra‘i a resident of Qalqilyah. He was arrested in January 1986 and he died in his confinement cell in al-Ramlah central prison on Apr 11, 1988. The Zionist settler colonial authorities claimed that he committed suicide. However, medical reports showed that he was assassinated inside his cell. See: al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 38.

²⁴⁵ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 22.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

chairs and rings in the walls that keep prisoners standing or seated in stress positions between interrogation sessions. He was tied to a small stool and the wall in this room. After a while, the interrogators raised the room temperature, and he almost choked. They hurried up to remove the bag and let him breathe. He used to raise the bag a little bit by leaning on the wall to get enough air to breathe. One time, someone suddenly pushed the bag down. When Qatamish tried to raise it, the bag was pushed down again. As a result, he could not breathe, and within seconds, he was on the floor.²⁴⁷

The stinking head bag is another method of torture. "قال: هذا الكيس جزء من التّحقيق" he said (the interrogator): this bag is a part of the interrogation." The purpose of this bag is to prevent the detainee from using his senses—the senses of sight and smell in particular—to discern his location and figure out what is happening around him. More importantly, this causes him to lose his sense of time and consequently, he becomes unable to distinguish day from night. ... المناضل" "يفقد البصر بسبب الكيس" "the freedom fighter loses the sense of seeing because of the bag." In addition, it isolates the detainee from other inmates by reducing his world to the boundaries of the bag and by focusing all his energies on finding ways to raise it or move in order to breathe.²⁴⁸

It is made of thick and dark fabric and has a horrible smell. This smell makes it impossible for the detainee to breathe normally. It damages the respiratory and nervous systems. Consequently, the detainee will suffer from continuous stress, which could lead to choking and fainting because of inhaling its bad smells.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 91, 34, 89.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 34-35.

²⁴⁹ Al-Barghuti and 'Isa, *Muqawamat*, 117.

During al-Barghuti's detention, this stinking bag was replaced with a black blindfold. The primary functions of this eye cover are the same as the bag, even if it is more comfortable in terms of breathing. Nevertheless, it instils fear in the heart of the detainee and keeps him/her alert and stressed out because s/he cannot hint what will happen to him/her next.

"منذ اليوم الأول وضع المحقق العصابة السوداء على عيني، وهي شديدة الظلمة لا ترى عبرها ومن حولك شيئاً"

"Since the first day, the interrogator put the blindfold over my eyes. It is very dark. You cannot see anything through it or around you."²⁵⁰ Detainees must put it on all the time, especially when they are moved from one place to another within the interrogation centre facility, during interrogation sessions, when they are transferred to other interrogation centres/prisons, and during transportation to and from courts and hospitals. This tool of torture usually is accompanied by hand and ankle cuffs.

These cuffs are constantly used during Shabh too, to hold the detainees in a specific position for a long time with minimal ability to move. As a result, detainees experience numbness in their hands and feet. Interrogators usually press these cuffs with their fists or feet to inflict pain on the detainees during interrogation sessions.²⁵¹ In addition, these cuffs are symbols of humiliation and dehumanisation because they force the detainees to spend long hours tied up to walls or chairs like animals.

²⁵⁰ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 22.

²⁵¹ Al-Barghuti and 'Isa, *Muqawamat*, 120.

"ما أروع فكّ الوثائق والمشى دقائق في الغرفة، فهذا كفيل بإزاحة الكثير من آلام كتفيّ وجذعي وحرقة في أردافي، غير أنّ هذا لا يتحقّق أبدًا."²⁵²

"How wonderful will it be if they release the cuffs and if walking for a few minutes in the room [is allowed]? This will guarantee to ease the pain in my shoulders, posterior, and infected buttocks, but this never takes place!"²⁵³

Detainees are not taken out for a daily walk and do not see daylight except when they are taken to court or sometimes when they meet their lawyers or Red Cross representatives. These rare incidents are very short and do not exceed a few minutes each time. However, their effect on the detainees is tremendous. This tactic aims to make the detainees lose their sense of space and time and to totally disconnect them from the outside world in an ongoing process of breaking their spirit.²⁵⁴ Qatamish talks about the first time he was exposed to the sun and daylight after twelve days of detention when he met his lawyer for the first time. They put the stinking bag over his head and violently dragged him outside the building while shackles were around his ankles. He felt the daylight and the heat of the sun:

وأحسست بالحياة... ورغم أنّ غيابي مجرد أيام، غير أنني شعرت بأنّ دهرًا قد انقضى، وأنّ الإحساس بالحياة هو فرصة للتغلب على محاولة عزلي عن الحياة، وتدققت مشاعر بهيجة إلى نفسي.

²⁵² A spelling mistake in the source. It should be وثاق (chain) and its plural is وثق rather than وثائق (documents).

²⁵³ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 93.

²⁵⁴ Talhami, "Breaking," 15.

I felt alive, although I was away only for a few days; still, I felt as if it had been a very long time; feeling alive was an opportunity to defeat the attempt of detaching me from life, and happy feelings burst out of my soul.²⁵⁵

All this beautiful and positive energy occurred merely by the feeling of the sun's light and heat from behind the stinking fabric of the head bag. Then another warden took over and removed the bag.

"فاغتتمت الفرصة وشققت جفني لمعرفة ما يجري حولي، يا إلهي فأول ما وقع عليه بصري أصناف الورود موزعة في

"I seized في باحة بناية كبيرة، وقد طار قلبي فرحاً... ولم تمض سوى دقائق حتى سحبتني على درجات تقود للطابق الثاني." "I seized this opportunity to know what was going on around me. Oh God, the first thing I saw was different kinds of flowers planted in the courtyard of a big building, and my heart flew with joy... after a few minutes, he dragged me up the stairs to the second floor."²⁵⁶

The interrogators use smoking to pressure the detainees to confess. If the detainee is a heavy smoker, they use cigarettes as bait. However, if he were a non-smoker, they would make sure he suffers from the smell of cigarettes.²⁵⁷ Qatamish is a non-smoker and cannot stand the smell of cigarettes. This information was concluded by the interrogators or transmitted to them via one of their informants. As a result, they started deliberately throwing piles of cigarette

²⁵⁵ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 101.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 102.

²⁵⁷ Al-Barghuti and 'Isa, *Muqawamat*, 131.

stumps on the floor or leaving ashtrays full of cigarette ashes and stumps around Qatamish in the Shabh room.²⁵⁸

"سألوني في بدايات اعتقالني، هل تدخن؟ أجبت: أدخن، قال أحدهم: تفضل سيجارة، قلت: لا أدخن منكم، ولقائي في الزنازين مع نزلاء آخرين هناك سرّي بأنني لا أدخن"

"They asked me at the beginning of my detention, do you smoke? I answered: I do. One of them said, please have a cigarette. I said: I don't smoke your cigarettes. Meeting other inmates in the cells revealed my secret that I don't smoke."²⁵⁹

Also, he suffered more from smoking when he shared cells with other smoker inmates, mainly because in those cells, the air was contaminated because of a lack of windows or poor air circulation. Thus, inhaling this contaminated air mixed with the smoke of cigarettes increased his headaches and prevented him from sleeping and made him suffer from shortness of breath.²⁶⁰

Cells are used as weapons to hurt the detainee and make it impossible for him/ her to have some rest between the interrogation sessions. They further isolate him/her and increase his/her feeling of loneliness and helplessness. In addition, detainees experience different kinds of cells during the interrogation period. Each one is hostile in its own way and intends to make the detainee's life unbearable. Some are used for Shabh, like the "wardrobe" cell. Others are used to exhaust the body and the nervous system, humiliate the detainees and deprive them of sleep.

²⁵⁸ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 126.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 107-8.

Moreover, detainees are moved from one interrogation centre to another during their detention and consequently from one cell to another to make detainees lose the feeling of stability.

"لا يتيحون للمنازل التماثل والاستقرار فهم يقومون بمناقلات أسبوعية تقريباً"

“They do not enable the detainee to settle down and adjust because they move [the detainees from cell to cell] almost every week.”²⁶¹

Usually, the cells are small in size. In each one, there is a squat toilet / toilet seat or a bin to be used as a toilet. Most of them have no windows. If there is a window, it will be small and covered to minimise the ventilation. Thus, the air in them is contaminated due to poor air circulation. This situation would make some of the detainees suffer from respiratory disorders. The cells contain other annoying details, such as dim or intense light, beds made of cement, unbearable smells, extreme cold/hot temperature, or a broken sink or toilet pump that leaks water and makes constant noise.²⁶² All these annoying matters turn the cell into a weapon that further increases the detainee’s suffering.

In the secret prison number 1391 al-Barghuti was transferred to a small cell:

"هي بلا نوافذ لا يعرف الأسير الليل والنهار، ولا يمكنه إطفاء الإضاءة الخافتة التي تبقى على مدار الساعة

"It إضافة إلى وجود حمام أرضي غالباً ما يكون وسخاً وقذرًا ولا تحتوي الرّزانة إلا على بطنيات فقط."

had no windows, so the detainee could not recognise night from the day. He had no

²⁶¹ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 106.

²⁶² Ibid.

access to turning off the constant dim light. In addition, [there was] a squat toilet which was usually dirty and the cell contained only a few blankets.”²⁶³

When he was moved to Petakh-Tikva prison, he was imprisoned in cell number one. This cell was the smallest in that prison. al-Barghuti assumed that it contained a tapping device. It had no windows, was airtight, and included a squat toilet with a horrible detested smell.²⁶⁴

Qatamish in his turn was moved to different confinement and shared cells during his detention in every prison to which he was transferred.²⁶⁵ Some of the cells he stayed in had a particular function such as depriving the detainee of sleep, like the 3x4 M low ceiling cell with four switched-on fluorescent lights.²⁶⁶ Alternatively, exposing the detainee to high and low temperatures is another method of torture. One night, he felt that the temperature degree in this low-ceilinged cell had increased. As a result, he was irritated, and his migraines and eye pain worsened. He was transferred to a cold air-conditioned cell the next day. He stayed in the cold cell for a few hours and felt frostbite on his bones.²⁶⁷

Moreover, after many days of continuous interrogation and isolation, the detainee will either be moved to share a cell with one or more collaborator inmates, or collaborator inmates

²⁶³ Ibid., 47.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 51.

²⁶⁵ During his detention Qatamish was transferred to five different prisons and interrogation centers (the Central Prison of Ramallah and al-Far‘ah Detention Center (Nablus), al-Maskubiyah Detention Center in Jerusalem, ‘Asqalan Prison and al-Ramlah Prison). al-Barghuti as well was detained in three facilities all of them are inside the Green Line (al-Maskubiyah Detention Center in Jerusalem, Petakh-Tikva Prison and the secret detention facility Prison number 1391). See: Qatamish, *La Lan*, 11, 45, 113, 117, 118 and see also al-Barghuti, *ALF*, 17, 45, 50.

²⁶⁶ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 53.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 129-130.

will join him/her in his/her cell. This evil human element is added to the hostile environment of the cell to annoy the exhausted detainee and keep him awake by the noise these collaborators make, the questions they ask and the constant conversations they open up. In addition, in some instances, they either try indirectly to extract information from the detainee that the interrogators themselves failed to extract or to terrorise and frustrate him/her to serve the goals of the interrogation. Under the subtitle “a made-up meeting that has no justification,” Qatamish narrates how one day, after a tiring interrogation session and after eating his lunch in the toilet, he was transferred to a cell with four to five inmates in their twenties. After introducing themselves, they started a political discussion and kept asking him questions. Another one kept knocking at the door, asking for a match for his cigarette from the warden. The noise and the questions aggravated his headaches, and he was dragged to a new interrogation session again before having some rest.²⁶⁸

al-Barghuti separately met three collaborators during the entire period of his four-month detention. They tried to extract information from him and prevented him from getting some sleep.

"وكنت أطمح إلى النوم ولو لنصف ساعة، لكن هذا الرجل "الجاسوس" لم يترك لي مجالاً للنوم وظلّ يتحدث حتى جاء الضابط ثانية واقتادني إلى التحقيق"

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 53-54.

“I was looking forward to having some sleep, even for half an hour, but this man “the spy,” did not let me sleep—he kept talking until the officer came back and dragged me back to the interrogation.”²⁶⁹

The prison transportation car "البوسطة" is another weapon that is used to humiliate and exhaust the prisoners. This car transfers criminal prisoners, prisoners of war and detainees from one prison to another and from prison to court and back. Palestinian prisoners name it “the mail car” because it is similar to the mail car. It has no windows except small holes of a one-centimetre radius. At the time of the transportation, it will be full of prisoners who are leg-cuffed and shackled with each other’s wrists. It is boiling in the summer and very cold during wintertime. Due to the lack of windows, the air inside the car is contaminated. One smells sweat and smoke mixed with other foul odours.

During the drive or sudden stops, the car bumps, jolts, and jerks. All these conditions are combined to make the ride horrendously awful. In the case of Qatamish, he remembers the worst unendurable ride he had ever experienced in this Bostah car. After several incidents of choking that Qatamish went through, it was clear to the interrogators that he could not tolerate closed, crowded heated places. Thus, one day they decided to make him encounter death in a new infernal way. One hot summer day, he was transferred to Al-Ramlah prison from ‘Asqalan prison, a ride that usually takes one hour lasted eight hours. During this transfer, he endured severe pain and discomfort. He felt highly dizzy, his migraines and blood pressure were exacerbated, and he felt like throwing up.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 31.

²⁷⁰ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 117.

"ولكنني أهرب من هذا الوضع فأرفع رأسي وأنظر حولي فيما عرقي يتصبّب من كل أنحاء جسمي وبشرتي تشحب وتصفّر كميت... وجاءت لحظات شعرت أنّ قلبي يدقّ الدقات الأخيرة وروحي تكاد تخرج من جسمي"

"I tried to escape this situation by raising my head and looking around me while I was heavily sweating all over my body, and my skin was getting pale and yellow like [the skin of] a dead man... at a particular moment, I felt that my heart was beating its last beats and my soul was about to leave my body.²⁷¹

Al-Barghuti was transferred to the secret prison facility number 1391 and Petakh-Tikva prison in a military Jeep. They threw him while blindfolded and with hands and legs shackled on the floor of an army car. He was in pain due to this situation.

"وما زادني ألماً هو قيام الجنود بوضع أقدامهم على جسدي وكانوا يسقطون رماد السجائر على وجهي... وقدّرت أنّ المشوار استغرق بين ساعتين ونصف إلى ثلاث ساعات"

"What increased my pain was [the fact that] the soldiers put their feet on my body and they dropped the ashes of their cigarettes on my face... I assumed the ride lasted around two and a half or three hours."²⁷²

In the first stage of the interrogation, the interrogator will have long detailed discussions with the detainee, accompanied by all or some of the torture methods mentioned above, to check and analyse his/ her personality, life experiences, education, personal life, etc. The purpose of

²⁷¹ Ibid., 117.

²⁷² al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 45, 50.

these conversations is to find out the points of weakness that the interrogator can use against the prisoner to make him/her submit.

"في غضون الأسبوع الأول، أو أكثر بيوم أو يومين... غدت جوانب من شخصيتي واضحة لهم... وكان عليهم إدخال

تعديلات على أسلوب التحقيق"

"Within the first week plus one or two more days, some aspects of my personality became clear to them... they had to modify the interrogation tactics."²⁷³

The ideological background, beliefs and principles of the detainee are checked out and attacked by the interrogator to bring him/her to lose his/her voice and adopt the interrogator's voice.²⁷⁴ "قناعاتي التي كانت هدفاً مباشراً لهجومهم بغية زعزعتها أو إرباكها."

"My beliefs were a direct target for their attack to stir them up and cause confusion - (what Qatamish calls the rounds of intellectual or ideological attacks. Moreover, the interrogator tries to make the detainee think that he knows everything about him/her and that he has complete confessions against him/her from other inmates with whom the detainee is acquainted. In addition, he attempts to make the detainee agree to the supremacy of the IZSCR over the Palestinians and the Arab regimes. He does his best to frustrate the detainee by emphasising the Arab defeats and betrayals and accusing the Palestinian Authority and leadership of corruption, stupidity and being

²⁷³ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 58.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

responsible for the misery of the Palestinian people -what Qatamish calls the rounds of the political attacks.²⁷⁵

In addition, the interrogators try to offer the prisoner some privileges. As Herman says, this is a very dangerous way to make the detainees willingly cooperate as a gesture of gratitude.

"حاولوا إدخالني لغرفة نظيفة مفروشة لكي أتناول طعامي فيها، وقد فهمت بغريزتي أنهم يعطوني امتيازًا فرفضت الدخول"

“They tried to make me enter a clean furnished room to have my meal; I realised that they are offering me a privilege, so I refused to enter” Qatamish refused any kind of special treatment or rewards from his interrogators.²⁷⁶

One technique that the interrogators may utilise is offering the detainees certain deals. For instance, they proposed to Qatamish to set him free if he agreed to leave the Palestinian territories to the United States of America or travel to Amman for three years. In another incident, they offered him a better deal. They promised to release him from jail if he decided to participate in the peace process.²⁷⁷ Another technique that the interrogators largely use is repeating the same questions over and over again, especially the important ones, to compare the answers and validate them.²⁷⁸

The interrogators regularly evaluate the recorded interrogation sessions. Thus, the utilised tactics of interrogation and torture methods are adjusted and changed to serve the interrogation's

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 71, 22.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 46, 125.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 57-58, 82.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 39.

ultimate goals. In the second interrogation stage, torture intensifies, and the interrogation session focuses more on making the detainee confess and provide his/her interrogators with the information they require. The third stage is evaluating the case, reaching conclusions and deciding how to proceed by choosing between conviction and administrative detention. As Elaine Scarry, in her book *The Body in Pain*, contends that two more apparatuses are connected to the prison “and like other objects are unmade by being made weapons and actual agents of the pain.”²⁷⁹ These two institutions are the courting system and the health services, i.e. hospitals, clinics and medical professionals.

The core principles of this oath are the doctor’s duty to deliver equal care to every person, not to harm the patient, and act with integrity. According to the Physicians for Human Rights- Israel periodic report (PHRI) published in October 2011, medical practitioners have always been viewed as having a unique social role. The doctor’s duty is first and foremost to relieve pain, heal and, sometimes, save lives. Simultaneously, the skills and professional knowledge of the doctors could allow them to create significant damage as well. In specific historical incidents, medical professionals have abused their special status and become associated “in some of the greatest injustices known to humankind such as the experiments carried out on human subjects in the concentration camps of the Nazi regime in Germany.”²⁸⁰ In order to prevent such involvement to be recurrent, the World Medical Association (WMA) created treaties such as Tokyo Declaration (1975). This declaration is a central document relating to the

²⁷⁹ Scarry, *The Body*, 41.

²⁸⁰ “Doctoring the Evidence, Abandoning the Victim: The Involvement of Medical Professionals in Torture and Ill-Treatment in Israel,” *Periodic Report of The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel*, last modified October 2011, accessed July 14, 2020, <http://stoptorture.org.il/doctoring-the-evidence-abandoning-the-victim-the-involvement-of-medical-professionals-in-torture-and-ill-treatment-in-israel-october-2011/?lang=en>.

prohibition against doctors' participation in torture or ill-treatment as it states in article one and two of the declaration:

The physician shall not countenance, condone or participate in the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading procedures, whatever the offense of which the victim of such procedures is suspected, accused or guilty, and whatever the victim's beliefs or motives, and in all situations, including armed conflict and civil strife. The physician shall not provide any premises, instruments, substances or knowledge to facilitate the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or to diminish the ability of the victim to resist such treatment.²⁸¹

That is to say; the declaration forbids even the most indirect and distant involvement in torture on the part of doctors. Thus, active collaboration and sharing information regarding the patient with his/ her interrogators are examples of violations of the rules of medical ethics. Nevertheless, the World Medical Association (WMA) not only prohibits active participation in torture and ill-treatment but requires that doctors take action even in cases where a doctor is a passive witness to violence. According to the WMA's Declaration, doctors must report torture or ill-treatment that they have seen, diagnosed or heard about.²⁸² Doctors who learn of the torture of

²⁸¹ "WMA Declaration of Tokyo - Guidelines for Physicians Concerning Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Relation to Detention and Imprisonment," www.wma.net, last modified October 2016, Accessed July 14, 2020, <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-tokyo-guidelines-for-physicians-concerning-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading-treatment-or-punishment-in-relation-to-detention-and-imprisonment/>.

²⁸² "WMA International Code of Medical Ethics," World Medical Association, last modified July 9, 2018, <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-international-code-of-medical-ethics/>. See also PCATI, "Doctoring," 16.

prisoners may not ignore this knowledge and continue their work; instead, they must actively oppose, document and protest.

The ethical rules related to prisoners in Israel, especially the ethical code written by the Israeli Medical Association (IMA) and its accompanying position papers, adopt many of the international organizations' above-mentioned ethical principles and regularly address the issues referring to the treatment of prisoners by medical professionals.²⁸³

Although the IMA condemns the doctors' participation in torture in its publications, the association is derelict in its role in two crucial ways.²⁸⁴ Firstly, throughout the years, the IMA has refused to either examine complaints filed with it or act on its authority to cancel the membership of, censure or else impose a sanction on those members who participated in torture, even when presented with solid evidence to that effect. Secondly, the IMA's ethical code includes articles, which do not agree with the obligation to maintain the professional autonomy of the doctor.²⁸⁵

As I discussed earlier, there is a piece of massive evidence that nurses and physicians employed by the IZSCR prisons service are complicit in the torture and abuse of Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees. This body of evidence is mainly presented in oral and written testimonies of Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees and in periodic reports of Human Rights

²⁸³ PCATI, "Doctoring," 17.

²⁸⁴ Tami Karni, *The Ethics Board*, 3rd ed., (Ramat Gan: Studio Logo, 2014), <https://www.ima.org.il/userfiles/image/EthicalCode2018.pdf>.

²⁸⁵ PCATI, "Doctoring," 20.

organizations.²⁸⁶ Medical practitioners in the IZSCR prisons systematically fail to document appropriately ill-treatment and injuries inflicted upon the victims of torture. However, they are often the only witnesses to injuries sustained by the interrogee due to the interrogation methods executed against him.²⁸⁷

In addition, they have been failing in reporting the prisoners' injuries to their superiors in or outside the prisons.²⁸⁸ In many cases, they fail to fulfil their duty to document the physical and psychological harm/ abuse experienced by the victim of torture or ill-treatment, "documentation which makes up crucial evidence victims may use in proceedings against their tormenters."²⁸⁹

As a result, many Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees have suffered medical ill-treatment and negligence. This ill-treatment is added to all the other prison hardships (under nourishing food, contaminated air, lack of hygiene, physical and psychological inflicted pain and other prison hardships) that usually lead to many health complications, chronic diseases and disabilities. In some instances, they may even cause death to the prisoners in prison or shortly after release.

²⁸⁶ "Briefing Note: Human Rights of Palestinian Detainees and Prisoners Held in Israel, with Relation to the Struggle against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment." *www.adalah.org*, last modified October 24, 2011, <https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/upfiles/2011/Palestinian%20Prisoners%20and%20Detainees%20Final%20Briefing%20Paper%20Oct%202011.pdf>.

²⁸⁷ PCATI, "Doctoring," 20.

²⁸⁸ The PHRI report raises serious concerns about this issue because the authors have not encountered any situations where a doctor reported a prisoner's injury to his or her superiors either in prison or outside it except one case only. See: *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

As I noted earlier, the prison medical personnel passed medical information about Qatamish to the interrogators after he underwent the medical check-up at the time of admission to both Ramallah Prison and al-Maskubiyah Interrogation Centre.²⁹⁰ Qatamish naively praises having these check-ups and thinks these procedures are one of the usurped rights the prisoners retrieved through their restless ongoing struggle against the prisons' authorities.

Medical professionals prefer the interrogation's requirements to the patient's well-being.²⁹¹ Qatamish suffered from eye infection, migraines and rashes in his buttocks mainly because of Shabh and sleep deprivation. One day the nurse came to Shabh room and softly tried to convince Qatamish to confess in order to be able to receive medical treatment instead of doing everything possible to treat him right away. This incident is evidence that this nurse is effectively a participant in torture:

حضر الممرض في غير مواعده، وخاطبني بلهجة رقيقة: أحمد أنت تعرف أنني لا أتصرف مثلهم، وأنا لم أؤذ أي معتقل ولم أضغط على أي معتقل: لا علاج إلا بعد أن تعترف كما يفعل غيرك وكان يقصد ممرضين آخرين يتعاونون صراحة مع ضباط المخابرات، لكنك بحاجة لعلاج، فقد مضى عليك أكثر من خمسة أسابيع وهذا له أضراره. خذ العلاج فهو يساعدك.

The nurse came unannounced, and he softly said, 'Ahmad you know that I do not behave like them, and I have never caused any harm or put pressure on any detainee: [there is] no treatment except after you confess as other detainees do.' He meant other nurses who openly cooperate with the interrogation officers. 'But you need the treatment; it has been

²⁹⁰ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 15, 37.

²⁹¹ Talhami, "Breaking," 6.

more than five weeks this will lead to complications. Take the treatment. It will help you.’²⁹²

Qatamish insisted on refusing to receive any medical treatment from the prison as long as he was under the responsibility of the GSS.

The court system is another tool that is also integral to the structure of torture in general and within the IZSCR in particular. The interrogation is vital to the Israeli military court system, as Hajjar states in her book *Courting Conflict* “because confessions represent the most common source of evidence (sometimes, the only source) to charge and prosecute Palestinians.”²⁹³ According to the Landau Commission, the judges cooperated with the security agents and “were fully aware of the use of violence.”²⁹⁴

Extension prosecutors can use secret evidence at detention hearings to support their request that judges imprison detainees. Secret evidence “can serve as a basis for charges” in the military court system. In these military courts, there is no “basis in law or practice for the presumption of innocence.” These courts can maintain and favour the confessions over other evidence. The judges of these courts tend to favour the witnesses of the prosecutors over those of the defence although there is a lot of evidence that the prosecutors conspire and cooperate with their witnesses “to present a false testimony in order to obtain a conviction.”²⁹⁵

²⁹² Qatamish, *La Lan*, 90.

²⁹³ Hajjar, *Courting Conflict*, 68.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 110.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 110-113.

In the beginning, Qatamish had faith in these military courts because of the 'supposed' democratic nature of the IZSCR. However, he found out later that these courts consider the recommendations of the GSS. In his case, he discovered that the verdicts of the military court and the decisions of the Supreme Court are meaningless. He received three verdicts of release, one before the end of his fourth month in detention, the second after one year and the third after one and half years of his detention. He received the last release verdict because of the solidarity campaigns that the PFLP had launched in different parts of the world, which led to an international public opinion that put massive pressure on the military court. Still, the GSS ignored these verdicts and continued to detain him under administrative detention for eight years. This outcome proves that this GSS apparatus is above the law.²⁹⁶ In the second detention-extension hearing, the judge noticed that Qatamish could not open his eyes and consequently could not see it as a clear sign of torture, but he did not investigate it further. Instead, he asked about the music he listens to and the movies he likes to watch.²⁹⁷

When Qatamish's lawyer requested a release on bail for health reasons, the judge denied her request. He explained that Qatamish is the one who is refusing to receive medical treatment. Qatamish informed him about sleep deprivation, threats to his life and the choking incidents. However, instead of taking action to prevent the agents of the GSS from using these methods of torture against Qatamish, he extended the detention period.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 32-33.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 102-3.

After September 11th and the launching of the “War on Terror” by the US government and its allies, the IZSCR in Palestine started taking Palestinian detainees to its civil courts as terrorists. Al-Barghuti was taken to a Civil Magistrate Court. However, he decided to boycott it and not cooperate with it. He refused to recognize it as a legal court because, in his opinion, it was an occupation court. According to international and humanitarian laws, it had no legal right to prosecute Palestinians. He also did not agree to attend the hearings or to allow a lawyer to defend him.

The Prison authorities forced him to be present during more than thirty hearings. Still, he kept silent during all of them. The court also assigned two female lawyers to defend him. He succeeded after considerable efforts to convince them not to participate in any court activity. At the end of the trial, they declared that he did not confess to any of the accusations against him during the interrogation. Still, the court found that there was enough evidence to convict him. He was sentenced to five life sentences, and he is still in prison until the present time.²⁹⁹ Torture, pain and hardships do not end with the conviction but rather, a new stage begins by moving prisoners to the collective cells or/ and the cells of absolute isolation (הפרדה). al-Barghuti spent one thousand days in these cells. He devotes two chapters of his testimony to bear witness to this unbearable stage of his incarceration.

How would these interrogators commit atrocities without any feeling of guilt? How would nurses and doctors directly or indirectly participate in their perpetration, and how would judges turn a blind eye to such violations of law without any feeling of guilt? They avoid guilt,

²⁹⁹ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 68-72.

as Robert Lifton contends in his book *The Nazi Doctors*, by exercising “doubling” each one in his/her own way. To double means to transfer the “requirements of conscience” to what Lifton calls the “Auschwitz self.” This self that I name the “Zionist settler colonial” self is the one performing the “dirty work” in the name of duty and loyalty to the regime. It makes that “dirty work” “proper,” and by so doing, it “protects the entire self from awareness of its own guilt.”³⁰⁰

This settler-colonial self is “first and foremost a Zionist, and then Israeli, and only last a Jew” as Noam Chayut describes the value triangle that he and his colleagues in the youth movement used to see as their three main elements of their identity in his book *The Girl Who Stole My Holocaust*.³⁰¹ This settler-colonial self is brainwashed and lives in total denial—“they cannot believe that Zionists committed crimes.”³⁰² “[T]hey do not ask what happened to the Palestinians when they read or see remains of houses or destroyed villages.”³⁰³ After joining the Army, the brainwashing process continues. Soldiers are “convinced that we were enlightened occupiers and that our occupation was moral.” This mantra of “the most moral army in the world” made detachment from reality for them possible.³⁰⁴ Chayut, at the end of his memoir, gets rid of this doubled self by admitting that as a soldier serving at a checkpoint in the West Bank, “in the crowds passing me day-in- day-out, I did not see humans or at least not humans equal to myself.”³⁰⁵

³⁰⁰ Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors*, 420-7.

³⁰¹ Noam Chayut, *The Girl Who Stole My Holocaust: A Memoir* (London; New York: Verso, 2013), 163.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 156.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 157.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 232.

The IZSCR interrogators are covered in several layers of defence, providing them with complete impunity and protecting them from any inspection, trial or punishment. These protections, mainly the law enforcement system that systematically refuses to investigate the conduct of GSS personnel, allow the continued perpetration of torture and ill-treatment. Medical practitioners, who interact with the imprisoned, whether employed by the Prison Service or hospital staff, form another layer of this protection system.³⁰⁶

It is through these and other means that the interrogation room becomes a no-man's land: a space outside the law, where interrogators assume new identities, not subject to a known and defined system of rules. Within the interrogation room, interrogators are not beholden to any of the obligations that apply on the outside; the world of external enforcement remains beyond the threshold. The victim of torture and ill-treatment is left bare before his interrogators, stripped of all protection.³⁰⁷

Also, there is a third layer, as Talhami concludes in his report, the process by which Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees are arrested, imprisoned and prosecuted is infected by lots of human rights violations. The existence of a public atmosphere inside the Zionist settler colonial society that enables this process to proceed is behind the persistence of these violations. Whether through silence or consent, Palestinians are demonized and dehumanized by this settler-colonial society and are unworthy of human rights.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ PCATI, "Doctoring," 13

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 12-13.

³⁰⁸ Talhami, "Breaking," 11-13.

Dehumanisation as Paulo Freire states in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* “marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also... those who have stolen it.”³⁰⁹ When the oppressed (Palestinians) refuse to be dehumanised, and when they liberate themselves, they will also liberate their oppressors by preserving their humanity. The interrogators and prison authorities would do their best to crush the inner selves of the detainees and reduce them to an animal level. Still, most of these prisoners refuse to be dehumanised or to dehumanise their perpetrators by resisting the prison's goals and clinging to their humanity. Each one, in his/her way, strives to wave a protective shield, searches for, discovers new positive energies and dormant powers in one's self and invents creative ways to survive, to keep one's self intact amongst this deadening melancholic demonstration of violence. "انتبهت بأنه ينظر إليّ بينما كنت متّجهاً. لزيارة أهلي ... فتوجّهت على الفور إلى عدّة زهرات وقطعتها مشتمّاً شذاها وفي ذهني أن يعلم أنني لم أفقد أحاسيسي الإنسانيّة رغم ما ساموني من عذاب ورغم حياة المعتقل".

I noticed that he [the head of the interrogation team] looked at me when I was going to see my family. I walked towards some flowers. I picked them and smelled their scent, I was thinking that [I wanted him] to know that I did not lose my human feelings despite all the torture they inflicted on me and despite the detention life.³¹⁰

In many places in Qatamish's personal testimony, he continues to see all the human manifestations of the enemy in prison. He sympathises with some of them (51). He feels sorry for others who accepted to reduce themselves to a weapon in an evil regime's hands and willingly dehumanise themselves before dehumanising their victims. (175) He also gives credit

³⁰⁹ Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (New York: Continuum, 1968), 44.

³¹⁰ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 119.

to a few wardens and/or nurses who sympathised with the detainees and treated them in a good way and respectful manner.³¹¹ (101, 89)

Solitary Confinement / Separation / absolute Isolation "הפרדה":

There are three kinds of solitary confinement under the Law of the IZSCR. The first kind is what Qatamish and al-Barghuti encountered during their interrogation. For investigation purposes, detainees would be held in solitary confinement “as long as it is essential to the purpose of the interrogation.”³¹² The second kind of solitary confinement is for disciplinary measures. When the prisoner is punished due to committing a disciplinary offence.³¹³ The last kind is “solitary confinement for extended, unlimited time (הפרדה). Two groups of prisoners are held in prolonged isolation. The first group includes those who threaten the safety of other inmates, and the second one is those who threaten the security of the regime.

It is worth noting that prolonged solitary confinement violates Articles 11 and 16 of the Convention against Torture (CAT). According to the treaty, this kind of confinement is considered an act of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment (CIDT). Solitary confinement may lead to severe irreversible damage to the prisoners' bodies, mental health, and psyche. It may cause “sleep disorders, depression and anxiety, psychotic disorders such as visual and auditory

³¹¹ Ibid., 51, 175, 101, 89.

³¹² “Solitary Confinement of Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Prisons,” *www.adalah.org*, last modified June 2011, https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/upfiles/2011/Solitary_confinement_position_paper_English.pdf

³¹³ Ibid., 3.

hallucinations, paranoia, disorientation in time and space, and severe confusion and cognitive disorders.”³¹⁴

The mental damage caused by prolonged solitary confinement could be temporary in certain prisoners and permanent in others. Ruchama Marton contends in her article “The Impact of Isolation on Mental Health” that victims of solitary confinement suffer from symptoms in the digestive system, cardiovascular system, and sexual and urinary systems, including tremors, migraines, headaches, sleep disorders and severe exhaustion, repeated accelerated heartbeats, excessive perspiration and shortness of breath.³¹⁵

In order to destabilise the prisoners and for security reasons, prisoners would usually be transferred to a different prison every six months. Al-Barghuti spent one thousand days of isolation in three different prisons. He spent the first two hundred fifty days in Ayalon prison. Then he was moved to the worst isolation section in Shattah prison, where he stayed for a few weeks. After that, he was moved to Bi’r al-Sab‘ prison, where he remained for six hundred days.³¹⁶

Prisoners in prolonged solitary confinement spend 23 hours a day in their cells. They have a break of one hour a day in which they —depending on the prison—pass alone or with other isolated prisoners in the prison courtyard.³¹⁷ In Ayalon prison, the warden drags

³¹⁴ Ibid., 4-5.

³¹⁵ Marton, “The Impact,” 226.

³¹⁶ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 84, 95, 104.

³¹⁷ Adalah, “Solitary,” 9. See also Sahar Francis, and Kathleen Gibson, “Isolation and Solitary Confinement of Palestinian Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Facilities.” *In Threat*, ed. Abeer Baker and Anat Matar (London: Pluto Press, 2011), 213.

al-Barghuti to the prison courtyard while shackles are on both his hands and ankles. The warden removes the handcuffs through a small opening in the door after al-Barghuti is locked in the prison courtyard. It is a tiny courtyard. Its size is around 8x5 meters. It is surrounded by tall walls made of cement that obscure the sight of anything else. Iron boards cover half of its ceiling completely, and the other half is covered with four layers of iron bars. Under the second half of the ceiling, the prisoner can see a part of the sky. As for the sunlight, it enters the courtyard for a limited time during the day. Throughout his isolation period, al-Barghuti spent his breaks alone. Still, he never missed any of these breaks, even if the weather was terrible. He would prefer to get wet from the rain that used to fill up the courtyard like a well rather than staying in the cell. It was his only opportunity to connect with the outside world and with life " معانقة قليل من ضوء الشمس، " "To embrace a little bit of sunlight and smell the air that penetrates the walls and the barbed wires in the sky."³¹⁸ In addition, the break and the screaming during the break were his only chance to speak and test his voice in order not to forget how to speak. Still, going around the yard all alone used to make him sometimes feel

"...بأنك تفقد جزءاً من طبيعتك الإنسانية، حيث تكابد معاناة وقهراً وحرماناً من الحرّية والحياة العادية"

"You feel that you are losing a part of your humanity where you suffer from oppression and deprivation of freedom and ordinary life."³¹⁹ In Shattah prison, the break time was usually at eight in the morning. al-Barghuti would spend it alone exercising, walking back and forth for the entire hour while the warden was sitting on a chair next to the door watching him. From this yard, he could see some natural scenes: mountains, trees, birds and flowers, which made him feel

³¹⁸ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 93.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

alive and full of hope. In Bi'r al-Sab' prison, the courtyard was bigger in size, and like Ayalon's prison, the yard had tall walls and a barbed-wire ceiling. Nevertheless, the only advantage of this yard was that the windows of some solitary confinement and isolation cells overlooked it. Thus, he used to use the break time to break up isolation, reconnect with the prisoners, and converse with them.

The solitary confinement cells are small: their size ranges from 1.5 x 2 meters to 3x 3.5 meters. Inside the cell, there is only a mattress and a blanket. Some cells do not have a toilet. In this case, prisoners must call the guard and wait until one of the wardens comes to take them to the restroom. In other cells, there would be a toilet and a shower that usually are not separated from each other or the central part of the cell. The door of the cell is made of iron in most cases. Food is passed through an opening in the door that will stay closed for the rest of the time. In most cases, the opening is low to prevent the solitary confined prisoner from having eye contact with other inmates and the wardens. Some cells have a small window, but others do not have any. No natural light or fresh air is allowed in the cell, even with a window. They are usually lit with dim fluorescent bulbs.³²⁰

In Ayalon prison, al-Barghuti stayed in a very dark cell with a high ceiling. The walls were made of sand and soil and had many holes and cracks. There were no windows except one 15 cm opening covered with iron bars at the top of the wall. Light would enter like a fine thread at a particular time before noon, and the moon could be seen sometimes with difficulty.³²¹ In the cell, there was only a bunk bed coated with rust. The length of the cell is two meters. The width

³²⁰ Adalah, "Solitary," 9. See also Francis and Gibson, "Isolation," 213.

³²¹ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 85.

is 120 cm, and its height is 3.5 meters. The cell door is made of iron. It has a 10 cm opening on top. This opening would be closed at all times and used by the warden during the procedure of inmate count or the random check-ups. The other opening is in the middle of the door and would be opened only during mealtime. The light is dim and limited, and the warden controls it from outside the cell. Inside this cell is an old squat toilet that was very difficult to use and a pipe to shower without any separation wall between them and the main floor. The shower water would flood into the whole cell because of poor drainage. There is also a worn-out small sink with a leaking pipe. al-Barghouti had to clean up the floor every time he used the sink.³²²

In Shattah prison, the cell is much better than the cell in Ayalon prison in terms of the physical condition of its walls, lighting and toilet. Nevertheless, the cell was separated from the guards' monitoring room by four doors, and he felt completely isolated from the world as if it was a grave. "في مقبرة مليئة بالصمت والوحدة والعزلة... الشّعور بالوحدة المطلقة شعور صعب ومرير ومخيف أحياناً"

“In a cemetery full of silence, loneliness and solitude... being in an absolute loneliness is difficult and bitter and scary sometimes.”³²³ The cell of Bi’r al-Sab‘ was the smallest. The door was made of iron bars to enable complete surveillance via the camera in the hallway. This allowed better air circulation. Still, he was exposed to different kinds of cockroaches, an infestation of insects that looked like ants and had a stinking smell, and giant rats.³²⁴

Prisoners confined for security reasons are entitled to receive visits from first-degree relatives only. However, many Palestinian prisoners are denied family visits for long periods that

³²² Ibid., 86.

³²³ Ibid., 98.

³²⁴ Ibid., 107-8.

can last for years. These visits, if they take place, usually last for forty-five minutes and are conducted across a glass shield and via an internal telephone system that prevents these prisoners from physical contact with their first-degree family members i.e. mother, father, brothers and sisters, up to a certain age, wife and kids up to a certain age.³²⁵

al-Barghuti was denied family visits during his one thousand days of absolute confinement.³²⁶ However, he used to receive visits from his lawyers. These visits were crucial because he would preserve a human connection with the lawyers. Through the lawyers, he would also reconnect with his family, political leaders, the institutions of the Palestinian Authority, the Arabic and Palestinian solidarity campaigns that call for his release and the media. Moreover, he appreciated these visits especially during holidays because:

" كان يوم العيد أحد الأيام المؤلمة في العزل الإنفرادي فأَيَّ عيد هذا الذي تقضيه في هذا القبر الصغير برفقة الفئران " والجرذان والنمل والصراصير ووراء باب مغلق؟

“The holiday day was one of the painful days during solitary confinement. What kind of a holiday is this which you spend in this little grave with the company of the mice, rats, big ants, cockroaches, and behind a closed door?”³²⁷ After a long-term bloody struggle against the prison authority in which many Palestinian Prisoners lost their lives in order to preserve their dignity and humanity and gain some basic privileges, prisoners started to enjoy a television, DVD player, books and the possibility of exchanging letters with beloved family members. However, in some prisons, prisoners would be deprived of all or part of these privileges. Moreover, they

³²⁵ Adalah, “Solitary,” 10.

³²⁶ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 83.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 119.

are not entitled to receive visits from a social worker and are not permitted to furlough or make phone calls like criminal inmates.³²⁸ al-Barghuti mentions that he bought a TV, radio, a fan and a food heating plate after three months of isolation from the prison canteen.³²⁹

The inmate counts and cell searchings are additional procedures the prison authority would do at least three times a day. In Shattah prison, the warden would count the prisoners five to six times a day. The goal of this procedure is not to perform a security check but rather to humiliate, annoy and provoke the prisoners. The prisoners should stand on their feet during these counts and wear the prison uniform. The wardens will hit the walls, the floor and the window with a particular club to ensure they are not plucked out and that no digging is taking place underneath.³³⁰

The goal of the prison authority behind using absolute isolation against Palestinian political leaders is not only to prevent them from exercising their leadership in the prisons and strengthening the prisoners' "unity and steadfastness"³³¹ but rather to cause temporary and long-term damage and even deprive the prisoners of leading "new lives outside of prison" and transferring them into "an asocial, shattered being."³³²

³²⁸ Adalah, "Solitary," 10. See also Francis and Gibson, "Isolation," 213.

³²⁹ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 91, 99.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 100.

³³¹ Francis and Gibson, "Isolation," 219.

³³² Marton, "The Impact," 230-1.

Solitary confinement, Marton continues, is one of the tools of the occupation to create “submissive, compliant subjects, who will fail to develop a national consciousness, develop into a community.”³³³

Many of the torture methods and tactics mentioned above have been used in the collective cells, together with new ones that have been incessantly created to enforce the strategic goal of IZSCR, which is to “physically and mentally kill the detainee[s]” and make the life of the prisoners constantly unbearable.³³⁴ In Ijneid Prison, the policy of daily treatment was “Minimum facilities and maximum restrictions.”³³⁵ Prisons were built according to hostile standards to serve this goal as well. The different prison authorities would seize every opportunity to deprive the prisoners of the minimal privileges they earned over the years through violent clashes with prison forces, hunger strikes and loss of lives and properties, in some cases, especially when opening a new prison facility as in the cases of Ijneid prison and Majiddu detention camp. As Nazzal indicates in her testimony, radio devices, books, newspapers and stationary material were not allowed for Palestinian female prisoners.³³⁶

‘Awwad also mentions that books and notebooks were prohibited in Majiddu prison initially. After enabling them, the prison authority continued confiscating them during arbitrary searches and restricted their quantity.³³⁷ Food continued to be of bad quality and in smaller

³³³ Ibid., 231.

³³⁴ ‘Awwad, *Dawlat*, 7. See also Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 8.

³³⁵ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 36.

³³⁶ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 28.

³³⁷ ‘Awwad, *Dawlat*, 10, 11.

amounts.³³⁸ In IJneid prison, health service was abysmal. The prison clinic had no medical equipment and was permanently closed during the daytime. For the whole jail, there was only one surgeon with ten assistants who were members of the prison security team, finished a nursing course and had no nursing certification. Prisoners with chronic diseases, mental illnesses, and physical deformations were not separated from the other prisoners or offered any treatment. This situation intensified the suffering of the healthy and sick prisoners in the overcrowded cells.³³⁹

Armed wardens did the inmate count three times a day in Majiddu prison, and they were usually accompanied by fully armed soldiers pointing their rifles at the prisoners. Prisoners had to sit on their beds facing the wardens and soldiers during the count. However, after five months of opening the prison, the authority decided that the prisoners had to give their backs to the soldiers during the count. When the prisoners disobeyed this change in the procedure, a massive force of armed wardens and soldiers attacked the prisoners in their tents with tear gas bombs and forced the new policy on them.³⁴⁰ The clashes between the soldiers and the prisoners in the Majiddu detention camp were a natural extension of the Intifada and its manifestations. The soldiers threw tear gas bombs and shot the prisoners with live, sound and rubber bullets, and the detainees retaliated by stoning the soldiers with anything they could get, such as soap bars, stones, tent poles and pegs. Such clashes often resulted in many injuries among the prisoners and the death of some of them.³⁴¹

³³⁸ “We are not receiving more than 50% percent of the decided quantity of food.” See: Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 35. See also Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 25-27. And ‘Awwad, *Dawlat*, 12.

³³⁹ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 34.

³⁴⁰ ‘Awwad, *Dawlat*, 10.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

Moreover, it forced the detention camp authority a year after opening the camp to pave the ground to prevent the prisoners from having access to stones. In addition, it reduced the size of every section by dividing it into two.³⁴² The wardens in Ijneid prison attacked some prisoners in section five violently and then bombed the whole prison section with tear gas bombs until all the prisoners passed out.³⁴³

Soldiers and wardens in Majjidu used to harass and beat the prisoners while transferring them to and back from courts and other prisons and moving them to solitary confinement as a disciplinary measure.³⁴⁴ In Ijneid prison, wardens armed with shields, clubs, tear gas bombs, and gas masks used to receive the prisoners who arrived at the jail with beatings and forced them to take off their clothes to be searched naked and used physical violence against the prisoners whenever they had a chance.³⁴⁵

Prisoners suffered from over-crowdedness in the cells, the yard and visiting room.³⁴⁶ Any physical activity was prohibited in the yard before the hunger strike at Ijneid prison. In Majjidu, the prison authority failed to prevent the prisoners from singing and exercising in the yard and tried to prohibit them from celebrating national and religious holidays and organising cultural activities.³⁴⁷

³⁴² Ibid., 12

³⁴³ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 37

³⁴⁴ ‘Awwad, *Dawlat*, 12.

³⁴⁵ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 36.

³⁴⁶ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 35. See also Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 37.

³⁴⁷ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 35. See also ‘Awwad, *Dawlat*, 13.

The cells' windows in Ijneid prison were entirely shielded with Asbestos laminated sheets. Two-thirds of every door were also covered by steel. These conditions prevented natural lighting and good ventilation. Moreover, every prisoner had 1.5-2 meters of space in these cells. Within this space, every prisoner stayed 22 hours daily and did all his activities such as eating, sleeping, working out and reading in continuous dim lighting.³⁴⁸ In Majiddu, prisoners suffered from a lack of hot water and cold weather in the wintertime.³⁴⁹ In addition to all the above torture tactics and methods, prisoners as individuals continued to be exposed to threats, curses, punishments for frivolous reasons and attempts to recruit them as collaborators.³⁵⁰

The nature of any colonial power since the 1500s, when European colonizers started to establish their rule all over Africa, Asia, and the Americas, was to conduct atrocities and use appalling forms of violence to control, exploit, and/or exterminate indigenous populations.³⁵¹ In the twentieth century, as Hajjar states in her book *Torture: A sociology of Violence and Human Rights*, colonial torture developed a new goal, which is “to counter and combat anti-colonial resistance to European rule.”³⁵² The IZSCR was in no way different from these colonial powers in terms of using horrific forms of violence against the native Palestinians, such as ethnic

³⁴⁸ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 32.

³⁴⁹ ‘Awwad, *Dawlat*, 13.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 12. See also Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 37.

³⁵¹ Fanon, *The Wretched*, 1-62. See also Hajjar, *Torture*, 24.

³⁵² Hajjar, *Torture*, 24.

cleansing, massacres, exterminating certain groups of the population and the destruction of more than 450 villages.³⁵³

This approach continued after 1948 with the massacre of Kufar Qasim in 1956, the evacuation of the two villages of Iqrith and Bir'im in 1948, blowing them up in 1951 and 1953 and preventing their residents who became refugees inside the IZSCR from returning to them until the present time.³⁵⁴ The torture tremendously intensified when the Palestinian resistance against the IZSCR took the form of armed struggle after the establishment of the Palestinian liberation organization (PLO) in 1964 and after the completion of the colonial project in Palestine by occupying the West Bank and Gaza Strip after the Six-Day War in 1967. The IZSCR until this day does not recognize the occupied territories in 1967 as occupied territories but rather as administrative areas.³⁵⁵ As a result, it does not recognize the Palestinian Prisoners of war and detainees as prisoners of war (POW) but rather as prisoners for security reasons, as I indicated in the introduction of the thesis. This misperception prevented the prisoners and detainees from enjoying their rights according to the Fourth Geneva Convention that guarantees the POWs, among other things: humane treatment, protection from violence and health endangerment getting proper medical attention and receiving sufficiently nutritious food.³⁵⁶

³⁵³ Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: One-word Publications Limited, 2007).

³⁵⁴ Shira Robinson, "Local Struggle, National Struggle: Palestinian Response to the Kafr Qasim Massacre and its Aftermath, 1956-66," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35.3 (2003): 393-416., doi: 10.1017/S0020743803000163. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-middle-east-studies/article/local-struggle-national-struggle-palestinian-responses-to-the-kafr-qasim-massacre-and-its-aftermath-195666/6E8528971B09CC50414A6695FCEAE4EB>. See also Joseph L. Ryan, "Refugees within Israel: The Case of the Villagers of Kafr Bir'im and Iqrit," *Journal of Palestine Studies* Vol. 2.4 (summer, 1973): 55-8.

³⁵⁵ Hajjar, *Torture*, 30.

³⁵⁶ Articles 13-143 of the Geneva Convention IV. See: "Geneva Convention IV," *United Nations Online*, Accessed 14 July 2020, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf.

The IZSCR established a military administration to control the Palestinian population and created a military court system to facilitate this control to stop and punish Palestinian resistance. The main job of this system is “to prosecute Palestinians suspected of violating the IZSCR military and emergency laws.” These laws criminalise all kinds of resistance acts, from armed activities to non-violent activities and even belonging to a Palestinian political faction. These military courts convict and imprison Palestinians based on confessions and secret evidence.³⁵⁷

Until the report of the Landau Commission in 1987, the IZSCR used to deny the use of torture against Palestinians to get confessions and intelligence information. This commission confirmed the use of violent interrogation methods by the GSS interrogators. However, this commission continued to protect the GSS interrogators. It avoided labelling these methods as torture, euphemised them as “moderate physical pressure,” and recommended their use. The IZSCR’s government accepted this commission's recommendation and officially legalised torture used. As a result, of this authorisation, human rights organisations and lawyers launched a long battle against legalising the use of torture, and in 1999 the High Court of Justice deprived this authorisation of legality.³⁵⁸ Still, as we have seen in the testimony of al-Barghuti (2003), the GSS interrogators are still using the same torture tactics, and they continue to be above the law when the law contradicts their interests.

Finally, the use of torture in the IZSCR’S prisons is systemic, and it has been undergoing a lot of changes and developments since 1948. However, the main goals of creating and facilitating this system are not primarily to extract information and prevent hostile attacks against

³⁵⁷ Hajjar, *Torture*, 30.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

the IZSCR and its settler communities. Instead, they aim at crushing the soul and spirit of Palestinian individuals. Consequently, they intend to destroy their social connections, turn them into burdens on their families and society, and prevent them from achieving national liberation. This conclusion proves my claim in the second part of this chapter that Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees have been victims of prolonged, repeated trauma.

In the following pages, I attempt to see how they survived under this structure of torture and resisted submission and how the mental and psychological conditions of the writers affected how their traumatic prison experience was encoded in their memory and consequently reflected in their testimonies. It is worth noting that the reactions of victims to torture and inflicting severe pain are neglected in the theoretical books about violence and torture written by structuralists like Elaine Scarry in her book *The Body in Pain* and Foucault in his book *Discipline & Punish* because, unlike torture and perpetrators who are alike in their essence, victims reactions to torture are subjective and diverse depending on their personal resilience. Moreover, I highlight the different motives behind writing these testimonies and how readers should approach them to give access to the silenced, denied voices of the victims to be heard in the world.

Part Two: Trauma, Bearing Witness to Survival in the Personal and Collective Testimonies of Palestinian Prisoners of War and Administrative Detainees

“Love is patient, love is kind...It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things...Love never fails...And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13: 4,5, 8 &13)

المحبة تتأني وترفق، وتحتمل كل شيء، وتصدق كل شيء، وترجو كل شيء، وتصبر على كل شيء، المحبة لا تسقط أبدًا. أما اللان فيثبت الإيمان والرجاء والمحبة هذه الثلاثة ولكن أعظمهن المحبة.

(رسالة بولس الرسول الأولى لأهل كورنثوس 13:4.5.8.13)

In this part of the thesis, I claim that Palestinian Prisoners of war and detainees are victims of severe prolonged, repeated psychic trauma, including the authors of the five personal and collective testimonies focused on in this chapter. Thus, I argue that the mental and psychological conditions of the authors when the traumatic events happened and at the time of writing their testimonies, as well as the hostile environment they were in, dictated not only the recurrence of specific narrative devices and characteristics in terms of content and form but also what was deliberately forgotten in the testimonies. For example, one notices the dominant feature of the documentary (literality in narration), depersonalisation, repeated novelistic features (i.e., flashback, gaps, fragments), and the lack of pain expression, whether physical, emotional, or psychological in most of these testimonies.

Trauma definition and PTSD syndromes:

Trauma is defined as a response, “sometimes delayed,” to events so overwhelmingly intense that they impair normal emotional or cognitive responses and bring lasting psychological disruption. This response takes many shapes, such as: “repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event, along with numbing ... and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event.”³⁵⁹ These traumatic symptoms characterise “the literal return of event against the will of the one it inhabits.”³⁶⁰ This literality refuses cure and makes trauma repeated suffering. Other symptoms of PTSD that profoundly affect memory, as Judith Herman in her article “Crime and Memory” lists, are disturbances

³⁵⁹ Cathy Caruth, “Introduction,” 3.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

dissociation—that is, perceptual distortions, depersonalisation, derealisation, time slowing, and amnesia. These symptoms appear in victims after exposure to “human cruelty.”³⁶¹

Traumatic events produce profound and lasting changes in “physiological arousal, emotion, cognition, and memory.” Moreover, traumatic events may separate these normally integrated functions from one another.³⁶² Traumatic memories have several unusual qualities. They are not encoded like the ordinary memories of adults in a verbal, linear narrative that is assimilated into an ongoing life story.³⁶³ Traumatic memories lack “verbal narrative and context; rather, they are encoded in the form of vivid sensations and images.” Often one particular set of images crystallises the experience. The intense focus on fragmentary sensation, on images without context, gives the traumatic memory a heightened reality.³⁶⁴ The traumatised person may experience intense emotion without clear memory of the event or may remember everything in detail but without emotion. S/he may find him or herself in a constant state of vigilance and irritability without knowing why. Traumatic symptoms tend to become disconnected from their source and take on a life of their own.³⁶⁵

Intrusion is another symptom of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); it affects the form and content of testimonies or narrative recovery. Long after the danger is over, traumatised people relive the event as though it was continually recurring in the present. They cannot resume

³⁶¹ Ibid., 5.

³⁶² Herman, *Trauma*, 34.

³⁶³ Ibid., 37.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 38.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 34.

the normal course of their lives because the trauma repeatedly interrupts them. It is as if time stops at the moment of trauma. “The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep.”³⁶⁶

Another cardinal symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder is constriction, disassociation or numbing. Awareness may be numbed or distorted, with partial anaesthesia or the loss of particular sensations. Time sense may be altered; this often occurs with a sense of slow motion. As a consequence, the experience may lose its quality of ordinary reality. The person may feel as though the event is not happening to him/her. S/he feels as though s/he is observing from outside his/her body. These changes are usually accompanied by “indifference and emotional detachment.”³⁶⁷ Traumatic events have tremendous power to elicit dissociative reactions. Some people dissociate spontaneously in response to terror. Others may learn to induce this state voluntarily, especially if they are exposed to traumatic events repeatedly. Political prisoners instruct one another in simple self-hypnosis techniques to withstand torture.³⁶⁸ It is worth noting that intrusion and constriction form a dialectic relation. ³⁶⁹ Traumatized people also suffer from a kind of deformed time- inner time due to trauma. A small time unit could appear endless, and an extended unit of time could pass rapidly.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 37.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 43

³⁶⁸ Herman, “Crime,” 7.

³⁶⁹ Herman, *Trauma*, 47.

³⁷⁰ Frankl, *From Death*, 71.

Are prison accounts identical?

Traumatic experiences are subjective experiences that have some features in common but cannot be identical. The subjective experience of every individual determines whether an event is traumatic or not. Some people can quickly move on with their life. Others need more time, and some other types of people can never be able to do that. Even though the five authors (i.e., Nazzal, Qatamish, al-Barghuti, ‘Awwad, and Rajjub) belong to Palestinian working-class families, they have different ideological and educational backgrounds, diverse personalities, heterogeneous personal life experiences and varied resilience and adaptive capacities. All these differences must have influenced their prison experiences and their coping strategies.

In addition, as we have seen in the first part of this chapter, the prisons of the IZSCR vary in their physical layout and disciplinary practices in both temporal and spatial terms. They also have been undergoing constant change due to internal and external influences since 1948.

Consequently, every one of the five prisoners was arrested at a different time—(Nazzal in 1987, Qatamish in 1992, al-Barghuti in 2002, ‘Awwad in 1988, and Rajjub in 1970). Each one has experienced prison differently in terms of torture methods and tactics, interrogation methods, interrogation centres, the physical layout of prisons and cells, and prisoners’ communities.

What do the testimonies talk about in addition to the structure of torture?

The authors write about the impact of the torture trauma on them and how they confronted and survived it. After reading the three personal testimonies of Nazzal, Qatamish, and al-Barghuti, one notices that the three authors suffered from what Victor E. Frankl defines as the “Syndrome of barbed wire sickness” in his book *From Death -Camp to Existentialism- a Psychiatrist’s Path*

to a *New Therapy*. Frankl claims that prisoners mentally react to life in prison in three phases: the period that follows their admission, the portion of time when they are well ingrained in prison life, and the period that precedes their release.³⁷¹

The responses of ‘shock’ and denial characterise the first phase, which usually lasts between three to thirty days. The perpetrator imposes a systematic, repetitive psychological trauma on his victims to enslave them. He exercises coercive control over all aspects of their lives by depriving them of liberty and isolating them. His goal would be to achieve a profound total submission.³⁷² Herman says the torturer’s techniques “are designed to instil terror and helplessness and to destroy the victims’ sense of self-relation to others.”³⁷³ The overwhelming amount of stress that the three authors experienced caused damage to their minds, and their ability to cope or regulate the emotional dent was severely affected. The acute stress disorder was very depleting, sudden, intense and very difficult to cope with. Thus, shock and denial were the initial responses to it. Some of the distressing symptoms of this phase were dissociation, intrusion, avoidance and arousal. They were literally encoded in the authors’ traumatic memory and manifested themselves through specific characteristics.

Humour and disgust are two characteristics of the first phase of the prisoners’ mental reactions to imprisonment.³⁷⁴ They are part of dissociation and its main symptom of depersonalization - derealisation, where the victim feels that the environment is unreal and that

³⁷¹ Frankl, *From Death*, 6.

³⁷² Herman, *Trauma*, 75. See also Foucault, *Discipline*, 237. And Whalen, *Contemporary*, 35.

³⁷³ Herman, *Trauma*, 75.

³⁷⁴ Frankl, *From Death*, 14-19.

she does not belong to it. At one in the morning, Nazzal was taken to another crowded cell with two two-level cement beds and a toilet with no door. She had to sleep on the floor between the two cement beds facing that toilet:

"وضعت فراشي على الأرض وكأنتني أعلم من قبل أين أضعه.. الحقيقة، لست بحاجة إلى المزيد من الذكاء حتى تتوصل إلى المكان المناسب الذي تضع فيه فراشك، إنه المسافة الضيقة المتبقية بين قبرين اسمنتيين.."

I put my mattress on the floor as if I had already known where to place it..The truth is that one needed no extra brilliance to find a suitable place for the mattress; the narrow space left between the two cement graves; this added a different use to the mattress, which is to be used as a door for the toilet.³⁷⁵

"أذكر أنني في بعض الليالي حين بلغ عدد النزيلات إحدى عشرة معتقلة كان لا بد لي في حالة كهذه إلا أن أفترش مدخل المراض المقرف."

"I remember on certain nights when the number of inmates reached eleven female detainees that I had in such a situation to sleep at the entrance of the disgusting toilet."³⁷⁶

In these two examples we see a grim of sense of humour and disgust of all the ugliness that surrounds Nazzal. This expression of humour and disgust is also used when Nazzal describes her first breakfast in prison:

³⁷⁵ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 33.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

تهيأنا لتناول أول وجبة إفطار.. وعندما بدأ هدير الأبواب الثلاثة المقفلة تسَلَّت روائح أطعمة غريبة امتزجت بالرطوبة والعفونة في الممر الطويل الضيق نسيباً إلى أن وصلنا إلى غرفة يبدو أنها مركز توزيع تلك الروائح.. في وسطها فتحة واسعة للمجاري، وبها طاولتان إسمنتيتان³⁷⁷ متقابلتان، وعلى جانبيهما يمتد مقعدان إسمنتيان وقد خصصت إحداهما لنا والأخرى للسجينات الجنائيات- الإنذار الأول بنشوب المعارك عندما يحين موعد كل وجبة طعام.. ندخل الغرفة – تراودني رغبة حقيقية في التقيؤ- إلى أن أصبحت عادة كالفعل الشرطي- - سامحك الله يا بافلوف- وعاء كبير الحجم أسود اللون من الداخل والخارج به سائل أسود- قيل عنه الشاي الدسم إذ تسيح فيه أشياء ..

When the three closed doors started to open, we sniffed the smells of weird foods mixed with [the smells of] humidity and mould that infiltrated the relatively narrow [and] long hallway until we reached a room that seemed to be the distribution centre of these smells.. There was a large sewage hole in the middle [of this room]. Two parallel cement tables surrounded by cement benches, one was for us [Palestinian detainees] and the other for the female criminal inmates- the first warning of the break out of battles was the time of every meal.. Every time we used to enter the room, I felt like vomiting- until I got used to it like the conditioned reflex –God forgive you, Pavlov³⁷⁸- a big container which is black

³⁷⁷ Grammatical mistake in the source it should be إسمنتيتان

³⁷⁸ “Experiments carried out by Pavlov and his pupils showed that conditioned reflexes originate in the cerebral cortex, which acts as the «prime distributor and organizer of all activity of the organism» and which is responsible for the very delicate equilibrium of an animal with its environment.” “Ivan Pavlov Biographical.” The “Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1904,” Noble prize, accessed August 25, 2019, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/1904/pavlov-bio.html.

from the outside and the inside and which is [filled] with black liquid [it] was called the greasy tea because things ... used to melt in it.³⁷⁹

The feeling of surprise and the ability to get used to hardship is another characteristic of the first phase.³⁸⁰ Qatamish was surprised how after two days of starvation and deprivation of sleep, he was neither hungry nor sleepy.³⁸¹

"وانتهى اليوم الثاني، وكان لافتاً للانتباه عدم شعوري بالجوع أو النعاس."

Qatamish, in his turn, also expresses his irritation, disgust and anger, which indicate extreme emotional arousal, in many places of his personal testimony. He arrived at the interrogation centre in Ramallah provoked and irritated, and he entered an office and met with two officers. After introducing themselves to him, they told him that he was in a central interrogation location and that they knew him very well. The conversation heated his irritation, and he answered:

قلت: أنا لا أعرفكم، قال: لماذا تتكلم بعصبية؟ قلت: أنا مُستفّرّ ولست عصبياً. قال: لماذا؟ قلت: وجودي هنا يستفّرني
قال: إننا لم نسيء إليك، قلت: اعتقالي بذاته إساءة لي خصوصاً وكتيبة عسكرية تقتحم البيت وترعب طفلة. قال:
وكيف تريد أن نعتقلك؟ قلت: ولماذا تعتقلوني أصلاً، قال: أنت مطلوب وتسالني لماذا نعتقلك، فمن سنين نبحت عنك،
قلت أنا لست مطلوباً لأحد.

I said, 'I do not know you. Why are you angry?' I said, 'I am provoked, not angry.' He said, 'we did not do anything wrong to you.' I said, 'my arrest itself is an offence,

³⁷⁹ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 35-36.

³⁸⁰ Frankl, *From Death*, 18.

³⁸¹ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 32.

especially when a battalion breaks into my home and terrorises a child.’ He said, ‘and how do you want us to arrest you.’ I said, ‘why did you arrest me in the first place.’ He said, ‘you are wanted, and you are asking me why we arrested you. For many years, we have been looking for you.’ I said, ‘I am not wanted.’³⁸²

In another incident, he describes his disgust and anger when he discovered that the dining room in Ramallah prison was the toilet, as I mentioned in part one of this chapter.

In al-Maskubiyah interrogation centre and after a long interrogation session, they made him enter a cell located in another cell. This cell is called the “wardrobe.” After closing the door, the wardrobe was dark and stinking. It was full of urine and excrement. He almost fainted and felt like vomiting and could not breathe. Still, he preferred to die than ask for help from his torturers.³⁸³

The perpetrator tries to destroy the victim’s sense of autonomy to shame and demoralise him/her. Once the perpetrator establishes bodily control of the victim, s/he becomes a source not only of fear and humiliation but also of solace. Prisoners aware of the methods of coercive control strive to maintain their sense of autonomy and connections with others.³⁸⁴ Frankl claims that there is always a choice to make. The opportunity to make a decision is always there—“a decision which determines whether you would or would not submit to those powers which

³⁸² Ibid., 11.

³⁸³ Ibid., 47.

³⁸⁴ Herman, *Trauma*, 78-79.

threatened to rob you of your very self, your inner freedom.”³⁸⁵ From the first minute of her arrest, Nazzal decided to resist and not submit.

رأيهم يلتفون حولي أقرامًا متوقعين تارة يتبادلون النكات.. وتارة أخرى تحركهم رغبة حقيقية في إطلاق الرصاص نحوي بالهزيمة.. يستسلمون لسلاسل طوققتني.. لم يكن بادياً لي أنهم يستطيعون سرقة جزء من عمري وتحجيمه في اعتقال إداري.. ومع غياب الشرعية بدأ الأمر سهلاً وسريعاً جداً..

I saw them surrounding me like dwarfs...they felt defeated in front of me.. They surrendered to chains that wrapped me.. I could not grasp that they were able to steal a part of my life and minimise it to administrative detention.. However, with the absence of legitimacy, the matter seemed to be easy and very fast..³⁸⁶

Al-Barghuti also decided not to cooperate with the interrogators no matter what happened, even if he paid for this with his own life.

قد استندت إلى إستراتيجية واضحة لمواجهة المحققين كانت قائمة على أساس قرار نهائي قاطع، وغير قابل للمراجعة بعدم التعاون في التحقيق، وعدم الإدلاء بأي معلومات مهما كانت، والتصميم على تحمل العذاب بما في ذلك الاستشهاد.³⁸⁷

I used a clear strategy to confront the interrogators. It was based on a final and decisive decision, which cannot be revised, not to cooperate during interrogation,

³⁸⁵ Frankl, *From Death*, 66.

³⁸⁶ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 25.

³⁸⁷ Grammatical mistake in the source. The correct word is أية.

not to give any information of any sort, and to have the determination to withstand torture [even if it led] to death.³⁸⁸

Qatamish believes endurance and resistance are decisions one takes a long time before he/she is detained. In his opinion, detention would be the actual test for such a decision. It would examine one's weaknesses, limits, and points of strength. It would also check how much one can persevere and stick to that decision.³⁸⁹ He also refused to cooperate with his interrogators throughout the four-month continuous interrogation. He provided them with his full name and was willing to share all his political, economic, social, and religious views during the painful and tiring long sessions of interrogation. However, they failed despite all the torture methods and tactics they used against him to extract information that is more personal or anything related to his work or affiliation with the PFLP. Under the subtitle "Don't Get Close to the Gate of My Personal Stuff," he presents the following dialogue between himself and one of the interrogators:

قال: أين تسكن؟ قلت: في بلدي. قال: أين؟ قلت: أسكن حيث أشاء. قال: حينما اعتقلناك في بيتك وجدنا أوراقاً لديك، قلت: هذا ليس بيّتي وإّما أنا زائر منذ نصف ساعة فقط. قال هل الزائر يرتدي بيجاما؟ قلت: وما شأنك ما ارتدي، قال: والأوراق لك، قلت: آية³⁹⁰ أوراق، لا أوراق معي، ... قال: والهويّة المزوّرة التي كانت في بنطلونك، قلت: قدّموها للمحكمة.

³⁸⁸ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 51-52.

³⁸⁹ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 112, 184-5.

³⁹⁰ Grammatical mistake in the source. The masculine form of the word i.e. *أَيّ* should be used instead of *أية* as an interrogative.

He said, 'where do you live?' I said, 'in my country.' He said, 'where?' I said, 'I live wherever I want.' He said, 'when we arrested you at your home, we found papers.' I said, 'this is not my house—I was a visitor who arrived half an hour [before your forces].' He said, 'does the visitor wear pyjamas?' I said, 'it is none of your business what I am wearing.' He said, 'are these your papers?' I said, 'what papers? I have no papers on me'... He said, 'and [what about] the fake identity card found in your trousers?' I said, 'present it in court.'³⁹¹

Nazzal was vigilant and cautious, especially during the period that followed her admission. She would be irritated by the noises that the wardens used to make.

"هذا يصرخ وذاك يقرع بالمفاتيح وذاك والآخر أشعر بنصف غيبوبة" "this one is screaming, the other knocks with the keys and that one and the other I feel that I am in a semi-coma."³⁹² Besides, she could not easily trust the other inmates.

"أصمت ربّما لحزني على ما يجري أو ربّما لأتّي أشعر بأنّي لا أثق بالجدران أو التوافذ وإن كانت تشكّل
بارقة أمل في بعض الأحيان."

I kept silent, perhaps out of sadness because of what was going on or maybe because I felt that I could not trust the walls and the windows."³⁹³

³⁹¹ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 14.

³⁹² Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 31

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 45.

She preferred to be a silent observant and kept her interaction with the other inmates to a minimum to preserve her social self and connection with others.³⁹⁴

Qatamish and al-Barghuti underwent similar experiences, especially when they shared cells with collaborators. They had minimal contact with them and were very cautious and irritated.³⁹⁵ This state of hyperarousal is the first cardinal symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder. As a result, the traumatised person startles easily, reacts irritably to minor provocations, and sleeps poorly.³⁹⁶

Relative apathy is the main symptom of the second phase of the prisoners' psychological reactions in which they achieve "a kind of emotional death."³⁹⁷ After a few weeks of prison life, disgust, horror, and pity are emotions that prisoners cease to feel. Suffering and painful scenes become such commonplace sights to them. They become insensitive to daily torture. "Using this insensibility, the prisoner soon surrounded himself with an essential protective shell."³⁹⁸ The main task during this phase is to survive to preserve "one's own life and that of the other fellow." Apathy is also a result of other factors, such as hunger and lack of sleep.³⁹⁹

Nazzal, Qatsamish, and al-Barghuti dissociate and describe the daily prison routine in detail as though they are observing it from outside their bodies with emotional detachment.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 47.

³⁹⁵ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 31-32. See also Qatamish, *La Lan*, 53.

³⁹⁶ Herman, *Trauma*, 35

³⁹⁷ Frankl, *From Death*, 18.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 21.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 62.

Daily, the wardens and interrogators try to destroy the prisoners' sense of autonomy. This is achieved by scrutinising and controlling the victims' bodies and bodily functions. They decide when and where the prisoners sleep or rest, when to go to the toilet, when and how often they shower, when and what they eat, and for how long, and they have the upper hand over offering medical treatment or preventing it, etc. They decide when and how to deprive the prisoners of sleep by conducting security searches at night, for instance.

"وللسجان والسجانة عدّة مهامٍ إضافية منها توسط جثتنا الملقية تحت ستار الليل بحجة التّفقّد والمحافظة على الأمن."

"The wardens have additional missions to do... standing among our corpses thrown under the night's curtain on the plea of search and maintaining security."⁴⁰⁰

They also dictate how to go to the bathroom and when and where to remove or put on the head bag, the cuffs, and the blindfold. Thus, the prisoners had to find ways to undermine these tactics as much as possible. During the entire interrogation period Qatamish, for example, used to refuse to put on or remove the head bag.⁴⁰¹ "رفع الجنديّ الكيس عن رأسي الذي رفضت رفعه"⁴⁰¹ "the soldier removed the bag that I refused to remove from my head."⁴⁰²

Whenever the wardens or the interrogators verbally abuse the prisoners, the prisoners, in their turn, should not take these curses personally. They should know to either curse back if they can or ignore them altogether if they want to win the battle against their perpetrators.

⁴⁰⁰ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 38.

⁴⁰¹ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 27.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 72.

"توجيه الشتائم، تلك الكلمات الوحيدة التي يجيدون نطقها بالعربية"

"Cursing, those are the only words they know how to say in Arabic."⁴⁰³ Qatamish was hurt by many of the filthy curses he received from his interrogators. Still, he always used the same expletives to swear back at them.⁴⁰⁴

Surveillance is another technique of depriving the prisoners of their privacy and autonomy. Prisoners are strictly watched all the time:

ثم الرقابة المشددة لنا كيف نأكل.. هل نمضغ الخبز جيّداً ثم نبلعه ثم نمدّ يدينا إلى لقمة أخرى إن وجدت.. وأعتقد أنّي وجدت سبباً فإن تشردقت إحدانا فسيسرع أحدهم لنجدتها بكوب ماء.. ولم يحصل أن تشردقت إحدانا أو حضر كوب الماء ربّما لأننا نجيد المضغ كما تجيد أجسادنا امتصاص الضوء وتحمل الهراوات الغليظة.

How we eat is strictly monitored.. Do we chew the bread well, swallow it, then extend our hands to [grab] another bite if there is another bite.. I think I found a convincing reason that if one of us choked, one of them would hurry to rescue her with a cup of water.. No one of us has ever choked, or no cup of water has been brought to us, maybe [it is as such] because we master chewing as our bodies master absorbing the light and withstanding the [beatings of] thick clubs.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 38.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 34, 161.

⁴⁰⁵ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 34.

Nazzal, in this example, does not lose her sense of humour, which is another survival mechanism. For that reason, prisoners soon learn how to hide their feelings and obscure their body language. This coping strategy would be strengthened and become more prominent in the second phase of incarceration. By so doing, the interrogators will not have the opportunity to check the effect and effectiveness of their torture methods on the prisoners. Qatamish was denied access to the toilet. Instead, he was moved to another cell. When he could not hold his urine anymore, he succeeded in taking out his penis, despite the handcuffs, urinating on the wall and the floor, and continued walking as if nothing had happened. He behaved this way to show his perpetrators who were watching him that they could not humiliate him by making him urinate in his pants.⁴⁰⁶

The wardens/ nurses also played the role of informants. They used to help the interrogators by watching the prisoners, asking them innocent questions, listening to their conversations, and indirectly trying to collect information.⁴⁰⁷ For that reason, the detainees should be aware and never volunteer to provide them with any information, no matter how small and worthless it may seem. Qatamish received a sweater as a gift from one inmate when the weather started to become cold. The head of the interrogation team noticed it and wanted to know how he got it. Still, Qatamish did not provide this information because he did not wish the interrogator to consider his answer as a sign of cooperation.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁶ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 26-27.

⁴⁰⁷ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 38.

⁴⁰⁸ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 115.

Qatamish was very angry and disgusted when he found out the first time that he had to eat his meal in the toilet during his interrogation in Ramallah Central Prison. However, soon he got used to the idea and stopped complaining.⁴⁰⁹

"وبعد تناول وجبة الغداء في المراض أدخلوني لزنزانة فيها 4-5 شبّان"

"After eating lunch in the toilet, they made me enter a cell in which there were 4-5 young men." After a while, the toilet became his only escape.⁴¹⁰ The toilet was the only place in which his body would feel free. To enable him to eat his meal, the wardens used to remove the head bag and the handcuffs. Thus, he used to take advantage of this opportunity to massage his shoulders and posterior and relax his buttocks.

"ولو راقبني أحدهم لتفاجأ من نمط سلوكي حالما أدخل المراض، فعلى الفور أباشر الحركات الرّياضيّة لمدة دقيقة أو اثنتين"

"If somebody had watched me, he would have been surprised; as soon as I entered the toilet, I started exercising right away for one or two minutes."⁴¹¹

al-Barghuti, as well in many places of his testimony, mentions how he succeeded in adjusting to any problematic situation or hardship, especially during his one thousand days of isolation, and how he managed to get used to things that used to irritate and disgust him. منذ

اليوم الأوّل في هذه الزّنزانة الموحشة، بدأت أعمل للتّكيّف مع هذا القبر"

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 46, 53.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 93.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 94.

“From the first day in this depressing cell, I started working on how to adjust to this grave.”⁴¹²

He even learned to coexist with the cockroaches.

"وكننت في البداية إذا استيقظت وقد مرّ صرصور على قدمي أو يدي أشعر بالضيق والفرع والقرف، ولكن رويدًا رويدًا لم أعد أحفل سوى بحماية منطقة الوجه"

“At the beginning, I used to feel annoyed, terrified, and disgusted if I woke up while a cockroach was walking on my foot or hand, and slowly my concern became only to protect the area of my face [from them].”⁴¹³

Nazzal and her fellow inmates were aware of these coercive control methods; they knew how to maintain their sense of autonomy and connection with others by developing their own coping strategies.

المذياع ممنوع.. الجرائد والكتب ممنوعة.. الورق الأبيض ممنوع.. والحبر بكافة أشكاله ممنوع أيضًا.. لكن يوجد عجم الزيتون.. تعلمنا كيف نستغله في صنع المسابح، وأشياء صغيرة أخرى تعلمنا من خلالها كيف نجسد التاريخ ونعلمه الصبر والمثابرة..

Radio is prohibited... newspapers and books are not permitted.. blank sheets of paper are not allowed.. and ink in all its forms is prohibited, too.. but there are the olive pits.. we

⁴¹² al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 91.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 107.

learned how to use them to make rosaries and other small things that taught us how to personify history and teach it patience and perseverance.⁴¹⁴

Qatamish's testimony is also full of examples that manifest this autonomy and his insistence, despite the complete isolation during the first two stages of his interrogation, to stay connected not only with other inmates but also with family members, with historical characters via recalling beautiful personal memories and historical events.

When he was dragged blindfolded to Shabh room⁴¹⁵ or the hallway with the loud music, he would hear some weak, low voices and realise and feel the presence of other detainees in the same room.⁴¹⁶ He would introduce himself and drop a few words of encouragement in a very loud voice.⁴¹⁷

"ومن خلال التّحنّات أيقنت وجود مشبوحين آخرين، فعرّفت بنفسي، ورّحّب بي آخر، وتدخّل الجندي وقام وأسكتنا"

"From the hemming and hawing, I was sure that other inmates were present, so I introduced myself, another inmate welcomed me, and then the soldier interfered and made us shut up."⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁴ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 38.

⁴¹⁵ A torture room in which the prisoners are left for a long period of time while sitting, standing or hanged in a certain stress position.

⁴¹⁶ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 32, 82.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

In many incidents in the testimony, Qatamish recalls historical figures (Lenin, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, and family members).⁴¹⁹ By so doing, he used to disassociate himself from the painful moment he was trapped in. This disassociation from the unbearable reality would reconnect him with the same world his perpetrator was trying effortlessly to destroy. This coping strategy would strengthen him, warm his heart and provide him with the patience and persistence he desperately needed to endure the present hardship.

"اهتديت إلى وسيلة كفاحية أخرى هي استحضار صور أقرب الناس إلى قلبي وعقلي كحنين وسهى وأمها
وأمي وإخوتي وأحبائي وذكريات عديدة فيما شخصيات كبيرة كالرفيق فيدل كاسترو الذي قال سنغرق الجزيرة في
البحر ولا نسلّمها للرأسماليين"

"I discovered a new resistance mechanism by recalling the images of my loved ones like Hanin and Suha and her mom and my mom and my brothers and several memories including great figures such as the comrade Fidel Castro who said we will let the island sink rather than surrendering it to the capitalists."⁴²⁰

al-Barghuti used this survival mechanism of recalling and imagining (positive hallucinations) places, family members, and happy memories to derive patience, strength, and willpower. He also used this survival mechanism to reconnect with his humanity and, consequently, the world during the interrogation.

⁴¹⁹ The historical and literary figures and events that detainees invoke to empower themselves and recharge their stamina at the time of hardship are drawn from and related to their ideological, educational, cultural and religious backgrounds. In the case of Qatamish he sought refuge in communism and socialism and in al-Barghuti's case, he empowered himself by referring to Arab nationalism and the Palestinian history of resistance. As for Nazzal, she clung to Palestinian resistance poets and poetry.

⁴²⁰ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 86.

"كنت أستذكر في أثناء التّحقيق الشّهداء والمواقف البطوليّة لأبناء شعبنا."

"During the interrogation, I used to recall the martyrs and the heroic stances of our Palestinian people" – as well as during the one thousand days he spent in complete isolation.⁴²¹

تتذكّر الزّوجة الحبيبة... وتتذكّر الأولاد وتقبّلهم وتضحك معهم... كما تتذكّر الأصدقاء... إنّ هذا الخيال
الرّائع يطلق سراحك رغماً عن أنف العدوّ ويحطّم الأسوار والأسلاك الشائكة والأبواب الحديديّة، ويجعلك حرّاً تفكّر
وتتأمل وتسمع وترى وتحسّ إنّ خيالك هو حرّيتك في هذه الرّزانة المظلمة

You remember the beloved wife... you remember the kids, and you kiss them and laugh with them... also you recall friends... this wonderful imagination sets you free despite the enemy; it breaks the walls, the barbed wires, and the iron doors, it makes you a free man who thinks, meditates, hears, listens and sees and you feel that your imagination is your freedom inside this dark cell.⁴²²

It is worth noting that sometimes remembering family members and loved ones could negatively influence the detainees. It could sadden them and increase their pain and worries. Moreover, it could trigger shame and guilt feelings in the victims. However, they soon learn how to control such frustrating thoughts immediately to stop their negative effect on them via disassociation or alteration of consciousness. After a continuous interrogation that lasted for two or three straight days, the interrogators brought two blankets to the interrogation room and let Qatamish rest. Snuggling in the blankets and using his arm as a pillow reminded him of his daughter Hanin and

⁴²¹ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 55.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 127.

he started to think about her and her mom "وسرحت في حنين وأمها" He began to worry about their fate after his detention. "وانهال همهما على رأسي" "the worry about them was falling in a heap over my head."⁴²³

In addition, prisoners are consumed by basic survival needs in the second imprisonment phase. That is the reason behind focusing on the poor quality of the food served in prison and its small amounts. Nazzal, Qatamish, and al-Barghuti write in detail about the bad quality food offered to the prisoners in small portions that would usually lead to a high degree of undernourishment, ailments, and starvation.

"وجبة الإفطار في أحسن حالاتها عبارة عن قليل من الزبدة والمرَّبِي⁴²⁴ ويقدمون غير ذلك قليل من اللبنة أو بيضة كاملة ولم نكن نقدّر هذه النعمة إلا عندما انتقلنا إلى سجن "أبو كبير" ... حيث كانت تقدّم نصف زرقاء أقصد نصف بيضة مسلوقة"

"The best breakfast consists of a small amount of butter and jam or a small amount of cream cheese or an egg. We did not appreciate this blessing until we were transferred to "Abu Kabir" prison ... [where]we were offered only a half blue, I mean half of a boiled egg."⁴²⁵

Al-Barghuti describes the meals he received during his interrogation period and complains about the small portions that kept him starving. Nevertheless, he and Qatamish would eat any food they offered to them to stay strong enough to confront the interrogation and the isolation duress.

⁴²³ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 52.

⁴²⁴ Typo mistake in the source it should end with ي not ى.

⁴²⁵ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 36.

In addition, food was used by the wardens to humiliate the prisoners further and reduce them to animals or sub-humans.

وجبة الغداء مكوّنة إمّا من البطاطا المهروسة أو المقلّية أو المطهّية بالماء أو صبغة البندورة وإمّا فاصوليا بيضاء أو معكرونة أو قطعة دجاج مكسوّة بالرّيش- دلالة على عدم التّمييز- ونادرًا ما نستطيع التّعرف من أيّ جزء نأكل، الآن الأمر الذي ندركه أنّ الدّجاجة تمّ اغتيالها قبل تقديمها لنا ويظهر على لحمها لأزرق علامات التّعذيب، وإمّا يقدّم لنا قطعة لحم أزرق مميّز غير المعروف لدينا..

Lunch consists of either mashed or fried potatoes or cooked potatoes with water or tomato sauce or white lima beans or pasta or a piece of chicken covered with feathers- a sign of frugality- it is almost impossible to recognise which part [of the chicken] we are eating, now what we realise is that either the chicken was assassinated before offering it to us and on its blue meat there are traces of torture or what is provided to us is a unique [kind of] blue meat that we do not recognise.⁴²⁶

However, Nazzal and her inmates proved that even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress prisoners can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom and an independence of mind:

وأذكر يومًا في سجن أبو كبير أن قدّمت لنا وجبة إفطار سخية، إذ أحضروا الكثير من الرّبدة والمرّبّى، مزجت جيّدًا بكثير من اللبنة فاعترضنا، فقالت لنا السّجّانة.. ألن يختلط هذا كلّه بعد الأكل.. إذن كلوه... يومها إجابتنا الوحيدة كانت الإضراب عن الطّعام ليوم واحد.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 37.

I remember one day at Abu Kabir prison; we were offered a generous breakfast. They brought lots of butter and jam mixed with a large quantity of cream cheese, but we refused to eat; the female warden said, wouldn't all this be mixed up after eating.. so eat it... That day our answer was to start a hunger strike for one day.⁴²⁷

The hunger strike, as Herman states, is “the ultimate expression of resistance.”⁴²⁸

The prisoners willingly subject themselves to greater deprivations than that desired by their perpetrators to sustain their sense of integrity and self- control:

وهكذا نعيش بمماحكات يومية يتذكرون من خلالها أنهم لن يستطيعوا السيطرة علينا بهذه الإجراءات الخليعة.. ولكن لا تنسوا أننا ابتدعنا من جوعنا ماسوشية مناضلة. فنحن نجوع ونتعذب بذلك، لنحقق ونحصل على حقوقنا.

Thus we live in daily confrontations through which the wardens remember that they cannot control us by using these nasty procedures.. However, do not forget that we had created a striving Masochism out of our starvation. Thus we starve and suffer to obtain and receive our rights.⁴²⁹

Qatamish used to have only five minutes to eat his meal and use the toilet. He decided not to start a hunger strike but rather to eat the food he received because he needed the energy to

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 38-39.

⁴²⁸ Herman, *Trauma*, 79.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 39.

survive the interrogation and its torture sessions.⁴³⁰ However, despite the small portions of the meal, he used to avoid eating certain foods

"حرصت على امتداد فترة التّحقيق على التهام أقلّ كمّيّة من الطّعام ليس لردائته⁴³¹ فقط، بل للحفاظ على نشاطي"

"Throughout the interrogation period, I kept eating as little food as possible, not only because of its low quality but also to keep myself awake." Moreover, he used to throw away the spoiled fruits offered to him.

"ولا يمكن أن أنسى أنّهم على امتداد أيّام وأيّام كانت فاكهتي مجرد 4-5 حبّات برقوق نصفها أو أكثر معطوب،

فأزلطها لظراوتها وألقي بالمعطوب بالدّورة"

"I cannot forget that for days and days, the only fruit I received was four to five plums. More than half of them were spoiled; I [used to] swallow them for their softness and would throw the spoiled ones in the toilet."⁴³²

In addition, food was usually offered without utensils; he insisted on receiving a spoon with his meal and kept asking for one with every meal until he forced the warden to provide him with a plastic spoon every once in a while.⁴³³

⁴³⁰ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 46.

⁴³¹ A spelling mistake in the source. It should be رداّته rather than ردائته.

⁴³² Qatamish, *La Lan*, 94.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 72.

During prolonged confinement and isolation, prisoners “are able to develop trance capabilities.” These hypnotic skills include “the ability to form positive or negative hallucinations and to disassociate parts of the personality.”⁴³⁴ It seems that Qatamish had developed some trance skills. He completely disassociated his mind and willpower from his tortured body.⁴³⁵ He could not explain this phenomenon and linked it to brainpower.

"كان عقلي صافيًا تمامًا وإرادتي متفولذة لا تقيم حسابًا للمعاناة"

“My mind was completely clear, and my steel willpower did not attach any importance to suffering.”⁴³⁶

Prisoners learn to alter an unbearable reality through the practice of disassociation, voluntary thought suppression, minimisation, and sometimes even outright denial. These mechanisms are consciously applied to withstand, among other things, exhaustion, cold, loneliness, helplessness, and pain.⁴³⁷ They allow these states to manifest through:

1-Chanting and poetry recitation. "نظّهر أجواءها بالأناشيد المجروحة".

“We purify its surroundings [the cell] with wounded anthems.”⁴³⁸

⁴³⁴ Herman, *Trauma*, 88.

⁴³⁵ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 136.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁴³⁷ Herman, *Trauma*, 87-88.

⁴³⁸ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 30, 36.

2-Praying.

"لقد تعبت... تمتت بآيات من الذكر الحكيم كي أنعم باستقرار وتوازن داخليين.."

"I am exhausted...I cited some Qur'anic verses under my breath to enjoy some inner stability and balance," ⁴³⁹ al-Barghuti says that reading the Quran and learning it by heart strengthened his faith, patience, and ability to face oppression and injustice.⁴⁴⁰

3- Imagining new images and worlds (positive hallucinations). al-Barghouti, in his testimony, talks about the failure of the IZSCR in imprisoning his mind, spirit, and will and how he discovered the greatness of the imagination. The imagination sets the prisoner free. It makes him think, meditate, hear, see and feel. In the dark cell, the imagination becomes a manifestation of one's freedom.⁴⁴¹

"الخيال ... عصي على الحبس والاعتقال، به تحلق في الفضاء، ومن خلاله تتجول في أزقة الوطن وشوارع... تتجول في كل مدينة وقرية ومخيم، وخربة وزقاق وشارع وحرارة..."

"The imagination cannot be incarcerated or detained, with it, you fly in the sky, and through it, you wander in the alleys and the streets of the homeland... you walk around in every city, village, [refugee] camp, site of ruins, alley, street, and neighbourhood."⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 29.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁴⁴¹ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 127.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*

Prisoners also develop their ability to restrict their thoughts voluntarily. After reading the three testimonies, one discovers that whenever the authors feel weak or remember something that can frustrate them and lead them to despair or submission, they suppress it immediately.

وأسفاه فقدري أن أموت مخنوقًا في زنزانة مجهولة، انتابنتي هيستيريا عاطفية كرغبة جامحة أن أحضن
حنين وسهى وأمي وأمها واغرورقت عيوني بالدموع ولكنها جفت فورًا بطريقة عجيبة حينما تذكرت أرستو تشي
جيفارا ... فحينما اعتقلوه بعد إصابته بعدة رصاصات في أدغال بوليفيا ... انتزع أحد الضباط سيجارة الكوبي من فمه
فصرخ فيه: أعد السجارة يا كلب ... وحسنت أموري ثانية، أهلاً بالموت.

Unfortunately, my fate was to pass away from choking in an unknown cell. I experienced a hysterical emotional attachment, like a strong desire to hug Hanin, Suha, her mom, and my mom, and my eyes bathed in tears. Still, they dried out immediately in a magical way when I recalled Ernesto Che Guevara when he was arrested after he was shot in Bolivian forests... one of the officers took out his Cuban cigar from his mouth. He yelled at him: Put the Cigar back bitch... and once again, I was determined; death is welcomed.⁴⁴³

Qatamish, in this example, does not surrender to this hysterical emotional attack. He immediately controls it and alters his consciousness to recharge his stamina. Moreover, he declares here and in another three places in the testimony that he is emotionally and spiritually ready to die.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴³ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 47.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 90, 91, 101.

al-Barghuti, too reaches this decision.

"وكنت أحياناً أسند نفسي التي كادت تهوي من العذاب باستعدادي الدائم للاستشهاد بدلاً من الذلّ والهوان"

"Sometimes I used to console myself, which was about to fall due to torture, by preferring death over humiliation."⁴⁴⁵

This readiness to pass away is in no way an act of surrender and despair but rather an act of resistance. It preserves an inner sense of control.⁴⁴⁶ When the prisoners choose "to be" over the "not to be," they rock the perpetrators' shaky system—they strip it of its illusory power and render it into dust.

Another coping strategy essential to preserve the inner self of the prisoners is maintaining human connections with others. Perpetrators not only seek to isolate their victims from any other source of information, material aid, or emotional support, but they also try to destroy their internal images of connection to others.⁴⁴⁷ Nazzal and her inmates were deprived of contact with the outside world, such as newspapers, writing and receiving letters, and family or lawyer visits. They understood that isolation is a danger to be avoided at all costs. In addition, they knew they had to avoid any relationship with the perpetrator. Such a malignant relationship with the perpetrator could be mitigated by attaching oneself to other inmates who share the same fate. Thus, the ability to form a strong relationship with others is not destroyed even under the most

⁴⁴⁵ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 52, 55.

⁴⁴⁶ Herman, *Trauma*, 84-85.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

diabolical conditions but instead allows one to experience the generosity, courage, and devotion that one/others can muster under duress.⁴⁴⁸ In describing the experience of the hunger strike, Nazzal hints at this fortunate opportunity:

"لا بأس.. تمضي الأيام الأولى بتناقل وبطء أو هكذا تعيش تلك الساعات بدواخلنا.. تنتهّد.. تنتهي إلى رماد يتبعثر.. لا حنين.. كم هي مقرفة ومعذّبة لكننا نعيشها بارتياح مهما تزلزلت دقائقها لأنّ فيها مهمّة التّعريف على الذات والذات الأخرى"

Never mind.. The first few days pass very slowly, or maybe this is how these hours live inside us.. They sigh.. They end as scattered ashes.. No yearning.. How disgusting and torturing [these hours are], but we live them comfortably no matter how strong their ticks are because [during these hours] we discover the self and the other.⁴⁴⁹

Qatamish and al-Barghuti were aware of the danger hidden in the privileges, temptations, and offers that the interrogators propose to the prisoners and detainees to drag them into the trap of submission softly. al-Barghuti believes prisoners should not accept any offer, especially those related to food, such as cigarettes, tea, and coffee.⁴⁵⁰ Prisoners should never trust any interrogator (especially the ones who play the role of the ‘good’ interrogator) or believe his promises. Qatamish mentions many incidents in his testimony in which wardens and interrogators attempted to offer him privileges or deals. His answer was always a big NO. He refused to receive any privilege and refrained from requesting help from his perpetrators even

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 91.

⁴⁴⁹ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 39.

⁴⁵⁰ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 24, 57.

when he encountered choking, and they rushed to help him. He never asked for their assistance.⁴⁵¹

In addition to all the above coping strategies, reading, studying, exercising whenever it is possible, and not missing the one-hour break that prisoners usually spend in the prison courtyard, especially after the end of the trial and after moving to the solitary confinement\ collective cells, among other things, play a significant role in comforting the prisoners and in helping them to endure the hardships of captivity, each one in his/her way.

Using all or some of these survival mechanisms is crucial to preserve an independent voice which is the “final source of self-extension,” as Scarry states in her book *The Body in Pain*. The self will expand past the boundaries of the tortured body to occupy a larger space, especially when the prisoner’s body becomes the actual cause of pain.⁴⁵² By so doing, the prisoner will prevent his perpetrators from splitting him /her into “self and body,” turning his /her voice into a weapon against him/her “to betray him on behalf of the enemy, ...to be the enemy.”⁴⁵³ Thus, to survive the pain during the interrogation, Qatamish and al-Barghuti had to sustain their voice to destroy pain and stop it from taking away their humanity and reducing them to the state of an animal. In their eyes, every torture session was a battle, and they had to awaken all the dormant powers they had inside to score points against their interrogators and prevent them from doubling their voices at the expense of destroying the victims’ voices and making them absent.

⁴⁵¹ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 46.

⁴⁵² Scarry, *The Body*, 33, 48.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 49.

Since the beginning of his prison experience Qatamish had developed an absolute rejection of the prisoner-torturer relationship because, in his opinion, the IZSCR had no moral right to detain, insult or inflict pain on him.⁴⁵⁴ This anti-prisoner-torturer voice echoed throughout the interrogation period and manifested itself in different verbal ways, silence and actions. Challenging himself and his torturers is one of the tactics he used. After a few minutes of leaving him inside the ‘wardrobe’ cell, in his first-time experience with this torture method, he started losing his strength, and his breath started coming in gasps. However, his torturers did not react. He hesitated whether to request help or not, and within a few seconds, he decided not to.

"هل يطلب الضحية المساعدة من جلأديه؟ وهل أطلب الحياة من الذين ينتزعون حياتي؟ ترددت في الإجابة لثواني⁴⁵⁵، ...، ولكنني حزمت أمري لا، لن أطلب"

“Would the victim ask his perpetrators for help? Would I request life from those who are extracting my life? I hesitated to answer [this question] for a few seconds... but I decided, no, I would not do that.”⁴⁵⁶

Refusing to hallucinate or to fall asleep during the interrogation is another tactic he followed to prevent his torturers from scoring against him. To achieve these goals, he used to scratch his fingers by using a protrusion in the handcuffs or rubbing his heels against the angle of

⁴⁵⁴ Qatamish, *La Lan*, 76.

⁴⁵⁵ Typo mistake in the original text. It should be ثوانٍ.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

the chair until they bled. Thus, whenever he felt sleepy, he would rub the little bruises. The produced pain would keep him awake.⁴⁵⁷

"لن أهلوس، وسوف تختبر ذلك بنفسك ... تأكد أنّ انهيار جسمي أو عدمه لا يمسّ بإرادتي قيد أنملة"

"I will not hallucinate, and you will find this out by yourself... be assured that whether my body collapses or not, it will not affect my will at all."⁴⁵⁸ Awakening dormant energies and powers to strengthen his stamina whenever he feels weak is the third way he finds very useful during duress. "محاولاتي مستمرة لاستنهاض قواي الكامنة" "my attempts are persistent to awaken my hidden powers"⁴⁵⁹ Threatening to cling or clinging to silence if the perpetrators use or say something that profoundly insults him is another tactic that he uses. Once, towards the end of the interrogation, when his body was exhausted, they pushed his chair violently, and he fell to the floor. This unkind act made him angry. As a result, he decided to cling to silence and end the interrogation session.

"فهذا لا أقبل به، فلست حقل تجارب وصممت على إنهاء التّحقيق بالصّمت وعدم الإجابة عن الأسئلة"

"I do not accept this, I am not a lab rat, and I am determined to finish the interrogation session by adhering to silence and not answering the questions."⁴⁶⁰ Finally, he used to refuse to offer any piece of information voluntarily or to cooperate with the wardens. Qatamish also rejected putting

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 46.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 86.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 96.

on or removing the head bag by himself. One time the court officer asked him to put on the bag, and he answered:

"أنا سجين ولا أسجن نفسي ثانية، فأنتم تسجونني مرّتين ... فلن أسجن نفسي بالكيس"

"I am a prisoner, and I do not [accept] to imprison myself; you are confining me twice, first by detaining me and second by putting the bag on my head... I will not lock myself inside this bag."⁴⁶¹

al-Barghuti, like Qatamish, feels that he is morally stronger than his perpetrators.⁴⁶² He also clings to silence and declines any cooperation with his interrogators.⁴⁶³ He would also encourage himself to persevere and awaken his dormant energy.⁴⁶⁴ During his one thousand days of isolation, he would loudly scream in order not to forget his voice or how to speak; by shouting, he aimed to remind his wardens that he was still alive. Also, he tried to connect with other inmates in the isolation section of the prison who were facing the same hardships as he did.

The day after arriving at Shattah Prison he turned to the window and

"ناديت بصوت عالٍ على جاري في الزنزانة الأخرى الوحيدة في هذا القسم لعليّ أجد لي رفيقًا يخفّف وحدتي، وأخفّف وحدته."

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, 127.

⁴⁶² Ibid., 76. See also al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 52.

⁴⁶³ al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 54.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 53, 95.

“I called out to my neighbour in the only other cell in this section, hoping to find a companion who would ease my loneliness, and I [in my turn] would reduce his.”⁴⁶⁵

Administrative detention lasts three or six months, and the IZSCR can renew it endlessly. The detainees will not know if they will be released or stay in prison until the last day of the third or sixth month. Not knowing the exact release date has the most depressing influence on the prisoners.⁴⁶⁶ The prison administration tortures the prisoners until the last minute of their detention by informing them that their detention will be extended when they receive a release or vice versa. A day before the end of her detention, Nazzal prepared herself to accept either decision.

"إن بقيت هنا.. برفقة مسلية وطيبة مع تلك الأخوات.. وبذلك تتكوّن ثروة إضافية لتجربتي الصحفية إذ ليس من المناسب أن أعيش زمن الاحتلال دون أن أتذوق مرارة إجراءاته.."

“If I stay here.. [I will have a] good, entertaining company with the inmates.. This will enrich my journalist experience because it is not right to live the occupation without tasting the bitterness of its procedures.”⁴⁶⁷ The following morning, the female warden came twice to the cell. The first time to wake the prisoners up, then to count them without saying a word regarding the release or the extension. Then after breakfast, with a smile on her face, the warden approached Nazzal and informed her that her detention was extended for another month.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 103.

⁴⁶⁶ Frankl, *From Death*, 69.

⁴⁶⁷ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 60.

"فقلت لها: هذا أفضل.. وابتسمت بحزن خفي.. أخبرت صويحباتي بما جرى .. وفقدت الأمل في الإفراج.."

"I told her: this is better.. and I smiled, hiding my sadness.. I informed my inmates.. and I lost hope in getting a release."⁴⁶⁸ After some time, another warden informed her that she had received a release. Nazzal could not grasp that she was free until she found herself alone in the street. However, she was displeased because she left her friends behind the prison walls.⁴⁶⁹

The period following the prisoners' release and liberation is the third phase of the prisoners' mental reactions to prison life. Liberated prisoners suffer from "depersonalisation." Everything appears to them as unreal, like a dream.⁴⁷⁰ It takes time for the prisoners to become human beings again:

كان يوماً رائعاً حقاً.. قضيت بعده أياماً عديدة وأنا أعيش على مفترق، لست بالطليقة ، ولست بالمعتقلة. وقتها اكتشفت حدود السجن التاريخي الذي وضعنا فيه وعشنا حيواته كاملة بتجاهل كامل.

It was a fantastic day indeed.. After it, I spent several days standing at crossroads; I was neither free nor a detainee. At that time, I discovered the boundaries of the historical prison we were imprisoned in and which we lived in its full details with complete denial.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 61.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Frankl, *From Death*, 89.

⁴⁷¹ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 62.

Released prisoners, better described as trauma survivors, are highly vulnerable and need social support. “Their sense of self has been shattered.”⁴⁷² They need to rebuild this sense of connection with others. Rebuilding trust between the released prisoner and his/her close family and friends is an essential task. An assurance of safety and protection should accompany this rebuilding of trust. After re-establishing a sense of basic security, the released prisoner needs assistance from others to rebuild “a positive view of self.” This restoration of a positive view of the self leads to a renewed sense of autonomy within connections with others and a renewed self-respect. In this stage, the freed prisoner must overcome his/her shame and diminish the feelings of humiliation and guilt. S/he needs realistic judgments from those close to him/her rather than harsh criticism and ignorant and blind acceptance because such attitudes would complicate the released prisoner’s self-blame and isolation. Finally, the released prisoner needs support from others to mourn his/her losses.⁴⁷³ Nazzal could not receive this social support from her community for many reasons. One of these reasons is that Palestinians consider the released prisoners of war and detainees heroes, and heroes do not complain or show weaknesses.

On the other hand, Palestinian society is conservative, and until the beginning of the first Intifada, the idea of having female prisoners of war or detainees was not broadly acceptable. However, with the beginning of the first Intifada, the number of female prisoners of war and detainees increased; this society was forced to adjust to the new reality. Still, this situation of females going to jail was not tolerable enough.

⁴⁷² Herman, *Trauma*, 62.

⁴⁷³ Herman, *Trauma*, 65-69.

"قافليّة ذات طابع محافظ بل ومحافظ جدًّا أيضاً، وأنا أحترم ذلك المجتمع الذي ترعرعت فيه، واحترامي لا يعني إطلاقاً أن أحول ما فيه إلى سلاسل تطوّفتني.."

"Qalqilyah has a very conservative characteristic, and I respect this community in which I was raised. However, this respect does not mean at all turning [some of its values] into chains that restrict me."⁴⁷⁴

At this point, Nazzal started to experience "bitterness" and "disillusionment."⁴⁷⁵ She realised that suffering was endless and that she could still intensely agonise and continue to suffer. This bitterness multiplied; this suffering culminated after receiving the warrant for house arrest. The house arrest warrant dictated that she had to limit her movement within the boundaries of her hometown of Qalqilyah. She had to stay home at night and show up at eleven o'clock every morning at the police station.

" لماذا يحاولون تشويه قفليية من خلال ربطها بالدلالات العسكريّة؟ إنهم يحاولون إضفاء السّواد على الصّور الجميلة لمنزلي الصّغير .. فهل نجحوا!؟ "

"Why do they try to misrepresent Qalqilyah by linking it with military tokens? They try to colour the beautiful pictures of my little home in black.. Have they succeeded?"⁴⁷⁶ Qalqilyah, her beloved town, her little homeland, her childhood memories, her safe refuge, turns out to be her new cell:

⁴⁷⁴ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 63

⁴⁷⁵ Frankl, *From Death*, 92.

⁴⁷⁶ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 64.

إنّها قلقيلية.. إنهم لا يعلمون كم هي قديمة ومتجدّدة .. جذورها في داخلي فهل تملّ الشجرة جذورها.. كلّ الحروف الأولى لقصّتي ولدت فيها وفي فلکها تدور... أحبّها بكلّ تناقضاتها.

It is Qalqilyah.. They do not know how old and renewed it is.. Its roots are inside me.

Would the tree get bored of its roots.. All the first letters of my story were born in it and went around its orbit.. I love it with all its contradictions.⁴⁷⁷

The perpetrator once again tried to enslave his victim and destroy her sense of autonomy. Nazzal had no option to enable the integration of her trauma or seek safety and protection after her home suddenly became a hostile place and a painful weapon against her. She felt utterly helpless and entered a state of surrender. She escaped this horrible situation not by action in the real world but instead by altering her state of consciousness. She isolated herself in her room, detached herself from the outer world, and spent the time reading. In such a state of emotional paralysis, she was unable to write:

يمضي اليوم فتحضر ذكراه.. أحاول أن أتصالح مع قلبي فأجدني أسيرته.. أبوح له فيرفض الحديث عن التفاصيل .. أبحث عن ذاتي فيه.. عن أشجاني.. عمّا يؤرّقني فأجده يتحوّل إلى إطار من وجع الأيام.. فأسكن الأيام.. ويلتهب الجرح..

The day ends, but its memory is still present.. I try to reconcile with my pen; instead, I become its prisoner.. I reveal [my sadness] to it, but it refuses to talk about the details.. I look for myself in it.. My griefs.. My worries, but it transforms [itself] into a burning wheel of the days' pain.. I calm down the days... and the wound bursts into flames.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.,

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 65.

As a mechanism of survival, Nazzal tried to build connections with the inhabitants of her hometown of Qalqilyah to restore her inner self. She found herself starting a new journey of suffering and learning. Due to studying in Jordan for four years and then working in Jerusalem for another five years, she was not actually involved in their lives and had missed many details. She tried to form a strong bond with them to understand their worries; however, it was the time of the Intifada. Changes were rapid; she felt utterly helpless. She could not grasp everything that was going on around her.

On the one hand, she was exposed to the atrocities of the occupation, especially against her town's children, men, and women. On the other, she witnessed her people's bravery, love, and endless sacrifices. At times, she was consumed by pain.

"لم أعد أطيق عدّ ما مضى وما بقي من عمر الجسد السّجين.. إنني تعبّة .. تعبّة جدًّا."

"I cannot withstand counting the number of the days that have passed and the number of the days that are left in the life of this imprisoned body.. I am tired .. exhausted."⁴⁷⁹ In other instances, she was optimistic and felt empowered.

"كانت الغرفة صغيرة معتمة. واليوم غرفتي رحبة يملأها الضياء. وجزء من عالمي يكسر سلاسل عزلتي"⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 78-79.

⁴⁸⁰ Spelling mistake in the source it should be: يملؤها .

“The room was small and dark, and today it is spacious and full of light.. and part of my world breaks the chains of my isolation.”⁴⁸¹ This alternation between despair and hope continued until the end of the testimony, where hope prevailed. Surrounded by an environment that lacked social support to communicate the trauma, the absence of a safe environment due to the ongoing clashes between the Palestinian civilians and the IZSCR forces and turning Qalqilyah into an open prison triggered Nazzal’s traumatic experience. Moreover, remaining in the hostile environment of prisons despite surviving the interrogation and isolation and being surrounded by supporting prisoners’ collective, Qatamish and al-Barghuti continued to re-experience the traumatic memories as well. Indeed, the scars and wounds of the prison traumatic experiences would never be completely healed or overcome. Still, the three authors had to negotiate their traumatic experiences by writing the testimonies to make them secondary or silent so that Nazzal, Qatamish, and al-Barghuti could recharge and continue their survival struggle in prison and outside its walls in the case of Nazzal.

The avant-garde revolutionary Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees who led the prisoners’ collective movement rightly understood the strategic goals of the IZSCR prison soon after 1967. They survived the interrogation with many wounds and scars on their bodies and souls. They experienced the hardships of the continuous struggle in the collective cells in a horrendously hostile environment. They also witnessed in their own eyes some inmates collaborating with their perpetrators, many others either developing mental and physical ailments, or even losing their lives under torture, during clashes with the prison forces, or soon after their release. Consequently, they had to invent creative ways to protect their inmates, themselves and

⁴⁸¹ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 69.

all future prisoners from a similar fate or worse and blow up the prison's goals by genuinely creating a counter-order inside the jails. Their revolutionary resilient selves, which won the interrogation battle stripped of everything except one man's willpower, knew with absolute certainty that the willpower of the prisoners as a collective could also score against the prison authority.

For over twenty years, this counter-order constituted a huge protective shield or shell that surrounded hundreds of thousands of prisoners in all the IZSCR prisons. Belonging to this grander idea of the protective shield (the prisoners' collective movement) made every individual inmate see that his agony was meaningless in comparison with other prisoners' sufferings and the challenges the movement was facing in prison. This shield was based on two principles "all for one" and "one for all." These two principles guided the acts and behaviours of every individual inmate and the prisoners' collective at all times and in every confrontation with the prison authority.⁴⁸² Consequently, a set of rules, which organised the relations among the prisoners, especially in the cells where they spent 22 hours a day and the different prison sections, was agreed on and distributed among the prisoners. Prisoners were required to adhere to these rules at all times. These rules aimed to at least decrease, if not eliminate, all kinds of irritabilities, arguments or fights among the inmates that could intensify the suffering they constantly lived in due to the continuous aggression of the prison authority and the hostility of the material surroundings. Instead of turning into weapons against each other, inmates wove profound relationships of fraternity and comradeship.

⁴⁸² Muḥammad Ḥasan Maḥmūd Igbārīyah, *Lama 'āt ft 'Atm al-Zanāzīn* (Jinīn: Mu'assasat Jafrā lil-Di'āyah wa-al-I'lān, n. d.), 48.

This connectedness made them find beauty in the most challenging times and transformed their pains and sufferings into solid willpower for survival.⁴⁸³ The Prisoners shared everything, from the daily six cigarettes allowed for every prisoner to ideas, dreams, knowledge, skills, and even personal stories and photos of their sons and daughters. There was no private property in the collective cells. There was no time for the traumatic experience or memories to deplete the prisoners. Every cell followed a strict daily schedule that usually began with the first inmate count at six in the morning and finished when the lights were turned off around ten at night. Such a schedule varied from cell to cell and prison to prison, and over time due to the different political affiliations of the inmates, the constant changes in prison rules, physical layout, routine, and the rights the prisoners earned over the years. Still, they partially devoted their free time between the three daily inmate counts, meals, and the half an hour/ hour spent in the prison yard to learning-teaching activities, cultural and social activities and hobbies. Some of these hobbies were reading, writing, and arts whenever books, stationary tools, and art supplies were available. The rest of their free time focused on factional and ideological concerns, political discussions and lectures.

However, before anything else, the avant-garde prisoners strove to build the organisational frames in the prisons, constantly mobilising the prisoners' collective, planning and managing disobedience tactics to improve the prison conditions, including hunger strikes. To accomplish these endeavours, they made every effort: first, to preserve the prisoners' unity in all the prisons to confront the prison authority and earn back the prisoners' usurped rights; Second, to violate the

⁴⁸³ 'Atā al-Qaymarī, *al-Sijn Laysa Lanā* (n.p., n.d.), 193.

separation concept of the prison by reconnecting with their political factions and their Palestinian people and its aspirations outside the prison walls; third, to seek empowerment from all past and contemporary liberation movements in the world and international solidarity movements with the Palestinian people and its cause. These three elements, in addition to awakening the latent mechanisms of survival in every prisoner, guaranteed to win the battle of endurance and, consequently, the struggle against the IZSCR prisons.⁴⁸⁴

However, the prisoners' leaders discovered another pivotal element they always had to consider when planning a confrontation with the prison authority, such as hunger strikes. This crucial element is choosing the right timing for starting such a strike by taking into account the local and international political circumstances to attract the most attention to their cause and make sure that none of these circumstances could affect the spirits of the hunger strikers.

Rajjub, in his collective testimony, states that the prisoners' leaders in Nafhah prison conducted a detailed study about the prison experience since 1967. The study showed that the strategic goals of the Israeli Prison Service against Palestinian inmates did not change. Moreover, all the commitments and statements of the new commissioner of prisons, Doctor Mordechai Wertheimer, to grant the Palestinian Prisoners of war and administrative detainees equal rights like the Israeli criminal inmates in terms of prison living conditions and treatment did not materialise in reality. Wertheimer retracted some of them and repudiated the others.⁴⁸⁵ Thus, the prisoners'

⁴⁸⁴ 'Atā. al-Qaymarī, *al-Sijn Laysa Lanā* (n.p., n.d.), 192-93.

⁴⁸⁵ "Mordechai Wertheimer," *Wikipedia*, Last modified on February 21, 2022), https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%93%D7%9B%D7%99_%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%98%D7%94%D7%99%D7%99%D7%9E%D7%A8. See Also Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 25.

leaders had no choice except to call for a hunger strike “to end the pains and sufferings of the Palestinian prisoners because of the degrading living conditions and the ill-treatment.” In May 1982, the prisoners’ leaders finalised a complete plan for a general hunger strike in all the prisons of the IZSCR prisons. However, this plan did not take place due to the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon to eradicate the Palestinian revolution on June 6 1982.⁴⁸⁶

Palestinian prisoners who live an ongoing acute traumatic experience worry and have excessive feelings of guilt and shame all the time. Such feelings are normal PTSD responses. They feel guilty because they physically and mentally survived the interrogation, isolation and clashes with the colonisers while other comrades did not. They worry about their families and feel ashamed because they cannot do their duty as fathers, husbands, and sons. They also feel guilty because they become burdens on their families instead of supporting them emotionally and financially. They have the same feelings for their people because, as prisoners, they cannot protect their people from the atrocities of colonisation and lead them to liberation. Thus, any defeat, crisis and political division that weakens the Arab and Palestinian fronts, such as the invasion of an Arab country, driving the PLO out of Lebanon, the massacres of Sabra and Shatila in 1982 and the Tripoli battle in 1983 multiplies these negative feelings, overwhelms the prisoners, deepens their feelings of helplessness, agitates their agony and suffering and temporarily diminishes the spark of their resistance.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁶ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 27.

⁴⁸⁷ Tripoli battle in 1983 took place in Tripoli a city in Northern Lebanon during the Lebanese Civil War between the Palestinian political factions that had defected from the PLO and allied with Syria and the FATAH faction led by Arafat. See: Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 573.

The prison authority always takes great advantage of such devastating times. It uses them in several ways to deplete the stamina of the prisoners and deprive them of the minimal rights they have earned. Thus, Wertheimer seized this opportunity of the prisoners' lack of interest in resistance to announce that his reform policies fulfilled their objectives in creating stability and tranquility in the prisons. Confronting these false statements with a large-scale hunger strike was not achievable then. Still, the prisoners' leaders in Nafhah started a partial hunger strike on Jan 22 1983, during which they ate only bread and returned the rest of their meals. This partial strike lasted twelve days and gained much of the Palestinian people's support. As a result, the strike forced the prison authority to meet some of the prisoners' secondary demands. In Rajjub's opinion, the importance of this small act of resistance lay in being the first direct and practical challenge to the policies of Wertheimer.⁴⁸⁸ To maintain the living conditions as they were and ensure relative stability in the prisons, the commissioner and officers of the Israeli Prison service started to spread false rumours among the prisoners and issued dishonest press releases regards the new 'modern' and 'deluxe' prison that would be opened soon in Nablus and would solve the major problems that the prisoners suffer from.⁴⁸⁹

The open hunger strike has been the last resort for Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees since 1967. This survival mechanism has been used by the prisoners' collective only when they reach unbearable situations due to degrading treatment and subhuman living conditions and when all other means of confrontation have been exhausted. It has been usually avoided to spare the hunger strikers from deteriorations in their mental and physical well-being that could

⁴⁸⁸ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 28.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 29

lead to the inability to resume everyday life and even death. The IZSCR prison authority, on the other, desperately tries to end the strike not only to preserve its 'false democratic image' in front of the world as Palestinian prisoners think and to sustain the lives of inmates under its custody in accordance with human rights laws but also aims at gaining back control over the prisoners. In other words, when the hunger strikers willingly deprive themselves and decide to die, they have back their dominance over their bodies and figuratively blow up the essence prison and its oppression system.

On May 27th 1984, the Palestinian prisoners started to arrive at Ijneid Prison from the other IZSCR central prisons to discover that the modernity of the new prison springs from using the latest technology of surveillance and oppression. However, in terms of living conditions and treatment, it was in line with the strategic goals of the Prison Service, which aimed at physically and mentally crushing the prisoners. The prison authority was moving forward with its efforts to offer "a minimum of facilities with a maximum of harassment." The authority deprived the prisoners of many rights they had earned after many sacrifices and enjoyed in the previous prisons.⁴⁹⁰ Consequently, the Central Committee of the Fatah faction in the IZSCR prisons decided to undertake a struggle to satisfy the prisoners' demands and set up a complete plan on August 10th 1984. This plan was based on the study conducted in Nafhah Prison in 1982 and was prepared in 'Asqalan prison in early 1984.

According to the plan, the prisoners had to initiate the struggle and manage it as stated in the plan rather than as an emotional reaction to prison provocations. The struggle had to begin with

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 30, 38.

tactics that put direct daily pressure on the Ijneid prison authority and gradually escalated to a total hunger strike. The plan was presented to the prisoners' coordinating committee in Ijnied on August 11th and was unanimously approved by all the committee members. On August 19th, a general struggle committee was elected to manage the struggle. A mobilising and guiding committee was formed during the struggle general committee's first meeting. The task of this committee was preparing in writing advisories and statements of guidance to the prisoners and public statements to scandalise the oppressional prison policies and refute its false propaganda. The committee decided that prisoners have to elect subcommittees of struggle in every section of the prison and a struggle mentor in every cell. The general struggle committee also chose one of its members as the official spokesman and general struggle coordinator whose task was to execute the committee's instructions and follow up on implementing them with the different committees on August 21.

The prison authority knew about the prisoners' intentions and tried to nip them in the bud by causing a problem in section five on August 22nd. Instead of removing beds from the crowded cells as promised, the prison authority brought more prisoners. The prisoners in section five refused to let the new prisoners enter. A police force attacked the inmates in cell number 12 with violent beatings and tear gas bombs. The inmates in the other cells started banging on the doors as a protest. The police dropped tear gas bombs inside section five's cells and hallways. As a result, all the prisoners started choking and passing out. The struggle general committee's response to this crime was to stick to the plan and announce a two-day hunger strike only as a protest tactic.

Many prisoners, including the inmates in section five, did not adhere to this decision and continued their strike. The struggle general committee made considerable efforts to convince the disobeying prisoners to follow its instructions and stop the partial strike. It also continued with the

prisoners' mobilizing process. In September 6, the committee sent letters to local and international bodies to attract solidarity and sympathy with the prisoners' struggle. Locally, all the Palestinian institutions and public figures, the foreign delegations in East Jerusalem, the Israeli left parties and their Jewish and Arab representatives in the parliament, Israeli Arab organizations, and all Arabic newspapers and radio stations received information about the struggle. Internationally, letters were sent to the Palestinian leadership, the Arab League, the Vatican, the Red Cross, Amnesty International and the UN. The Israeli Prison Service, on the other hand, continued to underestimate the prisoners' moves despite the Palestinian mass uprising and sit-ins in the Red Cross headquarters that accompanied the prisoners' protest tactics and the international solidarity campaign. Consequently, commissioner Wertheimer initiated a meeting with the prisoners. He repudiated all the demands of the prisoners and asked them to adapt to the status quo on September 10th.

The struggle general committee declared a state of emergency after this meeting. They updated the prisoners with the outcomes of the meeting and informed them that an open hunger strike would start soon. They exempted the sick and elderly prisoners from participating in it. They informed the rest of the prisoners that the participation was voluntary. However, any prisoner who chose to join it had to continue with it until the end; otherwise, he would lose his political affiliation with his faction. All the prisoners had to refuse to attend family visits and stop their correspondence activity with their families during the strike, whether they participated in it or not. Six hundred seventy-eight prisoners (92% of the total prisoners) committed to joining the open hunger strike and fully adhering to the instructions of their struggle general committee.

On September 11th, the prisoners' representative submitted four letters to the prison authority addressed to Ijneid prison director, the commissioner of the Israeli Prison Service, the minister of interior and the minister of public security with a thorough description of the situation and a list of demands without mentioning the exact date. In the letters, they emphasised that their strike was not political but rather to satisfy their demands for improving the prison living conditions and ill-treatment. They showed a willingness to take the nutrient liquid in a cup to avoid violent force-feeding procedures. They requested to stop all kinds of physical brutality against the prisoners. At the same time, the committee succeeded in deceiving the prison authority by spreading false rumours about its inability to reach a consensus regards the strike. The trick worked on the authority and did not take the prisoners seriously.

On September 16th, the struggle general committee decided to begin the strike on September 23rd. This date coincided with the General Assembly session. It was suggested by the Fatah faction to put the prisoners' struggle on the Assembly's agenda via the PLO representative in order to attract international attention and put more pressure on the IZSCR. The complete plan of the hunger strike, demands, guidance materials, restrictions, warnings and even slogans were given to all the prisoners. They had to discuss them, comment on them and return the feedback with any questions or enquiries to the struggle general committee within 48 hours to be able to respond to them before the beginning of the strike. Detailed information about fasting, how to conduct it, what to do and what to avoid and how to survive from day to day was also distributed. Prisoners who participated in hunger strikes in the past were asked to share their experiences with the rest of the prisoners. All the possible scenarios that the prison authority may cling to in order to provoke the prisoners and convince or force them to terminate their strike or disobey the struggle

general committee's instructions were addressed, and responses to them were given to all the prisoners.

On September 23rd, six hundred seventy-eight prisoners as one collective body (Protean self) started an open hunger strike until death or blowing up all the existing prison living conditions and ill-treatment. This activity of the prisoners' collective movement to achieve a dignified life extended far beyond the individual and his pains due to his empty stomach. The Hunger strikers experienced a larger human connectedness of a sublime purpose that empowered and helped them to hold their selves together in the face of every doubt and weakness. They abided by the instructions, recommendations and decisions of the struggle general committee throughout the 13-day hunger strike and the seven weeks of negotiations that followed the strike suspension. The hunger strikers, including their general committee, "were as steadfast as they were fixable." They struggled against the prison authority with perseverance and powerful motivation to achieve their objectives. At the same time, they took into consideration the developments surrounding their strike and changed some tactics accordingly until the prison authority met all their basic demands on November 21st 1984.⁴⁹¹ Steadfastness and fluidity are two characteristics of the Protean self that holds itself together under duress.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹¹ Some examples of the achieved basic demands were: the reduction of the number of beds in the overcrowded cells, allowing every prisoner to own a radio device, having more sinks in every cell, having a library room, a place for getting haircuts and another for sewing, having more ventilation and natural light in the cells after moving the attached asbestos window covers one meter from the windows, giving the prisoners the possibility to join colleges and universities, and stopping all kinds of beatings and humiliations during prisoner transfers. See: *Ibid.*, 156-76.

⁴⁹² Lifton, *Protean*, 91.

In addition to these two traits, the prisoners, especially the struggle general committee members, showed a high degree of responsibility, devotion and unconditional love towards taking care of their brothers (other inmates) before, during and after the hunger strike suspension by providing them with daily updates, emotional support and mobilisation. Even though they were conducting the hunger strike in a very hostile environment, they succeeded in staying goal-directed. They retained all the cognitive functions which allowed them to carry out their other tasks. Some of these tasks included following up with the national and international solidarity actions that accompanied the strike, communicating with the outside world via written declarations that provided updates and refuting the prison authority counter-propaganda, negotiating, making decisions, manoeuvring, and acting accordingly. This stress tolerance is another feature of the Protean self of the survivor-prisoners. The members of the struggle general committee proved to have a high capacity to work well under immense pressure.

The sense of victory over the Prison authority as a destructive force is evident in Rajjub's collective testimony. The prisoners survived the Hunger strike without dying. Their survival experience was accompanied by specific affirmations that include satisfaction and joy for being alive, achieving their goals, and "having undergone an experience that is illuminating in its pain." Consequently, as individuals and a collective, the prisoners were proud of the triumph that strengthened them mentally and physically.⁴⁹³ However, Rajjub admits that the hunger strike battle was only one battle out of many to come. He concludes that the prisoners should constantly strengthen their national unity to preserve all their past, current and future accomplishments.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 82.

⁴⁹⁴ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 150.

Thus, national unity among all Palestinian political factions, discipline, organisation and planning were the weapons that aided the prisoners in defeating all the prison authority's oppressional procedures and all its criminal plans against the prisoners.⁴⁹⁵

Majiddu detention camp was opened on May 18th 1988, to accommodate the remanded detainees of the first Intifada and aimed to face down the uprising and mentally and physically crush the detainees. 'Awwad, in his collective testimony, bears witness to the detainees' struggle that led to the formation of the detainees' counter order and improving the camp's living conditions by converting it into a revolutionary base and a school for national, political and security mobilisation and cultural education.⁴⁹⁶

The Avant-garde detainees who were leaders and activists of the Intifada and or released prisoners of war soon after opening the camp began weaving the protective shield by organising the relations among the detainees and the relation between the detainees and the camp authority. A unified struggle committee was elected. It consists of representatives of all the political factions grouped under The Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU). This committee had full legislative and executive powers in leading the life of the detainees and their struggle. The camp sections' directors and a general cultural director were elected from its members. Every tent had to elect a tent director democratically. The responsibilities of the tent director were organising the daily life in the tent, solving internal problems and raising any complicated issues, notes, and recommendations to the united struggle committee via the section director. Every tent also had a

⁴⁹⁵ Igbārīyah, *Lama 'āt*, 46.

⁴⁹⁶ 'Awwad, *Dawlat*, 7, 14.

tent committee that coordinated with the tent director to organise the daily life in the tent in terms of discipline, cleanness, solving problems, executing the decisions and the instructions of the unified struggle committee.⁴⁹⁷

A cultural body was formed to organise cultural life and intensify national, revolutionary and social awareness by preparing and developing cultural programs for the detainees. Every tent elected a cultural administrator. His mission was to organise and prepare cultural programs in coordination with the tent director and committee. A general cultural committee supervised by the general cultural director was also elected to develop and formulate educational, national and tactical policies to direct the tent administrators in carrying out day-to-day activities, such as mobilising, cultural and national study meetings, lectures, literacy and languages classes, plays and group dances.⁴⁹⁸

A revolutionary discipline body (police) was formed. The responsibility of this body was to protect the counter-order and correct any behaviour or action that breaks the rules, guidelines and instructions. A security apparatus was also established to deal with security issues and identify collaborators.⁴⁹⁹ The Majiddu detainees desperately needed such a protective shield because most of them were ordinary people who had no political affiliation or any idea about prison life before their detention. The prison authority put 300-400 detainees in every section. Among them, many collaborators were planted to cause disagreements, irritations, problems and fights to turn their

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 15-17.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 16.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

detention experience into a more hostile experience to achieve the strategic goal of the IZSCR in breaking them and thwarting the uprising.

The counter-order faced many challenges in achieving total voluntary self-commitment in the apolitical detainees. It had to force military discipline on them at the beginning of their detention. This step was crucial until they accomplished the right level of political awareness and mobilisation to realise the existential necessity of the counter-order to hold them together and the inevitability of confronting the prison authority to fail all its goals. As remanded detainees, they were held in the camp for up to four months until their trial. If they were sentenced for less than a year, they would return to the camp; otherwise, they would be transferred to one of the central prisons to serve their sentence.⁵⁰⁰

This short stay in the camp and the constant flux of new detainees rendered some of the confrontation tactics usually used by the Palestinian prisoners of war in the central prisons irrelevant. For example, it was hard within this short period of time to prepare and mobilise the detainees to conduct an open hunger strike for more than one day. Moreover, refraining from attending the family visits tactic did not concern the military authority of the camp that treated the detainees as captives. Thus, new creative disobedience tactics and confrontation methods had to be invented.⁵⁰¹

The unified struggle committee showed a high degree of responsibility and attempted to spare the detainees any extra suffering or risk to their health or lives by initiating a dialogue

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 21-23.

with the prison authority. This committee constantly requested from the prison authority to meet the fundamental rights of the detainees, such as the right of having hot water, books, newspapers, stationery materials, and enough food supplies of good quality in the prison kitchens. However, the response of the prison authority generally was procrastination, giving empty promises and even depriving the detainees of other basic rights, such as prohibiting cultural and educational meetings, singing and sports activities.

When there was no escape from a confrontation, the detainees escalated their disobedience tactics. They refused to receive the food supplies, returned the meals, and conducted a one-day hunger strike -as a protest against their depleting living conditions and in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees in other prisons- and practised the new tactic of 'Istinfar' (state of alert). Two factors helped this disobedience tactic to succeed. The first was the considerable number of detainees in every tent, which reached up to 120. The second was having an open yard in front of the tents in all the camp sections. The istinfar tactic took many shapes: standing in the yard and refusing to enter the tents during the inmate count; silent or crowd-shouting slogan marches; military parades performed by the members of the revolutionary discipline body and stone-throwing clashes with soldiers and wardens.

Another new tactic that the detainees of Majjidu clung to was the tactic of surprise and fait accompli to exercise some of their stolen rights. For instance, celebrating national and religious holidays was prohibited in Majjidu. Still, the detainees organised a two-day celebration of the anniversary of Fatah on December 31st 1988, and January 1st 1989. They surprised the prison authority with a uniformed celebration that took place and ended simultaneously in all the prison

sections and had the same program in terms of speeches and songs. The prison authority's attempts to end the celebration failed on the first day.

Through the detainees' security apparatus, the Unified general committee knew that the prison authority was planning to stop the celebration by force. Thus, all the detainees' were informed and asked to get ready fully for a physical confrontation with the soldiers. This physical confrontation tactic was the third new tactic used by the detainees for the first time on January 1st 1989. The soldiers and wardens attacked the celebration ceremonies in all the prison sections that night with tear gas bombs hoping to force compliance. Some detainees passed out and other inmates immediately organised themselves to offer first aid to the injured. Others extinguished the bombs with water. The rest of the detainees threw anything that came under their hands, such as stones, hard soap bars, tent poles and begs, and even collected tear gas bombs, at the attacking soldiers, guards' tents, and the prison towers. The authority did not expect such a reaction from the detainees and soldiers fired more tear gas bombs as well as sound and rubber bullets. The detainees continued fighting back and succeeded in preventing the attackers from entering the prison sections. They also refused to surrender until the prison authority ceased fire. Injuries were on both sides and the injured detainees refused to go to hospitals and received treatment in the camp.⁵⁰²

The detainees who had been mobilised for months and had worked hard on awakening their inner powers discovered after this collective death encounter the magnitude of human connectedness. Every detainee experienced unconditional love towards the detainees' collective.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 24-25.

This love was translated into the willingness of every detainee to sacrifice oneself to preserve others' existence. This love unified the detainees despite their differences and let them grasp the power they had as a collective. Moreover, this willingness made them regain control over their lives and feel abundant freedom. More than 1800 detainees were willing to fight until death to sustain this freedom. It was the exact moment when the prison authority realised its defeat and called for a ceasefire.

The unified general committee started planning for a struggle to improve prison conditions and ill-treatment. Thus, it sent reports about the situation in the camp to national and international organisations and figures to scandalise the perpetrators and attract support. Moreover, a study was written about the mistakes that occurred during the physical clash and ways to correct them. This study was distributed to avoid the same mistakes in the future. On Feb 8th 1989, an unplanned physical confrontation happened between the detainees and the soldiers in which live ammunition was used. The detainees won this battle as well. However, it ended with the death of 1 inmate and 22 injuries among the prisoners. An open hunger strike started on Feb 9th 1989, to protest against this crime and improve the prison living conditions and ill-treatment. The strike lasted for four days. The negotiations started with the prison authority during the strike and met some of the demands.⁵⁰³ 'Awwad, like Rajjub, is aware of the constant battle between the Palestinian detainees and the IZSCR prisons and that it would not end except by ending the colonisation. Still, awakening dormant powers, profound connectedness with the Palestinian people and its aspirations, revolutionary humanitarian awareness, and unified prisoners' collective are the keys to survival and steadfastness.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 31

The recurrent themes, textual and writing techniques in the personal and collective testimonies:

Qatamish, al-Barghuti, 'Awwad, and Rajjub wrote their testimonies in the collective cells of the prison while suffering from subhuman living conditions and ill-treatment and simultaneously surrounded by the prisoners' collective protective shield. Moreover, writings in the jails of the IZSCR were censored and subjected to confiscation and sometimes prohibited. Therefore, prisoners wrote in secret. They were preoccupied with securing hiding places for their texts and inventing creative ways to smuggle them outside the prison walls. Creating substitutes for banned stationary materials and their constant fear of losing their texts stressed them, complicated the writing process, and made it even far more difficult for prisoners to write than non-imprisoned writers. As for Nazzal, she wrote her personal testimony shortly after her release while she was under house arrest in her hometown of Qalqilyah surrounded by violent clashes between Palestinians and the colonial forces due to the ongoing Intifada in 1989.

The traumatic memories of the writers were often automatically triggered because they had been living in hostile environments at the time of writing. The traumatic memories are different from the original trauma. The actual traumatic events are unclaimed experiences because when people are exposed to the trauma, they render incapable of articulating and assimilating these overwhelming events like regular events. The thought process becomes scattered and unrecognised in such a manner that the traumatised people no longer recognise the memories as belonging to the original traumatic events. Instead, they become possessed by fragments of memory that were disposed of images, body sensations, and words stored in the unconscious to be activated belatedly. The traumatised strive to forget these unassimilated fragments of overwhelming experiences to silence them and avoid any stimuli that bring them back through dissociation. However, once they are triggered, aspects of the original trauma

events will re-enact in the form of repeated intrusive hallucinations, traumatic dreams, thoughts, images, and behaviours stemming from the initial trauma and flashbacks. These re-enactments resist cure and remain literal. Thus, the studied testimonies are an act of remembering and forgetting via flashbacks of literal fragments of memory.

However, taking into consideration the fact that testimonies are legal statements given by witnesses under oath, the writers of the personal testimonies attempted to organise their writing in a linear way by beginning the testimonies with the arrest stage in the case of Nazzal and Qatamish and failed to preserve this order throughout the texts. Traumatic memories defy linearity, and the traumatised cannot control them because when one of its aspects is triggered under specific circumstances, all the other elements automatically follow. Thus, the testimonies have many associations of ideas that take the reader on flashbacks to other times. Moreover, the names mentioned in the personal testimonies are the actual names of the prisoners and their family members, inmates, and lawyers. Pseudonyms of wardens and interrogators were used when the prisoners did not know their real names. However, in the collective testimonies, only the real names of prison personnel, Israeli officials, lawyers and the full names of martyrs and injured prisoners were mentioned. The other prisoners were considered an inseparable part of the collective prisoners' movement and were addressed as revolutionary Palestinian prisoners of war or fighters.

Temporal expressions, such as dates, number of days or months, are disproportionately presented in all the testimonies as part of the facts. In the collective testimonies, they were more exact and thorough because the writers had written documents that included these dates. As for the personal testimonies, time expressions are less precise and more used in Qatamish's

testimony. The writers of the personal testimonies suffer from losing the sense of the ordinary everyday time. They live in a constant present and focus on their survival needs. In addition, the traumatic past becomes present, and the future renders to nothing but endless repetitions because their traumatic memories are timeless and continue to react as if they are taking place now.

Another manifestation of this feature of disrupted temporality is that traumatic memories which have a profound impact on the prisoner have their own inner time. In other words, some are experienced as longer than their time span and others are remembered in detail and occupy a substantial number of pages in the testimonies regardless of their duration. Nazzal felt that the drive from her home to the interrogation centre in Jerusalem was very long.

"هل نسيت عقاربهم نظم التوقيت، الطّريق طويلة"

"Did the hands of their clock stop working? The way is too long."⁵⁰⁴

Repetition is another technique that manifests in the testimonies in different forms. Repetition ranges from repeating certain words, names, phrases, ideas, facts, behaviours, and cognitive and somatic reactions to mechanisms of survival, resistance tactics and repetition of traumatic memories. For instance, Nazzal's testimony begins with waiting in the interrogation room in al-Maskubiyah interrogation centre in Jerusalem. The effect of this traumatic memory was profound on Nazzal; it intruded on her memory with all its vividness. "الغرفة صغيرة معتمة" "The room is small and dark."⁵⁰⁵ This memory lacks verbal narrative. Her attention seemed focused on a central detail—colour and size. She tried to escape the fear and the feeling of

⁵⁰⁴ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 26.

⁵⁰⁵ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 22

helplessness by altering her consciousness. She started thinking about the Intifada and the events that were taking place outside the prison. Furthermore, her intensified fear continued bringing her back to

"الغرفة صغيرة ومعتمة.. لم يعد بحوزتي غير الظلال.. يتسع جرحي"

"The room is small and dark.. I don't have anything except the shadows. My wound widens."

Every repetition will add a new sensation to the image. "الغرفة صغيرة معتمة .. معتمة"

"I feel choked.. The room is small and dark..dark."⁵⁰⁶ In the fourth repetition, she was exposed to the screams of tortured inmates while she was moved to another cell. Nazzal tried to escape the horror she was experiencing by paying attention to other details in the new room until she felt utterly helpless and isolated until she encountered figurative death:

الغرفة صغيرة ومعتمة .. وكذلك الأبواب والنوافذ. دائرة الضوء لا تقع إلا بعد مساحات واسعة من السواد المختلط برطوبة الجدران .. صرخات الألم تفتح القلب.. يختلط النّزيف بظلام السّجون ووحشة الرّدهات.. أقفلت الأبواب الحديدية .. وحيدة أفق.. خلف الباب.. يكتمل شعوري بالعجز والانغلاق.. أحاول بعث الحياة في قضبان ميّنة

"The room is small and dark.. and the doors and the windows are small and dark. The light spot is seen from a distance of darkness mixed with the humidity of the walls.. Screams of pain fester the heart. The bleeding combined with the prison's darkness and the emptiness of the hallways.. The iron doors are closed.. I stand alone behind the door.. My feeling of helplessness and isolation is complete.. I try to infuse life in dead bars."⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

Traumatic memories re-enact in their exact details and sameness in the different texts written by the same writer. For example, in Qatamish's novel *al-Rihlah* (The Journey), some of the traumatic events that Qatamish endured during the interrogation in his personal testimony continue to haunt him and repeat themselves in exact detail by the father character, who is a released prisoner in the novel. A bruise under the character's underarm triggered some of the writer's prison traumatic memories while conversing with his girl.

"إثما من آثار... - لكثك بصقت السجن ... - ثمّة أشياء لا يمكن محوها... غامت عيناه... غاص في غدير ذاكرته التي تأتي - الاستقالة."

It is one of the marks... -But you spitted the prison out...-Some things cannot be erased [from memory]... his vision became cloudy, and he drowned in the creek of his unavoidable memory.” Then a series of intrusive traumatic memories re-enacted via a flashback until the father dissociated himself from them and said, “There are things that cannot be erased [from memory].”⁵⁰⁸

Literality is another feature of recurrent traumatic memories. They are encoded in the subconscious precisely as they were experienced with the same sensations, images, words, details and characteristics and will be experienced precisely the same every time they intrude because traumatic memories are “inflexible” and “invariable.”⁵⁰⁹ Feelings of irritability, disgust, agitation and humour that characterised the first phase of imprisonment (the shock phase) are

⁵⁰⁸ Aḥmad Qaṭāmish, *al-Rriḥlah*, Vol. 1(n.p., 1997), 160-66.

⁵⁰⁹ Janet, *Psychological*, 1920. See also: Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart, “The Intrusive,” 163.

encoded in the traumatic memories of that stage and are numbered with all other types of emotions in the traumatic memories of the second phase (the apathy phase).

Fragmentation is a primary representation in the 75-year prison experiences of Palestinians in the colonial prisons of the IZSCR. On the one hand, these horrendous experiences are not available for complete retrieval under ordinary circumstances because the existing meaning schemes of the victims fail to accommodate them when they occur; consequently, their memories are stored differently in the brain. Thus, the victims have to continuously make efforts to integrate them into their existing meaning schemes by revisiting these fragmented memories often to successfully complete and transform them into a narrative.⁵¹⁰

The writers of the five testimonies present fragmented testimonies in which many events are avoided, repressed, numbed or voluntarily forgotten. For example, Nazzal avoids talking about the interrogation she was submitted to, Qatamish focuses only on the interrogation stage, and al-Barghuti forgets many details due to staying one thousand days in total isolation. Rajjub and ‘Awwad cover collective struggles that took place in a limited time (1-4 years) and eliminate all the personal information about their experiences. On the other, most of the one million Palestinians who have been incarcerated since 1967 have been silenced. Thus, the hundreds of collective and personal testimonies that have been written so far and orally told or registered in local and international human rights organizations’ reports form only a tiny fragment of this prison experience and do not capture the magnitude of the prison atrocities and the sufferings of their victims.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 176.

Dissociation in the testimonies has different shapes, forms and effects. Dissociation could occur as a fast, automatic reaction (denial) to something or a situation that could increase the prisoner's suffering. For example, Nazzal disassociates spontaneously in response to terror and hardship. When she was moved to one cell that was not appropriate for human use, she decided to accept it as best as she could and said enthusiastically, "حسنًا سأعتني بها بمعرفتي.. وستكون جميلة فيما بعد.."

"Well I will take care of it in my way.. and from now on it will become pretty."⁵¹¹

Dissociation could take the form of a positive hallucination that either lasts for a short time or creates a parallel world. The victims live in both worlds simultaneously.⁵¹² al-Barghuti hallucinated voluntarily (what he calls the power of imagination) to sustain his inner self and reconnect with the outside world, such as family members, friends and places. His wife and kids, and other family members are living with him, and he does not feel isolated.

Splitting is another type of dissociation. Qatamish and al-Barghuti separated their selves from their bodies and were willing and ready to let their bodies die. By joining the prisoners' collective movement, the prisoners attached themselves to an illusory powerful body-less collective 'I' (spirit) and detached themselves from the weak, sick and chained bodies. This attachment gave them the capacity to endure hardships, ill-treatment, and collective death encounters during brutal physical clashes and hunger strikes. Qatamish, al-Barghuti, Rajjub, and 'Awwad encountered actual death more than once during their imprisonment and defeated it by

⁵¹¹ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 29.

⁵¹² al-Barghouti, *ALF*, 219-226.

their mechanisms of survival. By having so many Rendez-Vous with the threat of annihilation, they came back powerful with enlarged inner imagery regarding it and more gratitude for being alive. Lifton states that such knowledge is profound new knowledge about death and life. Still, some survivors face such encounters with numbness as a protective shield. Thus, it is crucial to continue to struggle to integrate the traumatic memory and “balance that need to reconstitute oneself with the capacity to take in the experience.”⁵¹³

Silence, avoidance and forgetting are prominent in the testimonies. In certain instances, they indicate dissociation. Nazzal, for example, totally avoids talking about the interrogation. She was so consumed with pain when writing the testimony that she could not relive the overwhelming experience of the interrogation again. The memories used in the testimony are selective. They only cover some minutes spent in prison. Thus, many other memories are simply forgotten for different reasons. There is also certain vulnerable information that is deliberately concealed for security reasons. The testimonies do not reveal, for instance, how and where prisoners hide their written texts. No information is given about the communication methods that the prisoners’ leadership use to communicate with the prisoners in the different prison sections, the prisoners in the other prisons and the outside world. Rajjub states in the testimony that he cannot mention all the tactics utilised in the prisoners’ struggle in Ijneid prison because they are essential to any future struggle.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹³ Robert Lifton J., “An Interview with Robert Lifton.” In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, edited by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 134.

⁵¹⁴ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 103.

Physical and emotional dissociation leads to a lack of pain expression. The abnormal features of traumatic memories created because of a profoundly altered state of consciousness at the time of trauma and the writer's state of mind at the time of writing determine to what extent pain will be expressed in the text. In her article *Chronic Pain and the Tension Between the Body as Subject and Object*, Jean Jackson defines pain as simultaneously bodily experience and mental-emotional experience, "by consisting [of] both sensation and emotion, by being simultaneously thinking and doing pain confounds mind-body dualism."⁵¹⁵ Expressing pain is problematic because pain is pre-linguistic; it has a meaning given by the cultural world one lives in and may differ from one culture/language to another. It is also invisible and has its own world, system of meaning and language. If used to metaphorise pain, everyday language becomes somewhat adequate for the task. Still, the metaphor does not describe the actual experience because the contents of consciousness are obliterated during those moments of pain, although one does not lose consciousness.⁵¹⁶ In addition, everyday language allows distance from the experience; and while one may benefit from this feature when s/he tries to gain control over adverse experiences, the language s/he uses does not produce the link between the experience and the "me" undergoing it.⁵¹⁷ Pain can be handled in a more linguistically expanded fashion if further information about the reactions of the rest of the body, mind, and emotions is provided.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁵ Jackson, *Chronic*, 211.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁵¹⁷ Ronald Granofsky, *The Trauma Novel: Contemporary Symbolic Depictions of Collective Disaster* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995) 7.

⁵¹⁸ Jackson, *Chronic*, 224.

As a result of this "unsharability" of pain that can be further concealed or disguised by traumatic memories, one has to be very careful when reading and analysing traumatised texts.⁵¹⁹ One should never forget that traumatised people do not create a new language; rather, the words they use are loaded with extra meanings that are not accessible to people who do not have the same experiences. For these reasons, one should also pay extra attention to other non-linguistic methods writers may use to express or avoid pain.

Fi Intizar al-Hulum, for instance, is written as one paragraph; there are no periods. The Ellipsis punctuation mark (..) is dominant throughout the text, separating the sentences. One feels that these ellipses replace sighs, tears and unsharable pain. The writer uses concise successive sentences, especially when she expresses something painful. One feels as if the writer was consumed by pain, standing a step from a nervous breakdown, and just wanted to utter everything she had to say before this pain kills her. The reader feels choked and exhausted by going through the fragmented traumatic memories without a break. In addition, as a poet, Nazzal uses very eloquent metaphors to express the unspeakable. "يَتَّسع جرحي." "My wound widens.." ⁵²⁰

"صرخات الألم تفتِّح القلب.. يختلط التّزيف بظلام السّجون ووحشة الرّدهات.. أقفلت الأبواب الحديدية.. وحيدة أقف خلف الباب.. يكتمل شعوري بالعجز والانغلاق."

⁵¹⁹ Scarry, 6.

⁵²⁰ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 24.

“Painful screams that fester the heart.. The blood is mixed with the darkness of prisons and the emptiness of the hallways.. The iron doors are closed.. I stand alone behind the door.. My feeling of helplessness and isolation is complete..”⁵²¹

"شعرت أنّ كلّ شيء ينتهي إلى صمت مرّ جارح"

“I felt everything is leading to a hurting bitter silence..”⁵²²

"كادت عيناى تطول السّماء.. فتمطر بداخلى أغنيات للجروح الممتلئة بالصّديد."

“My eyes almost reached the sky.. Songs for the wounds that are full of pus rained inside me..”⁵²³

"لم استطع غير الاحتراق بدموعى"

I could not [do anything] except burn in my tears..”⁵²⁴ Being in the third phase at the time of writing this testimony and in an extreme hyperarousal state of mind allowed Nazzal to relive the reenactments of the traumatic memories with original vivid expressions of pain. If we look at the metaphors, we notice the gradual enlargement of all the agents of pain around Nazzal, such as the hallways, the darkness of prisons, and the screams of tortured bodies. Even her emotions

⁵²¹ Ibid., 24.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Ibid., 25

⁵²⁴ Ibid., 26.

betray and turn against her by exacerbating her agony. All her attempts to console herself worsen the situation and constrict her inner self, rendering her paralysed, alone and helpless.

No doubt that it is hard for a non-prisoner untraumatised reader to grasp fully the pain, helplessness, and emotional and physical paralysis that the writer feels and experiences. However, simultaneously, the writer succeeds through these metaphors to let the reader enter her world of sorrow and gain his/her empathy by letting him/her engage with them in his/her way according to his/her personal life experience.

Qatamish and al-Barghuti were in the second phase of incarceration when they wrote their testimonies. They dissociated through depersonalization and numbness. They observe the traumatic experience from outside the body or reality. Thus, they continued to avoid remembering the emotions related to their traumatic memories to sustain their inner selves in a constantly hostile environment. Rajjub and 'Awwad dissociated themselves even more by choosing to present their traumatic experiences as a journalist report and historical document and observing the unfolding of the traumatic events from outside themselves. There was no place for expressing pain at the time of an ongoing existential war. All the energies were focused on mobilisation and survival.

Guilt, shame and anxiety are other themes that are impeded in the testimonies, and they are one of the characteristics of the survivor. al-Barghuti and Qatamish worry about their families and have guilt feelings because they are unable to do their duty as fathers, husbands and sons. Rajjub repeats the names of the inmates- martyrs in different places in his testimony. They

were killed during the force-feeding procedure during Nafhah prison hunger strike in 1980.⁵²⁵ ‘Awwad mentions the names of the injured and martyrs in Majjidu. ‘Awwad and Rajjub feel shame and guilt because they survived the struggle while these martyrs did not. Qatamish and al-Barghuti literally and figuratively witnessed death many times during the interrogation period. Rajjub and ‘Awwad also witnessed their death in addition to the death of others. Nazzal figuratively encountered death by fearing falling apart (a death equivalent) at the end of her testimony and by separation from her family and friends during her detention (another death equivalent). Thus, the act of witnessing is crucial to enter the survivor experience. A survivor is a person who literally or figuratively has witnessed and experienced death while remaining alive.⁵²⁶

As a result of these death encounters, the writers had the chance to know death and made them strengthen their connectedness with their inmates, families, people and cause. Instead of surrendering to the guilt feelings due to the loss of others, they transformed them into an expression of responsibility, responsibility to the dead and silenced. They wrote the testimonies to scandalise the perpetrators and make them pay for their crimes. They aimed to address the potential prisoners to make their future experiences less traumatic. Moreover, they committed themselves to lead and protect the rest of the prisoners by organising counter-orders, mobilising the prisoners and awakening their latent powers. Finally, they realised that in order to give meaning to all their suffering, they should continue to dedicate their lives to fighting against the colonial regime that stands behind the suffering that they had encountered. Consequently, the

⁵²⁵ More information about these martyrs available in chapter two.

⁵²⁶ Lifton, *Protean*, 81.

testimonies are full of revolutionary optimism, unconditional love, and faith in the oppressed ability to preserve humanity and attain justice.

The motives behind writing these testimonies:

Writing (either personal, collective, or literary testimony), as many trauma specialists (Judith Herman, Suzette Henke, Jennifer Freyd, James Pennebaker, and others) believe, is therapeutic.⁵²⁷ Reconstructing the story by the traumatised writer enables interpretation and integration of trauma. However, for healing to take place it needs a safe environment supported socially and culturally. The testimonies are written in different hostile environments. Thus, in the following lines, I try to find out the motives and ‘hidden transcripts’ behind writing them.⁵²⁸

Suzette A. Henke, in her book, *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing*, contends that the term ‘narrative recovery’ is meant to evoke both the recovery of past experiences through narrative articulation and the psychological reintegration of traumatically shattered subject. She concludes that the process of ‘scriptotherapy’ liberates the author/ narrator from the tortured past as s/he intentionally “escapes the prison of trauma through testimonial acts of narrative recovery.” According to her, “writing can function as a valuable defence against despair and “nihilism” and could offer mental healing.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁷ Jennifer J. Freyd, *Betrayal Trauma: The Logic of Forgetting Childhood Abuse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

⁵²⁸ James Scott, *Dominations and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 4.

⁵²⁹ Henke, *Shattered*, xii-xxiii.

Nazzal thought she had reached the absolute limit of all possible suffering in prison. However, after her release, she discovered that grief had no boundaries and that she was still suffering and more profoundly. It seems that after she wrote down her testimony, she achieved a kind of relief and a new understanding that made her rise above her pain:

تتبعثر خواطري الحية، عند بحر بلا روح، لعلها تمسّد أوجاعي الواضحة.. أفيق على حافة الجرح وأجدني أبحث عن حلم
آخر.. لعلّي أجد نفسي أكثر وأكثر."

My alive thoughts are scattered at sea with no soul; perhaps they could caress my pains.. I wake up at the edge of the wound.. And find myself waiting for another dream.. Maybe I will find myself more and more.⁵³⁰

She finally understands, like Qatamish, al-Barghuti, ‘Awwad, and Rajjub, that her suffering has a meaning.⁵³¹ “While waiting for the other dream,” she may continue to suffer. At the same time, she was aware that this suffering strengthened her. As Nietzsche says: “that which does not kill me, makes me stronger.”⁵³² This path of suffering was the only choice every Palestinian had to take to make the dream of liberation and self-determination come true. As Nietzsche says: “he who has a why to live for can bear with almost any how.”⁵³³ Nazzal, Qatamish, al-Barghuti, ‘Awwad, and Rajjub preserved their inner freedom. They became worthy of their

⁵³⁰ Nazzal, *Fi Intizar*, 82.

⁵³¹ As Nietzsche says in one of his quotes: “To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in suffering.” See: Frankl, *From Death*, 67.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 80.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, xi, 76.

suffering by writing down their personal and collective testimonies. Such inner spiritual freedom that cannot be taken away makes life meaningful; however, one cannot determine that recovery has occurred here because simple memory retrieval is not enough for successful treatment.⁵³⁴ Healing happens when the memory is integrated into a safe environment and connections with others. No doubt, that writing these testimonies made Nazzal, Qatamish, al-Barghuti, ‘Awwad, Rajjub, and their inmate readers feel some catharsis or relief. Thus, bearing witness to their prison experiences via writing was necessary. It was an act of resistance, a mechanism of survival. It empowered them and made them fully ready first, for the new rounds of the ongoing struggle with the perpetrators and their tools, inside and outside the prison walls; second, to go on with their lives until full recovery became possible.

There is a “hidden Transcript” of resistance in the testimonies of Qatamish, al-Barghuti, ‘Awwad, and Rajjub, similar to the one found in the political prison writings in Morocco between 1956-99. These Palestinian prisoner-leaders aimed to push the boundaries of fear and seek a culture of disobedience in the wider Palestinian society.⁵³⁵ In the case of Qatamish, and al-Barghuti, bearing witness to their prison experiences offers the future potential Palestinian prisoners a way to survive the interrogation via disobedience, ideology/faith, and willpower. Moreover, witnessing the torture methods, perpetrators’ tactics and goals before imprisonment and learning how to face them would minimise the scars and wounds of trauma these future potential prisoners may experience. In addition, if one unarmed person with his willpower defeats the perpetrator, his tactics and methods in prison, then one can imagine what millions of Palestinians could achieve in

⁵³⁴ Herman, *Trauma*, 99. See also Herman, “Crime,” 9.

⁵³⁵ Brahim El Guabli, “The “Hidden Transcripts” of Resistance in Moroccan Tazmamart Prison Writings, *The Arab Studies Journal* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 170-207.

the open prison they live in if they follow such examples. ‘Awwad also shows that disobedience and national unity enabled the prisoners in Majiddu prison as a collective to form a counter-order inside the enclosed prison. This counter-order provided the prisoners with a protective shield that protected and allowed them to endure the prison adversities, regain control over their daily life in prison, and reclaim usurped rights. Rajjub, in his turn, presents another genuine paradigm of protection and resistance where the willpower of the prisoners overcomes the will of the prison authority *قوة الإرادة مقابل إرادة القوة* and force it to accept all the prisoners’ demands to improve their prison conditions with minimal suffering and loss during the hunger strike.

Both personal and collective testimonies of the Palestinian Prisoners of war and administrative detainees also write and document in detail the eyewitness history of their struggle in the different prisons, detention centres and camps of the IZSCR. This struggle has been integral to the Palestinian revolution and the ongoing struggle for liberation and establishing the future sovereign Palestinian state. This eyewitness history unfolds part of the stories of one million silenced Palestinian Christs who unconditionally loved their people and homeland and fought with their willpower, empty stomachs, flesh, and blood to preserve their humanity. They converted the prison, which aimed to crush their inner self and turn them into subhumans, submissive, passive creatures and burdens on their families and societies, into an educational college and a factory for producing revolutionary intellectual leaders with high political awareness and morals.⁵³⁶ Such revolutionary leaders and activists would lead the people after release and actively participate in achieving the aspirations of the Palestinian people in different fields, including liberation.

⁵³⁶ Igbariyah, *Lama ‘at*, 45-46.

As testimonies, they also aim to scandalise the perpetrator, penetrate the secrecy shield covering his atrocities and crimes, and disprove his false propaganda.⁵³⁷ They give voice to the silenced, the victims as individuals and a collective, and seek justice. The survivors- writers who write their testimonies in prison and continually face annihilation, in particular, take high risks when writing because they are unsure whether they and their inmates will make it to freedom or lose their minds and die before their release. They insist, as long as they remain intact, on bearing witness to their prison experiences as well as the experiences of other inmates to leave evidence that finds the perpetrator guilty and accountable for his violations. They expect their readers to become witnesses to these atrocities and join efforts to fulfil this goal.

Readers needed to access traumatized texts:

The traumatised need a listener/ reader who can hear the impossible event with ‘empathy’ rather than sympathy. Through this witnessing capacity, the listener helps the traumatised prisoner to modify his or her inner imagery to enable him/her to absorb and accept the trauma through the enlargement of his/her inner world. Jay Lifton writes “of the importance of bearing witness to the pain and suffering of the victim by process of empathic participation in which the therapist remains open as opposed to closed and tries to recreate and symbolize the patient’s traumatic narrative.”⁵³⁸

Contemporary works of art and non-fiction prose use testimonies as a subject of their writing or as the medium of their literal transmission. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub agree that both “psychoanalysis and literature have come both to contaminate and enrich each other... and their testimony ... will be understood as a mode of *truth’s realization*... not as a mode of *statement*

⁵³⁷ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 2.

⁵³⁸ Walsh, “Life in Death,” 252.

of, but rather as a mode of *access to*, that truth.”⁵³⁹ Thus, according to Felman and Laub, the witness could be both the one who actually witnesses and the one who has access to the truth through the process of testimony in literature, psychoanalysis and even history.

Many scholars, who have a non-psychological background, including me at the beginning of my interest in prison texts in the Arab World, including colonised Palestine, would notice, as Sabry Hafez in his review essay “Torture, Imprisonment, and Political Assassination in the Arab Novel,” that these texts “have many features in common.”⁵⁴⁰ However, at the same time, they would not be able to explain the reasons behind these similarities and sometimes they would intentionally neglect certain elements in the texts because they would sound unreal or ridiculous. For instance, I wrote a conference paper about the manifestations of violence in Nawal al-Sa‘dawi’s and Zaynab al-Ghazali’s prison accounts in 2003.⁵⁴¹ At that time, I had no idea about trauma theories and negative hallucinations in particular. I remember finding parts of al-Ghazali’s testimony unreliable. I had no logical explanations for them, especially when she recounted how she was moved to room number 24, full of dangerous dogs that violently attacked her. She could not do anything except praying, and after hours when the guards came to take her out, she found herself miraculously unharmed.⁵⁴² Thus, in order to give a voice to the victim-writer readers have to be acquainted with trauma theories.

⁵³⁹ Felman and Laub, *Testimony*. 16.

⁵⁴⁰ Sabry Hafez, “Torture, Imprisonment, and Political Assassination in the Arab Novel,” trans. Basil Samara, *Al-Jadid* (Winter 2002): 16-17.

⁵⁴¹ Tarob Boulos, “The Manifestations of Violence in Arabic Prison Narrative Written by Women – Two Egyptian Memoirs” At the conference of Middle East Studies Association of North America, Inc (MESA), Nov 2003.

⁵⁴² Zaynab Al-Ghazālī, *Ayām min Ḥayātī* (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Tawzī‘ wa-al-Nashr al-Islamīyah, 1999), 25-26.

Still, reading the testimonies is disturbing because the authors and their inmates are less fortunate than the readers. Some readers may feel that their safe world is aggressively invaded. They may experience discomfort, guilt, and frustration and render defenceless and naked. Other readers may escape the emotional risk they are asked to take by refraining from reading. Therefore, readers have to approach the testimonies with empathy rather than sympathy. I remember that I suffered from all the above symptoms at the beginning of my research. It took me time to learn how to witness the trauma in these testimonies as a therapist without getting overwhelmed or traumatised by them and how to access what is impeded, escaped, silenced and forgotten.

Finally, readers should never forget that the authors and their inmates endure constant turmoil and danger through conflict with greater power than their own. After exposure to these testimonies, they cannot claim that they do not know about the prison atrocities that have been committed against Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees since 1948. These testimonies request the readers to take a critical stance and choose whose side to be on, e.g., the victim or the perpetrator. They pose action against injustice as the only substitute for guilt and ignorance.

Conclusions:

Nazzal, al-Barghuti, Qatamish, 'Awwad and Rajjub, suffered from chronic trauma. Their writing in a particular stage of their incarceration or shortly after their release and even after a long time after their release, like the case of 'A'ishah 'Awdah, was an existential necessity to sustain their inner self and withstand the corrosive psychological effects of

imprisonment.⁵⁴³ Whether these testimonies are literary or nonliterary, there is no need to fall into the trap of literary categorisation because the reason behind the writing that the author has in mind at the time of writing is survival and resistance rather than creating and producing a literary work. In his introduction to Nazzal's testimony, Taha—as I explained above and in the introduction of this thesis—fails to categorise the testimony under any existing literary genres. For that reason, he concludes that this poetic, personal testimony could be considered an anecdote, and it was published as such. By so doing, I assert that he further silenced the testimony and its author. Qatamish's, al-Barghuti's, 'Awwad and Rajjub's testimonies, however, did not face similar categorisation for the simple reason that they were not established writers and because of the usage of reporting narrative (Qatamish, al-Barghuti) and historical writing styles ('Awwad and Rajjub).

Like all the discussed testimonies, Nazzal's testimony is nothing but a personal testimony written by a journalist and a poet in poetic language. Reconstructing the trauma is a necessary part of the recovery process. However, no recovery can occur in a hostile environment without social support. The occupation aims at crushing the authors' inner selves to enslave them. Being in the second phase of trauma at the time of writing the testimonies, Qatamish, al-Barghuti, 'Awwad, and Rajjub could not vividly express any pain or vulnerability in their texts because the physical and psychological conditions that enable recovery were utterly absent. However, Nazzal, who was in the third phase of trauma when writing her testimony, had the opportunity to

⁵⁴³ 'A'ishah 'Awdah, *AḥLām bi al-Hurīyah* (Rām Allāh: al-Mu'assasah al-Filasṭīniyah lil-Dirāsāt al-Ddī muqrāṭīyah, 2004). Also see 'A'ishah 'Awdah, *Thamanan lil-Shams* (Rām Allāh: al-Mu'assasah al-Filasṭīniyah lil-Dirāsāt al-Ddīmuqrāṭīyah, 2012).

express pain via formal techniques and metaphors. By so doing, she distinguished her testimony from all the other testimonies written in prison.

The five authors shared a common personality virtue, which is being Protean. That is to have a resilient self that can undergo extreme prolonged trauma without being destroyed.⁵⁴⁴ A deep belief in something, whether ideological, religious, or moral, and a connectedness to the masses and their aspirations are two prominent components of this Protean self that the five authors have. Testifying also served as a vehicle of validation and catharsis for the five traumatised writers and had similar effects on their readers, including their inmates-readers.

Writing also turns out to be a weapon against the essence of prison and imprisonment because it confounds the secrecy and the isolation required by such institutions. The writer-prisoner defeats the sense of isolation with which the prison authorities hope to break his resistance. He seeks to recover his agency through writing. This agency allows the writer-prisoner to reassert control over how he is represented. When prison testimonies are smuggled out and published, they connect the author with the people outside the prison walls and inspire active solidarity among them. Such solidarity would empower the prisoners in return. Besides, these testimonies indirectly, aim to prepare the readers as potential future prisoners to survive the prison experience and indirectly mobilize the Palestinian people to continue resisting colonialism. Thus, prison personal and collective testimonies, like all Palestinian prison writings, are acts of resistance against the IZSCR and its illegal, criminal laws that harass Palestinians in general and Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees, in particular, to silence

⁵⁴⁴ Lifton, *Protean*, 139.

them and thwart any act of struggle or opposition they may cling to. They aim at breaking that silence to speak of their victimisation, preserve their human dignity, and scandalise their perpetrators to hold them accountable for their crimes. All these motives and objectives, among other things, would continue to inspire prison fiction written in IZSCR prisons by Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees, as the following chapter demonstrates.

Chapter Two

Trauma and Resistance Representations in Fiction Written in Prison by Palestinian Prisoners of War and Administrative Detainees

“The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, as everything they owned was held in common.” (Acts of Apostles, 4:32)

"وكان لجمهور الذين آمنوا قلب واحد ونفس واحدة. ولم يكن أحد يقول إن شيئاً من أمواله له بل كان عندهم كل شيء مشتركاً." (أعمال الرسل 4:32)

What is prison literature in Arabic literature? Thousands of Arab intellectuals, including writers, journalists, novelists, poets, and artists, have been victims of oppression under totalitarian regimes throughout the Arab homeland since the fifties of the twentieth century. These regimes imprisoned and tortured them for their political writing, views and activism. Consequently, those authors mainly recorded their prison experiences and produced a massive amount of text. By the beginning of the seventies, these texts formed a new literary phenomenon in Arabic literature and a new genre known as “prison literature” was born.⁵⁴⁵

Since the seventies of the twentieth century, Prison literature in Arabic literature has been reduced only to literary works (i.e., novels, short stories and memoirs) that deal with the prison theme, whether lived or imagined and written by an established Arab writer or intellectual.⁵⁴⁶ In addition, conclusions have been reached regards the form and content of the new literary genre. All the prison experiences are identical; all the authors have similar cultural and artistic backgrounds. Thus, this sameness in experience consequently led to producing identical works of prison Literature in terms of form and content, as Abu Nidal assumes in his book *Adab al-Sujun*.⁵⁴⁷

This chapter seeks to present a new broader definition of prison literature. Prison fiction in the Arab Homeland is not written only by established intellectual writers who belonged to the middle class but also by imprisoned freedom fighters with modest formal education who

⁵⁴⁵ Abu Nidal, *Adab*, 117.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 119.

belonged to the working class and who developed their writing skills in prison -as is the case in the experience of Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees studied in this thesis. Prison literature in the Arab Homeland has been produced within different ruling orders. Some of these authorities are settler colonial regimes (Palestinian experience), occupation management (Iraqi experience under American occupation and Kuwaiti experience under Iraqi occupation), totalitarian governments (as in Egypt, Morocco and other Arab countries), and radical takfiri orders (Da'ish, Nusra and other fanatic groups in different parts of the Arab Homeland). Thus, Arabic prison literature is not limited to totalitarian regimes, as was mostly the case in the seventies of the twentieth century. In addition, as I present in the following pages of this chapter, prison literature does not only include fiction that focuses on lived or imagined prison experiences, but rather it embraces all literary works that are written in prison, whether the prison theme is central, marginal or absent from these works of fiction.

Besides, it is always good to emphasise that prison literature is only one of many different types of texts written in prison. These non-literary texts, whether political, philosophical, social, economic, historical, personal or testimonial, should attract the attention of scholars from different fields to comprehensively understand the effects of prison on its victims.

In this chapter, I trace trauma representations in the texts, such as forgetting and remembering, detachment and attachment, the now and here, guilt and shame, death encounter and survival, transformation, change, and hope, fragmentation, literality and flashbacks, which were studied in detail in the first chapter. I also combine literary interpretation, postcolonial, colonial, and socialist approaches to examine the relationship between resistance and literature,

the different interrelations between form and content, the dominant themes and the role that writing plays in the context of the continuous Palestinian revolution against colonisation.

In my close reading, I look thoroughly at two fictional works written in prison that either do not concentrate on the traditional prison experience in terms of themes and forms or focus on resistance and revolutionary issues. In some of the studied stories, the prison theme is marginal; in others, it is either absent or fragmented. I also shed light on how they should be read as resistance literature and the motives behind writing them. The Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees (as members of the National Liberation Movement) are not only engaged in the struggle against the IZSCR and its oppression but also with traditional, social, political and literary codes. Resistance literature “call[s] attention to itself as political and politicized activity,” as Barbra Harlow indicates in her book *Resistance Literature*.⁵⁴⁸

This chapter examines the extent to which this resistance/political element serves as a fundamental aesthetic quality in structuring Palestinian resistance literature. Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, writes that the “crystallization of the national consciousness will both disrupt literary styles and themes, and also create a completely new public.”⁵⁴⁹ From this perspective, I explore how the artistic form of literature is influenced when a liberation struggle intensifies the ideological content. Margaret Dickinson, in *When Bullets Begin to Flower*, points out that these changes in themes and styles fashion their own forms “shaped by new dialectic created by revolutionary conditions.”⁵⁵⁰ This chapter discusses the extent to which the content of

⁵⁴⁸ Harlow, *Resistance*, 28.

⁵⁴⁹ Fanon, *The Wretched*, 192.

⁵⁵⁰ Dickinson, *When*, 30.

these narratives is encased in and interrelated to form “in an indissoluble unity” and whether the writers are consciously aware of the nuances of the form that they utilize to express the content of a particular phase of the struggle.⁵⁵¹

Between the years 1968 to 2004, four fiction writers have been born in prison. Two of them, Fadil Yunis and Walid al-Hawdali continued to write and publish their fictional works after their release. While Both Ahmad Qatamish and Muhammad I‘layan stopped writing fiction after they were set free despite the writing talent they proved to have. These writers were read or received direct feedback and guidance from fellow intellectual inmates, such as experts in literature, university students, professors, and established writers (novelists, poets, journalists). They also participated in the cultural sessions that prisoners of literary expertise and background used to organize in prison to improve their writing skills.

They experiment with various novelistic techniques, narrative voices, devices, and forms in their writings. However, in general, most of them were interested in something other than the characters' inner world and psychological development. Instead, they present characters representing the writers' ideological beliefs and ideas that help develop the novel's and stories' events. This fact confirms that the content was more important to these writers than the form or style of writing.

One notices the urgent, didactic and imperative message of contemporary, historical conditions in these narratives and how content speaks to the people’s present needs. Literature, thus, becomes functional in that it has an authentic task to perform. In Harlow’s words, literature

⁵⁵¹ Bushmin, “Analytic,” 138.

is one of the ‘arenas’ of the struggle, a tool of liberation, and a force to create a national identity.⁵⁵² The writers, as revolutionary characters and working-class members, are in touch with the aspirations of the masses, as these aspirations are their own. They are aware of the suffering and humiliations the masses suffer at the hands of the colonisers and the injustices perpetrated against them.

These resistance writers demand politicisation of interpretation and artistic production, and they are conscious of their critical self-imposed role as educators of society along with their responsibility to mobilize the masses and unite them under a common cause (struggle, liberation, a fair and just government). The writers’ role thus is crucial both as a force for mobilising a collective response to the colonisation (resistance) and as a repository of the collective, popular memory and consciousness.

This responsibility and didactic urgency manifest themselves in writing by focusing on specific themes: 1) culture: the rise of cultural expression plays an essential role in the liberation struggle and emerges at each critical moment of this struggle. Speaking on the issue, Amilcar Carbal Comments,

The study of the history of national liberation struggles shows that generally these struggles are preceded by an increase in expression of culture, consolidated progressively into a successful or unsuccessful attempt to affirm the cultural personality of the dominated people, as a means of negating the oppressor's culture.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵² Harlow, *Resistance*, 2.

⁵⁵³ Amilcar Carbal, *Return to The Source* (New York: African Information Service, 1973), 69.

2) History: the writers are concerned about understanding the possibilities inherent in the past.

“The colonized man who writes for his people ought to use the past [history] with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and basis for hope.”⁵⁵⁴ To write, for these writers, is to historicise reality, concretise that past, and insist on the consequences of the work of literature and their specific place in the events of the world they record. Writing the Palestinian history as eyewitnesses and glorifying and criticising the Palestinian past made the literature a literature of resistance against colonisation and affirmation of a Palestinian national spirit.

3) Folklore and traditions: the writings grow out of their own culture and mirror the traditions, aspirations, joys, and sorrows of the people.

Other major themes that the writers highlight in their literary works are political visions and ideology, revolutionary violence as a crucial tool for achieving liberation, awakening national consciousness and identity, restoring a sense of personal dignity, and infusing the writing with hope. All the writings lead to the human being, his extraordinary capacity to endure and fight for hope. As these writers show in their writings, the Palestinian people fight against injustice. Using violence, in their eyes, means to willingly give one’s life for the liberation of Palestine; it is the violence of love. As Fanon states in *A Dying Colonialism*:

The Algerian *fiḍa’i* [one who sacrifices oneself for the sake of his country], unlike the unbalanced anarchists made famous in literature, does not take dope. The *fiḍa’i* does not need to be unaware of danger, to befog his consciousness, or to forget. The “terrorist,” from the moment he undertakes an assignment, allows death to enter into his soul. He has a

⁵⁵⁴ Fanon, *The Wretched*, 187.

rendezvous with death. The *fida'i*, on the other hand, has a rendezvous with the life of the Revolution, and with his own life. The *fida'i* is not one of the sacrificed. To be sure, he does not shrink before the possibilities of losing his life or the independence of his country, but at no moment does he choose death.⁵⁵⁵

All the fictional works written by these writers are realistic. The writers turn to realism to comprehend several issues, such as the nature of colonialism, the Palestinian past, the Palestinian society and the peculiarities of its historical being. As illustrated below, the writers, by writing these fictional works, attempt to discover an indigenous form to convey the content of their experiences. They also respond to the presence of the Israeli Zionist settler colonialism and render their revolutionary visions of achieving liberty and independence.

In the following pages, I present a detailed close literary interpretation of two works of fiction. I focus on the target audience that the authors have in mind at the time of writing and the main ideas and themes they address in their stories. In addition, I attempt to trace trauma and the expression of pain in these works. Moreover, I highlight the role writing fiction plays in maintaining the author's healthy psyche, gaining back his agency and reconnecting him with the masses outside of the prison walls by resuming his resistance against the IZSC colonialism through writing fiction.

⁵⁵⁵ Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1965), 57-58.

**Part One : Liberation through Pedagogy: A Close Reading of
“Hikayat al-‘AM ‘Izz al-Din li Isra’ al –Quds” (The Stories of Uncle
Izz al-Din to Isra’ of Jerusalem)**

Author's biography:

Walid al-Hawdali wrote this fictional work in 'Asqalan prison in 1999. al-Hawdali is affiliated with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad faction. He was charged with providing aid to a group planning to kidnap Israeli soldiers for prisoner exchange purposes and convicted for 12 years in prison in 1992. He obtained a teaching diploma before his arrest and started his writing career after his fifth year in prison. He is one of the few Palestinian prisoners of war who discovered their writing talent in the wake of their imprisonment and continued to write and publish after their release. His writings were smuggled outside the prison, and the rest were released with him in 2002. While serving his sentence, he was moved between ten different prisons and was deprived of seeing his wife and kids. After his third year in prison the IZSCR prevented the family from returning to the Occupied Territories after a family visit to Jordan. He started another family after he was set free. However, his new wife, an Islamic Jihad female inmate and activist 'Itaf I'layan, was arrested in 2003 as an administrative detainee while pregnant. al-Hawdali was unable to visit his wife and his new born girl in prison because, since his release, he has been living under house arrest where the IZSCR occupation has confined his movements to his residence town Ramallah. The girl was set free when she became two years old in 2006, whereas the mother stayed in prison until 2008. al-Hawdali was detained once again on January 16, 2017 for few months.

Summary of the events:

The frame story covers ten visits of Isra', a little girl, and her grandmother to Uncle 'Izz al-Din in the 'Asqalan prison every two consecutive weeks. In preparation for the visit, Isra' and her grandmother wake up early in the morning to take the bus intended for the prisoners' families. They travel for many hours from al-Quds (Jerusalem) to the prison to see 'Izz al-Din for half an hour (the duration of the visit). Isra' loves to hear stories. On the way to prison, she asks her grandmother to tell her stories about Yafa (Jaffa), her grandmother's hometown, before the Zionist terrorist gangs displaced her family in 1948. She asks about what happened to the family during the Nakba (The Palestinian Catastrophe in 1948-1949) and Palestine's history under the British Mandate. She is curious about famous Palestinian figures involved in resistance against the British and Zionist hegemony in Palestine. Before and after seeing her Uncle, Isra' undergoes a security check. Then she has half an hour to see her uncle from behind bars. She asks him all the questions she has prepared for the visit. Her uncle cannot tell her the whole story or answer all her questions because of the short time of the visit. Thus, 'Izz al-Din encourages her to write her questions in a letter and address it to other inmates to give them a chance to tell her their own stories.

He also tells her his own story, which includes his activism against colonisation, how he was caught, lost the ability to see in his two eyes, and the torture he faced during the interrogation stage. He emphasises the importance of the resistance against colonisation by highlighting historical acts of resistance in the early nineties of the 20th century. These resistance operations have been carried out by Istish`hadiyin (the ones who sacrifice themselves for the sake of God) and freedom fighters who belonged to Palestinian and Arabic Islamic factions, such

as Hamas, Islamic Jihad of Palestine, and Hizbu-Allah. The story ends with Isra' and her grandmother arriving at 'Asqalan prison to find out that the uncle was transferred to Nafhah prison in the Naqab desert (170 km from al-Quds). The prison authority, in such cases, does not bother to notify the families before their visits. It intends such a strategy to increase the prisoners' and their families' hardships.

The frame story:

The fictional frame story is based on the true story of one of the inmates that al-Hawdali has known and highly admired in prison. In al-Hawdali's book *Madfan al-Aḥyā'* (The Cemetery of the Alive), the writer introduces the reader to the blind inmate, the *fida'i* 'Ala' al-din al-Bazyān from Jerusalem. 'Ala lost one of his eyes and the sight in the other eye in 1978 after an improvised explosive device that he was preparing to use against the IZSCR soldiers had exploded. His refusal to cooperate with his interrogators prevented him from getting their "promised" medical treatment for the injured eye, which was conditioned on giving a complete confession.⁵⁵⁶ Consequently, he was convicted of a life sentence in prison. al-Bazyān was set free in 1985 as one of 1,150 prisoners who were swapped for three IZSCR soldiers during Gibril's prisoner exchange deal.⁵⁵⁷ However, he was soon arrested again because he resumed his resistance against the IZSCR colonial occupation and was convicted of another life sentence in prison. In the same book, al-Hawdali informs us about Asma', al-Bazyān's favourite niece, who used to visit him in prison with his mom and their unique connection and love for each other.

⁵⁵⁶ Walīd al-Hawdalī, *Madfan al-Aḥyā'* (Rām Allāh: Bayt al-Shi'r fī Filastīn, 2001), 97-106.

⁵⁵⁷ Walīd al-Hawdalī, "'Alā' al-Bāzyān... Baṣīrat al-Quds fī Sujūn al-Iḥtilāl," *qudsn.net Shabakat Quds al-Ikhhārīyah*, accessed on September 3, 2019, <https://qudsn.co/post/137627/الاحتلال-في-سجون-القدس-في-سجون-القدس-في-سجون-القدس>.

In *The Stories of Uncle Izz al-Din*, al-Hawdali employs al-Bazyan's story as his frame story and makes its characters his fictional characters to convey his revolutionary ideas and Islamic ideological thoughts.⁵⁵⁸ He only changes the characters' real names to names that rhyme with the original ones ('Alā' al-dīn-'Izz al-Din and Asmā' - Isra') and have religious connotations. 'Izz al-Din represents the members of Islamic freedom fighters and factions who glorify the religion and strengthen it through their faith and dedication to protect their Islamic nation and its holy places and causes from all its enemies. The name Isra' refers the reader to the physical and spiritual journey to Jerusalem the prophet Muhammad took around 621A.D. At the same time, this name symbolises the spiritual and educational journey that the young protagonist Isra' and all readers of the same age group to whom the stories are addressed, take through the book in order

"تتهيأ للقيام بدور جهادي أكبر في المستقبل القريب"

"To be ready to play a bigger Jihadi role soon."⁵⁵⁹ al-Hawdali like all the Palestinian authors after 1967 wants "to say, to declare, to incite and mobilize his people to the incessant battle."⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁸ Walid al-Hawdalī, *Hikāyāt al-'Amm 'Izz al-Dīn li Isrā' al-Quds*, al-Juz' al-Awwal (Rām-Allāh: Markaz YāFā lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 1999).

⁵⁵⁹ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 43.

⁵⁶⁰ Khayrī Mansūr, *al-Kaf wa al-Makhrāz: Adab al-Muqawamah fī Filastīn al-Muḥtalah al-Ḍafah wa al-Qiṭā' ba'd 'Ām 1967* (Baghdad: Dār al-Shu'ūn al-Thaqāfiyah wa al-Nashr, 1984), 90.

The circumstances and motives inspired the writer in choosing this true story as his frame story:

As a collective, the Palestinian prisoners formed an illusory protective shield that unifies all the prisoners. As one entity they shared everything from their small inadequate meals to the pictures of their beloved kids and siblings. They identified with each other and had a profound human connectedness with each other that made them feel more than comrades and brothers. Therefore, Asma' to the writer, was more than a niece considering that the writer was deprived of seeing his own kids.

In addition, the survival characteristic of the 'now and here' dictated the prisoner-writer's themes, form and characters. Al-Hawdali as a traumatised writer, was re-experiencing an ongoing prolonged acute trauma in prison at the time of writing the stories. As a survivor, he had been living in a constant timeless present and drew his characters and themes from what he sees, hears, interacts with, and is concerned with and intrigued by willingly or forcibly.

Moreover, al-Hawdali, deep inside, had guilty feelings because he could survive the death encounter in prison without severe physical or mental damage while al-Bazyan lost his sight. This guilt intensified because al-Bazyan, as a blind man, suffered much more than other inmates from the hostile prison environment. At the same time, al-Hawdali had tremendous respect and admiration for the inspiring inner power that sustained al-Bazyan. Thus, as a survivor who faced death and stayed alive, al-Hawdali feels responsible for giving a voice to the silenced.

As a revolutionary, al-Hawdali opposed the Oslo accords and the aftermaths of the negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and the IZSCR, especially the issue of changing

the Palestinian curricula according to the colonisers' suggestions. He felt a huge responsibility towards his people and the younger generation and wrote the stories as a resistance act. The stories are not about trauma. Still, they were written under duress by a responsible survivor-writer.

The structure of the stories:

The frame story consists of ten travels that Isra' and her grandmother make from Jerusalem to 'Asqalan prison to attend the prison visit of her uncle 'Izz al-Din, which usually takes place twice monthly. Within this frame story, the other stories unfold, and the voices of other narrators and characters are heard. The narration is interrupted after each visit and resumes in the next one after two weeks. This structure reflects the shutting down and opening up intervals that the prisoners experience (the separation from and the connectedness with the real world).

In addition, because of the short time of each prison visit (30 minutes) and the short duration of each bus drive (60 minutes), the stories are divided into sections and scattered throughout the ten travels and visits that form the book. Moreover, this limited face-to-face interaction time, especially between the niece and her uncle, led them to use another way of communication- exchanging letters. This communication method enables Isra' and the reader to hear the voices of other inmates of her uncle directly. These letters further interrupt the scattered narration, and the letter's format textually occupies ample space. They allowed their writers as eyewitnesses to tell the contemporary history of the resistance and their role in shaping it. They also present the biographies of some of the exceptional martyrs to Isra' and the reader.

The stories are open-ended as most of the stories of the Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees. Clinging to such endings reflects the ongoing and unresolved conflict. Thus, as A. Bushmin articulates in his article “Analytic Approach to a Work of Art,” “content and form have no separate existence; they are always together, in an indissoluble unity as two aspects that mutually penetrate each other, forming a single whole.”⁵⁶¹ The writer succeeds in conveying through form and content the continuous attempt of the perpetrator to disconnect the prisoner from all his ties with the outside world. He achieves this by limiting this contact to one hour per month and exhausting the families with security searches, tiring waiting times, and useless visits after transferring the prisoners to other jails without informing them. Simultaneously, the writer shows how the prisoner sustains his family relations by violating the prison policy and smuggling letters through the net metal barrier that separates him from his beloved ones during the prison visit

"ناولها رسالة صغيرة على شكل كبسولة دواء"

“He handed her a small letter that had the shape of a capsule.”⁵⁶² Most importantly, the harsh conditions of the prison visits and all the hassles that accompany them fail to prevent Isra’ from taking her educational and spiritual journey. On the other, the writer brilliantly creates gaps and many instances of delay at the end of each visit to keep the reader’s interest in continuing his/her own educational and spiritual journey throughout the book. The writer does not focus on the theme of prison visits and the difficulties the prisoners’ families go through during the day of

⁵⁶¹ Bushmin, “Analytic,” 143.

⁵⁶² al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 21.

each appointed visit. Instead, he uses them to set a realistic background and space where the main characters /narrators interact and present the writer's didactic and educational themes.

The pedagogical way to approach liberation:

al-Hawdali, like all resistance writers in Palestine, is aware of his critical role in educating the masses, mainly the younger generation, and re-establishing and constructing the social integrity of his people.⁵⁶³ Thus, the writer is not interested in the inner worlds of his characters. Instead, polyphony takes place between the different fictional and authentic voices that speak out through the events of the stories to not only echo and or support the writer's pedagogical and ideological ideas indirectly but also to reinforce the democratic aspect of the dialogue that takes place among the different characters and voices.

It seems that al-Hawdali as a graduate of Teachers College was well acquainted with Paulo Freire and his book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He uses literature as a platform to provide the younger generation with the insights, tools and instruments that the oppressed need to break down barriers and create suitable resistance methods to accomplish freedom. According to Friere, achieving liberation happens through a pedagogical way that shifts how the oppressed think, which should occur via dialogue. Leaders and the people must take on the task of reflection and action together.⁵⁶⁴

Uncle 'Izz al-Din does not impose his ideas on his niece/ the reader but instead shares them with her/him and guides her/him on approaching and grasping them through the stories.

⁵⁶³ Harlow, *Resistance*, 59.

⁵⁶⁴ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1968), 40.

This attitude resonates with the writer's statement in the introduction, which indicates that the book is written for teenagers as an attempt "to have a dialogue with them and share enjoyable and beneficial issues to advance our ideas and morals towards our great aims."⁵⁶⁵

Uncle 'Izz al-Din nurtures Isra's curiosity and motivates her to learn, analyse and come to conclusions by encouraging her /the reader to ask questions and gather information through communicating with the prisoners during prison visits and via the exchange of letters. Besides, he boosts her\ the reader's self-esteem and advises her/the reader to be independent in their endeavours. The writer emphasises the resistance's critical need for members who have such mental and personality traits, as well as the crucial role of education, knowledge, and science in the resistance and in achieving its ultimate goals of liberation and freedom

"امتحان العلم وامتحان الجهاد... هما توأمان يجب أن لا ينفصل أحدهما عن الآخر"⁵⁶⁶

"The test of science/ knowledge and the test of Jihad... they are twins and should never be separated." "The desire to win the conflict made it a conflict of brains... it's a war between brains... their minds confront our minds."⁵⁶⁷

Knowing the history of the Palestinian resistance is crucial for the new generation to learn from the mistakes of the past to proceed with their resistance to a better future:

⁵⁶⁵ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*,3.

⁵⁶⁶ Grammatical mistake in the original text. It should be ألا instead of أن لا.

⁵⁶⁷ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*,35, 42.

Uncle ‘Izz al-Din belongs to the *Fida’iyin* / freedom fighters who were members of the secular Palestinian resistance militias. Mainly displaced Palestinian refugees founded these militias after establishing the IZSCR (Israel) state in colonized Palestine in 1948. These *Fida’iyin* waged guerrilla warfare against the IZSCR from Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and Gaza Strip. After 1967, they united under the PLO, and their military activities gradually decreased due to the exodus of the PLO leaders and fighters from Jordan in 1970 and Beirut in 1982. In the 1967 Occupied Territories, the local freedom fighters fought alone against the colonial occupation and with minimal primitive weaponry supplies. Despite the rise of the Palestinian nonviolent resistance that provided alternative leadership to resist the occupation, these secular *Fida’iyin*, alongside other political and religious factions that appeared in the eighties of the twentieth century, such as Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine and Hamas, continued to believe that the armed struggle is the only way to win the incessant battle against the IZSCR colonial occupation.

The personal story of uncle ‘Izz al-Din presents this stage of the Palestinian resistance. Uncle ‘Izz al-Din lived and witnessed the daily sufferings and humiliations that his people have been going through.

"كان جنوده يضربون بهراواتهم العمال الذين يبحثون عن أرزاق أولادهم، وفي الظهيرة كانوا يلاحقون طلاب المدارس"

“His soldiers used to beat the workers who were looking for their kids’ daily bread with their sticks, and at noon they used to chase the pupils.”⁵⁶⁸ The oppressors are the ones who start the

⁵⁶⁸ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*,7.

violence, who tyrannise, who exploit, who dehumanise, not “the oppressed, exploited, and unrecognized.” One can paradoxically find a “gesture of love” in the reaction of the oppressed to such violence, as Freire states because when the oppressed preserve their humanity, they consequently revive the humanity of their oppressors that, has been given up for domination of others.⁵⁶⁹

Consciously or unconsciously, the act of rebellion by the oppressed (an act which is always, or nearly always, as violent as the initial violence of the oppressors) can initiate love. Whereas the violence of the oppressors prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter to this violence is grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human...As the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressor's power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression.

Uncle ‘Izz al-Din was 17 years old when he joined the clandestine armed resistance to rid his people of “the curse” of the colonial occupation and preserve their human dignity - “the most precious thing that a human being possesses is his dignity...A free man refuses to be humiliated... he strongly refuses the humiliation policy that is exercised over him... we can hurt them as they hurt us by occupying our land and people.”⁵⁷⁰ He participated in shootings at patrol vehicles that used to arrest and torture people. “He planned with a group of freedom fighters and assassinated a military officer who used to enjoy torturing Palestinians in interrogation centres as

⁵⁶⁹ Freire, *Pedagogy*, 42.

⁵⁷⁰ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 22.

well as in the streets.”⁵⁷¹ Subsequently, he and his group attempted to prepare bombs locally and plant them in soldiers’ bus stops. However, after the second attempt, he was arrested when the bomb he was pushing under the bus stop seat exploded in his face. He survived the interrogation that started when he returned to full wakefulness at the hospital. He refused to cooperate with his enemies, to turn into a subhuman by submitting to them. He preferred sacrificing the possibility of recovery from blindness to betray his principles, fellow *Fida’iyyin*, the revolution, and his people. Even after his release in 1985, he resumed his resistance against the brutal colonial occupation despite his disability and returned to prison to serve another life sentence. The unbearable hostile living conditions of prison also failed to quench the spark in his heart (his humanity) that the communication with Isra’ kept ignited.

Connectedness with the world as an act of resistance:

1-Communication with others is an essential need to preserve one’s own humanity because “[t]o impede communication is to reduce men to the status of “things”- and this is a job for oppressors, not for revolutionaries.”⁵⁷² Thus, it is very important to uncle ‘Izz al-Din (the writer, educator and freedom fighter) to have a perpetual dialogical relationship with Isra’ (the younger generation/ the oppressed people) to maintain their humanity because the dialogue that replaces “monologue, slogans and communiqués” is an essential element of “every authentic revolution” as Freire articulates further:

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁷² Freire, *Pedagogy*, 123.

Dialogue with the people is radically necessary to every authentic revolution... its very legitimacy lies in that dialogue. It cannot fear the people, their expression, their effective participation in power. It must be accountable to them, must speak frankly to them of its achievements, its mistakes, its miscalculations, and its difficulties.⁵⁷³

Thus, through the grandmother's character, the writer talks about the mistakes that led to the Nakbah, as we will see below. Through uncle 'Izz al-Din and the other Mujahidin, he highlights the development of the Palestinian revolution and some of its accomplishments from 1949-1999 (the liberation of some Lebanese territories and military operations against the IZSCR forces and personnel). He also details some difficulties (imprisonment, torture, personal injury, loss of life, family suffering, and the revolution's inability to achieve liberation in the present moment). However, this inability does not mean at any cost to surrender and become spectators and wait for miracles to happen. On the contrary, the resistance should retaliate by "developing its methods" as long as the "Zionists" continue to go too far in their oppression. First, "the stone [was used], then Molotov cocktail, then the knife, then shootings... then explosives and now operations that are carried out by Istishhadiyin is the only effective method," as Hasan Salamah, one of Hamas imprisoned freedom fighters, indicates in his letter addressed to Isra'.⁵⁷⁴

The characteristics of the democratic dialogue:

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 122.

⁵⁷⁴ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 26.

This dialogue should be based on mutual trust and profound love for the world and the people.⁵⁷⁵ Thus, the relationships among the fictional characters of the stories are founded on deep love, unconditional trust, and respect.

"دخلت إسرائء غرفة الزيارة وأشواقها تسابقها إلى عمها الحبيب...حبيبي عمي عز الدين... كيف حالك؟"

"When Isra' entered the visiting room her longings [to him] were racing with her to [reach] her beloved uncle... My dear uncle 'Izz al-Din... how are you doing?,"⁵⁷⁶ After Isra' goes to the post office to mail the letters, she wrote to the imprisoned Mujahidin, she returns home and finds her mother, grandfather and grandmother waiting for her for dinner

"يرقبونها بعيون الحبّ ويتقون بتصرّفاتها لأتّها ذكّبة ومجتهدة ومؤدّبة"

"Watching her with eyes full of love, they trust her behaviours because she is smart, diligent and well-mannered."⁵⁷⁷

As for 'Izz al-Din and the other Mujahidin, they express their love through their commitment to the cause of liberation and their connectedness to the people. As Freire articulates:

Love is an act of courage, not fear, love is commitment to other men...this commitment because it is loving, is dialogical... Only by abolishing, the situation of oppression is it

⁵⁷⁵ Freire, *Pedagogy*, 52, 77.

⁵⁷⁶ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 34.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

possible to restore the love, which that situation made impossible. If I do not love the world- if I do not love life – if I do not love people- I cannot enter into dialogue.⁵⁷⁸

These Palestinian and Lebanese freedom fighters like the Algerian ones have been extraordinary examples of self-sacrifice, honour, love of life and disregard for death. They, as Fanon states, “the Algerian fighter has an unusual way of fighting and dying, and no reference to Islam or Paradise can explain this spirit of self-sacrifice when it comes to protecting his people or shielding his comrades.”⁵⁷⁹ This spirit that Fanon talks about and fails like most academics in the West to grasp thoroughly is the essence of the Levant the cradle of civilisations and religions. It is deeply rooted in the subconscious of its people. Resurrection, redemption, and renewal of life have always been preconditioned by the sacrifice of the body. It is found long before Christ in the Ancient Egyptian myth of Isis and Osiris, the Sumerian and Babylonian myths of Tammuz and Ishtar, the Phoenician myth of Adonis, and the Canaanite myth of ‘Anat and Ba‘1. This spirit reflects a profound faith “in man, his power to make and remake, to create and recreate, faith in his vocation to be more fully human.”⁵⁸⁰ More importantly, it is man’s faith in the justice of the cause and in the ideology/God who granted man such power to preserve humanity on earth by fighting against the powers of oppression.

In the case of the Palestinian and Lebanese Islamic resistances, the relation with God is a relation of a profound mystic love (عشق \ ‘Ishq). It requires a complete surrender to God’s will

⁵⁷⁸ Freire, *Pedagogy*, 78.

⁵⁷⁹ Fanon, *The Wretched*, 221.

⁵⁸⁰ Freire, *Pedagogy*, 79.

(توكل). The members of these resistances follow the paths of God to fulfil their ultimate goal which is to eternally unite with God and permanently vanish in divinity

(فناء في الذات الإلهية). The imprisoned Lebanese freedom fighter says:

"ولكننا نمتاز عنهم ... بحبنا للموت في سبيل الله ... نحب الموت كما يعشقون الحياة"

“What differentiates us from them is our love to die for the sake of God...we love death as much as they love life.”⁵⁸¹ In the letter of the prisoner Hasan Salamah he says:

"أسأل الله يا صديقتي أن يكتب لي الشهادة فهذه أسمى ما أتمنى"

“I ask God, my friend, to die as a martyr, this is the most sublime thing I could wish for.”⁵⁸²

They do not seek death but rather an eternal life for themselves and a dignified humane life that is worth living for the ones they leave behind. The Spirit (the divine part in man according to Islamic and Christian faiths) fights with all the might it has to protect God’s creations and values on earth in order to preserve life. However, when God, the beloved, calls for its return, it willingly leaves the mundane prison (the body) and goes back to where it belongs.

Such a spirit is undefeatable and fascinating at the same time because it has purified itself from egotism, individualism, and selfishness and has detached itself from the materialistic world. It is hard for the West and many of its academics to understand such spirituality because since

⁵⁸¹ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 42.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, 27.

the industrial revolution, the man in the West has been industrialised and has been systematically reduced to a machine, a social security number, a paid slave and a robot. I claim that the West deprives many of his sons and daughters of their spirituality that has unlimited possibilities and no borders by announcing that “God is dead” and turning them into egocentric, self-centred and materialistic creatures who limit themselves only to the limited boundaries of the rational/ logical human mind and consequently imbalance their psychological equilibrium.

2- Humility is another essential component of dialogue.⁵⁸³ The fictional characters, as well as the freedom fighters in the stories, are very modest. They refrain from boasting about their heroic actions, keep a low profile and pursue their duty silently.

"أنا العبد الفقير إلى الله تعالى"

“I am the indigent servant of God.”⁵⁸⁴ The writer, also, emphasises the importance of modesty in keeping egotism at bay. When Isra’ asks her uncle to tell her his story he informs her that every freedom fighter fears becoming arrogant if he talks a lot about himself for that reason

"فإنَّ ما فعلته لا أرجعه إلى نفسي وإنما إلى فضل الله عليّ"

“I refer everything I have done not to myself but rather to God’s grace that was bestowed on me.”⁵⁸⁵ When Isra’ complains about the fact that her uncle continues to avoid telling her his

⁵⁸³ Freire, *Pedagogy*, 78.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁸⁵ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 35.

story by focusing on other freedom fighters' stories the grandmother attributes his behaviour to the fact that "in the past, people used to work silently... they worked more and spoke less." The uncle comments on this statement by saying that "today work is lesser and [there is] too much talking" then the grandmother adds "and sometimes there is only talking without any action." The writer criticises "boasting" as a negative phenomenon that has become trendy nowadays in Palestinian society through this dialogue and shows that God dislikes when someone boasts about something that he has not done by citing a verse from the Quran.⁵⁸⁶

3-Hope is another essential element of the dialogue because it "is rooted in men's incompleteness, from which they move out in constant search- a search which can be carried out only in communion with other men."⁵⁸⁷ However, hope does not mean to sit idle and wait for the change to take place but rather "[a]s long as I fight, I am moved by hope; and if I fight with hope, then I can wait."⁵⁸⁸ Hasan Salamah ends his letter saying:

"رحلتنا مع الاحتلال طويلة ... هذه جولة ولنا معهم جولات... مهما طال الليل فالصبح آتٍ لا محالة بإذن الله"

"Our Journey with the occupation is long...this is only one round of many rounds with them [to come]... no matter how long the night seems to be it would definitely be followed by the morning, God willing." The hope of this freedom fighter who is serving 46 life sentences in prison is definite and shows his great capacity to endure such exaggerated conviction.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid. 34.

⁵⁸⁷ Freire, *Pedagogy*, 80.

⁵⁸⁸ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 80.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., 27.

Unity as an integral goal for achieving liberation:

In addition, the writer focuses on the experience of the resistance of Hizbu –Allah against the IZSCR in the stories, as Ghassan Kanafani states, to emphasise the natural cohesion between the resistance literature of the Palestinians and the Arab battles outside the occupied territories, on the one hand.⁵⁹⁰ On the other, he highlights the importance of unifying all the Arab Homeland’s patriotic resistances against the one and only enemy of the Arabs. Nevertheless, most importantly, he attempts to infuse his stories with “revolutionary optimism”⁵⁹¹ by presenting to his oppressed Palestinian people a thriving, contemporary, and live example of resistance. This resistance has been defeating the IZSCR and achieving liberation without compromising its humanism and its moral integrity. Such resistance should be studied to learn from it, follow its steps and tactics, and even unite forces with it.

The writer, by initiating a democratic dialogue between him as a freedom fighter/educator and the reader/his people/ the younger generation (boys and girls) that is based on love, humility, faith, hope, and mutual trust, aims at building a partnership with the masses, to work together on the goal of liberation and to preserve their human dignity. Thus, this democratic attitude reflects the writer’s liberal views, especially towards women. He considers them equal partners in the struggle because no true freedom could be achieved without women’s emancipation. Making Isra’ the main character of the stories instead of a male character is clear evidence of such a progressive vision.

⁵⁹⁰ Ghassan Kanafani, *Adab al-Muqāwamah fī filasṭīn al-Muḥtalah 1948-1966* (Qubruş: Manshūāt al-Rimāl, 2014), 32.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

Isra', in her turn, adores visiting her uncle in prison despite the difficulties she confronts during the tiring rides, the long waiting time, and the hostile security checks at the prison gate because she enjoys her conversations with her uncle and the stories he usually uses to answer her endless questions. Through Isra' the omniscient narrator depicts the Palestinian Landscape and its beauty to strengthen the readers' bond with it and their feeling of belonging to it, primarily because the land issue is the core of the struggle against the IZSCR colonial occupation. "Isra' loves Palestine, she loves the homeland and loves God who created this land and gave it to his devoted believers."⁵⁹² "It is springtime...our country Palestine is one of God's paradises... here are the colourful wildflowers filling up the mountains... and it is pleasant to sit in the shadow of the green pine trees and have a barbecue."⁵⁹³

Transformation: a key part of liberation is the movement from passive acceptance to active participation in the struggle.

At the beginning of the story, Isra' is described as a little child, "she runs to the visiting room after the body search," and her shoes are small.⁵⁹⁴ However, she soon transforms because of the education she is receiving from her uncle, grandmother, the other inmates, and school. She is not a passive learner. On the contrary, she enquires about the issues that interest her; she gets the information from different resources. Then she analyses and processes that information, reaches her conclusions, and acts upon situations accordingly. For instance, Isra' receives a letter

⁵⁹² al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 5.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

from the prisoners who belong to the Lebanese Islamic resistance (Hizbu –Allah), including a brief historical review of this resistance and its accomplishments from 1982 until the late nineties. After reading the letter, she concludes that she is also exercising her way of Jihad for Allah’s sake by visiting her uncle, loving and contacting the Mujahidin, and learning and studying. Since then, and especially after discussing Jihad’s issue with her uncle and learning that it is not limited to physical fighting against the occupiers and the enemies of Islam, the visits to the prison start to have a new meaning, i.e., the meaning of greater love and Jihad.

Isra’ is growing and maturing because she is receiving a “liberating education” based on “acts of cognition, not transfers of information.” Through dialogue, the educator and the educated become subjects “jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.”⁵⁹⁵ Isra’ follows her uncle’s advice and conducts her research on a particular Jihadi operation. She goes to the library, uses the newspaper archives to collect information about that operation, and writes an essay for her school cultural wall magazine. Her creative work receives much good feedback, and the school decides to publish it online.⁵⁹⁶ In another example, Isra’ recounts to her uncle how she reacted to and incited the other pupils against a hypocritical speech about peace and coexistence between Arabs and Jews that was given to her and a group of the best Arab Palestinian pupils of the schools of Jerusalem by a representative of the Israeli education ministry. She exercised her jihad/resistance again when she voiced her opinion loudly without fear of the risks involved and protested against the coloniser’s lousy attempt to continue manipulating the colonised.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., 72.

⁵⁹⁶ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 57

This example shows that engaging Isra' in a critical reflection on the occupation's reality through dialogues with the uncle, the grandmother, and the other prisoners led her to act when the action was needed, and her action constituted "an authentic praxis" in Freire's words.⁵⁹⁷ He further articulates:

The conviction of the oppressed that they must fight for their liberation is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their own conscientizacao [learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against oppressive elements of reality].⁵⁹⁸

When the uncle is transferred to Nafḥah prison, located in the heart of the desert 170 km away from Jerusalem, without informing the family. At first, Isra' feels anger and sadness in her heart because of this new situation not only because she could not see her uncle and hear his fantastic stories, but also because of the torture that he encounters during these transfers and the sufferings he faces while adapting to new hostile environments as a blind man.⁵⁹⁹ Her frustration increases when she thinks about the 10-year peace process negotiations' failure between the IZSCR and the Palestinians in resolving the Palestinian prisoners of war issue.

⁵⁹⁷ Freire, *Pedagogy*, 54.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., 52. The added explanation of the term "conscientizacao" appears in the Preface of the book on page 35.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 65.

However, she and her grandmother start to look at this “limit situation” as a new obstacle that they need to overcome by actions rather “than passively accepting the given.”⁶⁰⁰ First, they cling to hope and reassure each other that prisoner exchange deals, not peace negotiations, are the only way to release prisoners and keep believing that the uncle would be released by one of them soon.⁶⁰¹ Second, Isra’ has to focus on her studies and get the best grades despite the new reality. Third, they have the self-awareness to realise that ‘limit situations’ would persist as long as the occupation persists and new ones would continuously appear and would evoke new limit-acts as long as they succeed to supersede the old ones by their commitment to the cause and acting upon changing their reality. Thus, the first round of the battle that both Isra’ and her grandmother are engaged in against the prison policy of isolating and disconnecting the prisoners from the outside world is finished by transferring the uncle to Nafḥah prison. However, meanwhile, they are positively getting ready to overcome the new harsher limit situation and looking forward to “a new round of new stories” and a new spiritual and educational journey.

The Function of the stories as a work of literature:

Thus, the function of the stories as a work of literature becomes one of “the agencies which articulate history” as Jacques Ehrmann states in his article “On Articulation: The Language of History and the Terror of Language.”⁶⁰² In fact, al-Hawdali, through writing, is concerned with understanding the possibilities inherent in the past in order to reconcile with his

⁶⁰⁰ Freire, *Pedagogy*, 98.

⁶⁰¹ It is worth noting that al-Bazyán, the blind prisoner who inspired uncle ‘Izz al-Din was released in Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal Between the IZSCR and Hamas in 2011. However, he was arrested in 2013 for the third time, and he is still in prison. al-Hawdali, “‘Ala’ al-Bazyán.”

⁶⁰² Jacques Ehrmann, “On Articulation: The Language of History and the Terror of Language,” *Yale French Studies* 39 (1967): 25.

present and open up the possibilities of the future. “The colonized man who writes to his people ought to use the past [history] with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and basis for hope.”⁶⁰³

In the stories, fiction is mixed with documentary and literal retelling of the resistance in precise historical details. al-Hawdali consciously attempts to present the armed resistance as the most critical and inspiring phase of the historical development of Palestinians. In his eyes, it is the only way to achieve freedom because “freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly... It is ...the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion.”⁶⁰⁴ This history of the resistance is told by the freedom fighters themselves, the eyewitnesses who made it and by glorifying the martyrs who shaped it with their blood. Thus, these stories become the literature of resistance against the IZSCR colonial occupation and the force to create a Palestinian culture and identity.

Whether peaceful or armed, resistance is an extreme political activity that occurs when normal, political means become futile. Resistance as politics has a dialectic relation with literature because both “seek to express the same thing...liberty, since both claim ‘liberate’ man,” although their methods could look contradicting, on first consideration, because politics and literature approach liberty from different “vantage points.” These different perspectives spring from the fact that “what literature says originates in language, and the possibilities of language and what politics says originates in the world and its possibilities. World and language

⁶⁰³ Fanon, *The Wretched*, 167.

⁶⁰⁴ Freire, *Pedagogy*, 31.

thus limit each other reciprocally.”⁶⁰⁵ Moreover, if “writing is a way of wanting freedom,” as Sartre states in his book *What is Literature?*⁶⁰⁶ and if wanting freedom in the situation of colonial occupation is equivalent to a political/ resistance act, then writing in the context of Palestine becomes an urgent and inevitable political act. As a result, the political aspect becomes the produced literature’s ideological content and its basic literary structure.

In Palestine, Ghassan Kanafani believes that the extreme importance of the cultural form of resistance is no less valuable than armed resistance.⁶⁰⁷ Kanafani’s statement is similar to Paulo Freire’s opinion that the revolutionary process is eminently educational in character.⁶⁰⁸ Amilcar Carbal, in his turn, also argues, “At any moment, depending on internal and external factors determining the evolution of the society in question, cultural resistance (indestructible) may take new forms (Political, economic, military in order fully to contest foreign domination.”⁶⁰⁹

Therefore, it plays a pivotal role in the larger struggle of liberation in enabling the masses to preserve their personal and collective dignity by preserving their culture and identity “despite the worries, humiliation, and brutalities to which they are often subject.” Carbal adds that the masses are the ones who keep the culture of the people untouched by the culture of the

⁶⁰⁵ Ehrmann, “On Articulation,” 23-24.

⁶⁰⁶ Jean Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

⁶⁰⁷ Kanafani, *Adab*, 13.

⁶⁰⁸ Freire, *Pedagogy*, 133.

⁶⁰⁹ Carbal, *Return*, 40.

coloniser.⁶¹⁰ In Palestine, the masses attached themselves to a syncretistic Arabic and Islamic-based culture to resist the colonial occupation's attempts to destroy it.

Characters and language:

al-Hawdali, as an Islamist, presents devoted Muslim fictional and real characters. The characters' Islamic religious affiliation is mainly revealed via the language and terminology they use. In addition, these characters return to Islamic sources, such as the Holy Quran, al-Hadith, and Islamic history, to support their political beliefs, highlight Islamic human values and emphasise their religious and national identity. The writer neither focuses on giving religious interpretations to these citations nor historical details; rather, they are mainly used to support the characters' arguments and points of view. For instance, the battle of "Badr," the story of "David and Goliath" and a part of verse number 249 of the Cow chapter of the Holy Quran:⁶¹¹ "How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allah" are only used by Isra' to wonder why Allah did not let the Palestinian resistance (a small company) win the 1948 war against the Zionist terrorist gangs (a large company).⁶¹² At the end of the letter of the Mujahidin of Hizbu-Allah, they inform Isra' that their conclusion after 18 years of continuous struggle against the IZSCR is that violence is the only way to "destroy the mightiness of their oppression."⁶¹³ Then they cite a part of verse number 60 of the eighth chapter of the Holy Quran

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., 69.

⁶¹¹ <https://quran.com/2>.

⁶¹² al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 32.

⁶¹³ Ibid., 42.

al-Anfal to support this supposition “and prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy.”⁶¹⁴

The writer is not calling at any cost for a fanatic sectarian Islam because such kind of Islam is usually irrational, sterilizing, paralyzing, mythicizing, and alienating. In that way, it becomes an obstacle to liberation because it would turn reality into a false one and, consequently, an unchangeable one.⁶¹⁵ On the contrary, al-Hawdali presents a revolutionary radical creative Islam that is infused with a “critical spirit.” The function of this kind of Islam is to criticise in order to liberate. It increases the commitment of its followers, who know their reality very well, to the cause they have chosen- fighting against the colonial occupation.

Consequently, they act upon transforming their existing reality by eagerly engaging in an incessant struggle against injustices. “Jihad does not stop.” According to the prophet Muhammad.⁶¹⁶

As for the grandmother, she has neither a name nor a physical description in the stories. She is the one who visits her son every two weeks in prison with her granddaughter. This character plays a role in developing the events through the dialogues between her, the son, and the granddaughter. Its main task is to narrate the old history during the bus rides from the point of view of an eyewitness.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid. 8.

⁶¹⁵ Freire, *Pedagogy*, 30.

⁶¹⁶ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 54.

"سأحدثك عن القديم... أسألي عمك أن يحدثك عن الجديد"

"I will tell you about the old [history] and ask your uncle to tell you about the contemporary [one]."⁶¹⁷ By the old history, she means the history of her hometown, Jaffa, its inhabitants, and their daily life on the eve of the Nakbah. Moreover, she recollects events and occurrences that she either heard about or eye-witnessed regarding the Palestinian resistance against the British Mandate and Zionist gangs and the atrocities committed by the latter before and during the Nakbah to terrorise the Palestinian inhabitants and force them to flee.

At the end of her story, she moves from the public to the private and tells her granddaughter her personal Nakbah. In other words, she presents her testimony to the ethnic cleansing and displacement that she, as an 11 years old girl at the time, and her family suffered from after Jaffa fell into the Zionist terrorist gangs' hands. Such a crime against humanity resulted in tragic and painful consequences. She lost her little sister while leaving their burning house, which was bombed by the Zionist terrorist gangs.⁶¹⁸ She and her family became refugees overnight and suffered from the absence of the dad, who was fighting with the rebels when they fled the city and who spent a whole year looking for his family until he found them and reunited with them.⁶¹⁹

The reader does not find bitter, desperate accusations or lamentations in the grandmother's recollections. On the contrary, he wants the reader to face the reality of that old past despite all its losses, bitterness, and sorrows. He analyses it responsibly by figuring out the points of weakness

⁶¹⁷ al-Hawdali, *Hikayat*, 11.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

that led to its catastrophic outcomes to learn from the mistakes made in the past and realise their effects on the struggle at present to avoid them in the future.

"أهل يافا والفلسطينيون في معركتهم التي خسروا فيها فلسطين لم يحسنوا الإعداد... وكذلك عنصر الإيمان لم يكن كما يجب... لو كان الإيمان قوياً لضحوا بالدنيا... من أجل الدين والوطن... لتوكلوا على الله وثبتوا في أرض المعركة... لقد توكلوا على إمدادات الجيوش العربية "

"the inhabitants of Jaffa and the Palestinians [in general] had not probably prepared themselves for the battle in which they had lost Palestine... also, the element of faith was not as it should have to be... if their faith had been strong [enough] they would have sacrificed the world for the sake of the religion and the homeland... they would have relied on God and would have remained firm on the battlefield... [instead] they had relied on the reinforcements of the Arab armies."⁶²⁰

Conclusions:

al-Hawdali, in his testimonial stories, addresses the concrete (i.e., the present needs of the people) and the historical like the traditional novel as Michael Bakhtin articulates, in his essay "Discourse in the Novel," it deals with the discourse that is still "warm" from social struggle and unresolved hostility.

The prose art presumes a deliberate feeling for the historical and social concreteness of living discourse, as well as its relativity, a feeling for its participation in historical

⁶²⁰ Ibid., 33.

becoming and in social struggle; it deals with discourse that is still warm from that struggle and hostility, as yet unresolved and still fraught with hostile intentions and accents; prose art finds discourse in this state and subjects it to the dynamic unity of its own style.⁶²¹

However, unlike the traditional novel al-Hawdali focuses on the collective, democratic and many-voiced rather than the individual, authorial, and univocal by integrating multiple voices and oral traditions and experimenting with form, techniques, and discourse. By so doing, he harshly criticises the official discourse of the Palestinian Authority that was obliged after the Oslo accords that took place in the nineties to make changes to the Palestinian school curriculum by eliminating many of the historical elements (incidents, biographies, massacres, maps) that the colonial occupation had viewed as provocative obstacles to the peace and normalisation processes. Thus, al-Hawdali, who opposes the peace process between the Palestinians and the IZSCR, reveals the “connection between knowledge and power, the awareness of the exploitation of knowledge by the interests of power to create a distorted historical record” and attempts in his book to rewrite the distorted Palestinian historical record according to his own political and ideological views.⁶²²

In the struggle for freedom al-Hawdali’s stories like all the literary works of the Third World, “the Revolutionary World” as Georg M. Gugelberger suggests to name it in his article *Decolonizing the Canon: Considerations of Third World Literature*,⁶²³ become one of the main

⁶²¹ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 298.

⁶²² Harlow, *Resistance*, 116.

⁶²³ Gugelberger prefers the “Revolutionary world” or “the World of Revolutionary Struggle” rather than the “Third World” or “Underdeveloped Countries” to imply “its dynamic, militant, and explosive character.”

tools of the resistance that has a very real task to perform. This task is to fight with hope in order to achieve liberation and preserve human dignity. Gugelberger defines the literature of this Revolutionary World as “more realistic” than the “mainstream” western literature. It is more concrete, overtly political, combative, historically aware, didactic, and very often allegorical, and more concerned with message than with form.⁶²⁴ It is, also, “problem posing, dialogical, and fundamentally demythologizing” in comparison with the anaesthetising, monologic, and mythologising inclinations of western literature.⁶²⁵ Almost all these content and form features manifest in al-Hawdali’s stories, as I discussed hereinbefore, and in all the fictional works written by Palestinian Prisoners of war and detainees. Thus, in order to grasp these writings thoroughly, readers from different worlds should have, as Harlow states, “a historical background and ideological awareness which certain schools of criticism had thought to have dispensed with.”⁶²⁶

al-Hawdali’s stories are a documentary and testimonial discourse that reflects a specific historical context of oppression. He did not need to invent his fictional characters or their stories because his people’s reality under the IZSCR colonial occupation is too overwhelming, inconceivable, and extreme to make any clear distinction between such reality and the imagined. He also includes actual testimonies of other eyewitnesses, which, in turn, intensifies the effect of the real in his stories and highlights the democratic belief that was conveyed through the

Georg M. Gugelberger, “Decolonizing the Canon: Considerations of Third World Literature.” *New Literary History* Vol. 22, No. 3, Undermining Subjects (summer, 1991): 522.

⁶²⁴ Ibid., 515.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 514.

⁶²⁶ Harlow, *Resistance*, 96.

dialogue between Isra' and the different real and fictional characters. Whether real or fictional, these characters are the ordinary people, the oppressed, who shape the history of their people while struggling to preserve their human dignity. They adhere to violence because all the avenues of justice have been closed in their faces. Fighting for freedom rather than for purposeless cruelty is the only option available for them to achieve their ultimate goal of liberation as Adolfe Gilly states in his introduction to Fanon's book *A Dying Colonialism*:

The masses resist and fight in a thousand ways, not only with arms in hand. These means include violence because, in a world where oppression is maintained by violence from above, it is only possible to liquidate it with violence from below. Ultimately, once the struggle reaches a certain point, arms in hand are indispensable.⁶²⁷

al-Hawdali, idealises some of the characters, such as Uncle 'Izz al-Din, for his long-suffering and fascinating endurance despite his blindness. He names some of the martyrs and creates new myths of these fallen heroes' heroic operations to preserve the memory of his people, which is an integral part of its national identity. Moreover, he adopts a feminist perspective like all the other freedom fighter writers by choosing a female character as his main character, who is smart, independent, and courageous. Female characters in Palestinian resistance literature, in general, are not only portrayed as equal and as tough as their male counterparts. Instead, there is an inclination to tilt the scale on their behalf and show them

⁶²⁷ Gilly, "Introduction," 3.

smarter, more robust, courageous and educated than their male peers, as is the case in the novels of Ahmad Qatamish in particular.⁶²⁸

The inspiration of al-Hawdali's stories is the struggle against the occupation, the writer's struggle, and his inmates through deeds, actions and words against the IZSCR colonial occupation, and his audience is the Palestinian younger generation between the ages of 10-13. The language in the stories is simple and straightforward. Religious references are plenty to educate, convince the reader, and restore his/her national identity. The themes are rebelliousness, the practical needs of the struggle, the reasons for the resistance, learning the mistakes of the past, and the hope for the future. The writer writes for the masses, and his themes are bound up with the people's life to liberate and be liberated with the masses.

⁶²⁸ Qaṭāmish, *al-Rriḥlah*. See also Aḥmad Qaṭāmish, *'Ubūr al-Nahr* (Dimashq: Dār Kan'ān, 2002).

**Part Two: Entrapped in a Vicious Circle of Pain: A Close Reading
of *Sa‘at ma qabl al-Fajr*.**

Sa'at ma qabl al-Fajr (Few Hours Before Dawn) is written by Muhammad I'layan.⁶²⁹ It is a collection of eight short stories that I'layan wrote between the years 1977 and 1984. The writer belongs to a working-class family from East Jerusalem. He was a first-year student at a nursing school and a member of the PFLP when he was arrested and convicted for a life sentence in prison in 1975. He served a total of ten years in prison before he received a presidential pardon in 1985. After his release, he obtained a degree in law and became a lawyer. He has been practicing law in Jerusalem since the year 2000.⁶³⁰ I'layan wrote only these eight stories even though they show the birth of a talented writer as the Palestinian novelist Jamal Banurah states in his introduction to this short story collection.⁶³¹

I'layan managed to send the stories outside the prison walls through the letters he used to write to his family members every month, as he personally informed me in 2004. In addition, it is worth noting that after twenty years of being a free person, he was still suffering from miscommunication with his close family members who were unable to grasp his prison experience fully. The only refuge where he could find some relief, as he mentioned, was a weekly meeting with a group of released inmates that he had been attending every Thursday evening.

⁶²⁹ Muḥammad I'layān, *Sā'āt mā qabl al-Fajr* (al-Quds: Dār al-Kātib, 1985).

⁶³⁰ I obtained this information from the writer himself after meeting with him to get a copy of his book at his office in Jerusalem in 2004.

⁶³¹ The introduction of the collection written by Jamal Banourah. I'layan, *Sa'at*, 14.

The first story, “Sa‘ah fi Qitar al-Zaman” (An Hour in the Train of Time), was written in Nafḥa prison in 1984. It captures the events of one hour in the lives of a prisoner’s wife and her nine- year old son. The two main characters and narrators were going towards the bus that the prisoners’ families take to the prisons for the biweekly family visits. On their way, they stopped at the market place to buy some underwear items for the prisoner-husband. While the mother was busy talking with the merchant and ignoring her little son, who was urging her to finish before they miss the bus, the son left the store and entered another nearby store. The mother realised his absence after picking up what she needed and left the store to look for him. He came back to the store, and the seller informed him that the mother had already gone. Thus, he started to look for her, as well.

The story unfolds to the reader from the point of view of both the mother and the child, who alternately exchange the role of the narrator in the first-person pronoun. Via interior monologues, flashbacks, and dialogues with other marginal characters (the prisoner-father/husband, sellers, and passers-by), the events develop, and the reader is introduced gradually to more personal information about the main characters. The reader also enters their interior worlds where he hears, watches, and feels the culmination of anxiety, fear, pain, and feelings of guilt in their hearts and minds.

The story begins with the moment the mother realises her son’s absence. "أين سعيد؟" “where is Sa‘id?”⁶³² Via flashback, the mother takes the reader a few minutes back to hear Sa‘id asking her to hurry up in order not to miss the bus. She asks him to be quiet and continues her

⁶³² I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 21.

conversation with the seller. After that, we hear Sa'id's voice asking "أين أمي؟" "where is my mom?"⁶³³ Then he begins to tell the story from his point of view. After his mother asked him to keep silent, he was irritated and felt like crying because he was afraid to miss the bus and consequently miss seeing his dad. He was too angry to stay, so he went out and stood next to a watch shop window.

The story reaches its climax after one hour when both the mother and the child lose hope in finding each other. The falling action takes place immediately after the climax when they see each other from a distance and the story ends with an open ending. The reader is compelled to ask many questions, and try to imagine the answers. First, how would the mother and son behave when they reach each other? Second, would they be able to catch the bus or not? More importantly, if the bus leaves without them, how would the prisoner /father feel? What kind of negative thoughts, worries, guilt, and feelings of helplessness would he become prey to, mainly because his wife for ten years has never missed not even one visit? How would he be able to calm himself down and wait two more weeks the time of the next prison visit to find out what had happened?

This open ending technique would repeat itself in other stories in the collection. This repetition indicates that the author intentionally uses it to create another layer of the protective shield that he surrounds himself with to avoid expressing the pain, anxiety, and guilt prisoners experience in such situations. However, he does not leave it totally to the reader's imagination. Instead, he foreshadows it through a conversation that the mother recalls while looking for her

⁶³³ Ibid., 23.

son. One time she went to visit her husband without the child because he was sick.⁶³⁴ The father was hurt and wished to see his son

"هو عنده ليس ابناً وحسب، هو شيء آخر لا يدركه إلا نحن الاثنين"⁶³⁵

"To him he was not only a son he was something else that only both of us can apprehend."⁶³⁶

The reader hears the father saying:

"هو ثمرة حبنا.. هو ما أفكر فيه دائماً.. أخشى أن يجوع، أن يمرض.. أن يقع من فوق جدار... أو تصدمه سيارة.."

"He is the fruit of our love, he is the one I always think about.. I fear [the fact that] he may starve, get sick.. fall off of [the top of the] wall.. or be hit by a car"⁶³⁷ and after resisting shedding a tear, the father continued

"أتعذب لمجرد التفكير بأنّ أمراً كهذا ممكن أن يحدث.. كان يتحاشى النظر إليّ كأنّما شعر بذنب ما.."

"I suffer merely from thinking that such a thing could happen.. he was avoiding looking at me in the eyes as if he felt some guilt."⁶³⁸

⁶³⁴ Ibid., 32.

⁶³⁵ Grammatical mistake in the original text. It should be الاثنان.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 34.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

The prisoners who are fathers, in particular, have such a deep feeling of guilt because they are unable to fulfil their duty as good parents and husbands. It is true that most of the time, they repress such tremendous feelings of pain through disassociation or alternating in their state of consciousness. Still, in certain times especially when unusual or bad things happen, the prisoners cannot control such strong feelings of guilt and pain symptoms, and they would experience these feelings even more intensely. These feelings of worry and guilt reflect the impact of PTSD on the victims.

Besides, the author sheds light on the effects of imprisonment on the families of the prisoners. Sa'id was born while his father was in prison. He never had a normal relationship with his dad. He never had the opportunity to hug or be hugged by him, sit in his lap, sleep in his arms or even kiss him or touch him without the net metal barrier that separates them during the half an hour visit every two weeks. Sa'id is too young to grasp what the prison means. He wonders

"لا يسمحون أن أراه دون شبك، لا يسمحون أن أجلس معه أكثر من نصف ساعة

"They do not allow me to see him [the father] without the net metal barrier and they do not allow me to sit with him more than half an hour"⁶³⁹

In addition, fathers are usually the primary providers in their families. Thus, the family's lifestyle would be badly affected after the incarceration of the parent. Sa'id does not enjoy his

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 24.

childhood, like many other kids, because their home budget is minimal. His mother cannot provide him with the toys and other things that his friends have, and he keeps asking for them.

"طلبت مرّة من والدي أن يشتري لي دراجة ... قال إذا نجحت في المدرسة ستشتري أمك واحدة ونجحت بتفوق ... اشترى له دراجة .. هديّة منّي. غمزت له بعينها وقالت: بعدين .. بعدين.."

"I asked my dad once to buy me a bicycle... he said if you do well at school, your mom will buy one [for you] I succeeded with distinction... buy him a bicycle.. a gift from me. She winked and said: later.. later.." ⁶⁴⁰ Thus, the child suffers from the absence of his father and deprivation.

"عندما يخرج سيشتري لي ما أريد، أنا على ثقة من ذلك، ولكن متى سيخرج؟ كيف سيخرج؟ فكرت بذلك: شعرت بالألم"
 "when he [the father] is released, he will buy me everything I want, I am pretty sure of that, but when would he be released? How would he leave [the prison]? I thought about that and felt pain... " The pain was his companion. He would suffer from aches in his head, stomach, or under his heart because of poverty. ⁶⁴¹

The policy adopted by the IZSCR aims to separate the people from each other to make any unity among them impossible to quash their resistance and crush them. This tactic is mainly used against Palestinian male adults. From 1948 until this day more than nine hundred thousand Palestinian males have experienced incarceration in the IZSCR prisons . As a result, the Palestinian family has been undergoing a continuous transformation by developing new values. Thus, in the story, the wife's responsibilities double after the imprisonment of the husband.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 28.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 29.

Sometimes she needs to work to make a living. She has to play the role of both the father and the mother when taking care of the children and the house. Moreover, she has to visit the husband in jail and participate in the different solidarity activities with the prisoners. It was very hard for Su'ad, the mother, to believe that she lost her child just like that in the market place.⁶⁴²

"What kind of a mum I am? How could I forget to hold his hand at the store, why did I scold him? ... How miserable am I? How miserable I am?" When she could not find him, she started to panic. Evil thoughts haunted her. She was afraid that he might be hurt or injured due to an accident, or attacked by strangers and even starving. Then, she started to hate herself because, for the first time, she is betraying her husband and the promise she gave him one day.

"قلت له... أن يطمئن فهو في السجن ولا ينبغي أن يقلق كثيرًا وسيكون "سعيد" أتمن هدية أقدمها له حين يخرج من السجن"

"I told him... to feel assured. He is in prison, and he does not need to worry too much, and "Sa'id" would be the most precious gift I would give him after his release." These feelings increased her guilt and despair while running like a crazy woman in the alleys, begging God, sellers, and passers-by to help her find her son.⁶⁴³

No doubt that I'layan, brilliantly, succeeds in totally distancing himself from the text by making his characters speak for themselves and managing to conceal the direct exposure of the

⁶⁴² Ibid., 30.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., 30-36.

prisoner's vulnerabilities and weaknesses by telling the story from the point of view of both the wife and the son rather than that of the prisoner's. Simultaneously, the author uses specific narrative techniques to actively engage the reader in the reading process, such as delay, open ending, the alternation in the narration voices, and the gradual revelation of information about the characters. This engagement remains after the end of the reading, where the reader continues to be interested in checking up all the possible scenarios and consequently revealing what the author wanted to conceal or avoid.

The second short story is "ويكون لنا مستقبل" (And We Will Have a Future), was written in 1977 at al-Ramlah prison. This story is a manifestation of what Freud calls "wish fulfilment." It is the "impetus, the driving force of all non- traumatic dreams." It accomplishes "a desired, pleasant outcome to a painful, terrifying intra-psychic or life situation"⁶⁴⁴ in the dream. As Samir al-Mahrum says in his collective testimony, *Da'irat al-Alam* (the Circle of Pain) the night, day, and all daydreams of all Palestinian prisoners of war are about freedom. Prisoners dream of the day in which they as well as their homeland Palestine would be free. At that time, they would not need to fight and struggle anymore for the sake of achieving freedom, but rather they would live a normal life like all the inhabitants of the world whose countries are independent.⁶⁴⁵

The author in this symbolic story imagines this moment of liberation of both the Prisoners of war and the land through a story of a released prisoner and his family.

⁶⁴⁴ Laub, "Psychoanalysis," 1-18.

⁶⁴⁵ Sāmīr al-Maḥrūm, *Dā'irat al-Alam* (Jinīn: Maṭba'at al-Nūr, 2004), 103.

"بعد أن عدت لنا وذهبوا عنا"

“After you returned to us, and they had left.”⁶⁴⁶

The prisoner is sitting on his bed—the same bed he was sleeping on when he was arrested many years ago, surrounded by his family members. He notices that everything and everyone in the room look different. His father looks twenty years older than his real age because of the arduous physical work he had to do every day to provide a decent life for his big family. The mother, who has been suffering from a chronic disease long before his imprisonment, looks fifteen years older than her real age as well. Nevertheless, her smile and looks are still the same. The arrest of her oldest son and blocking the doors and windows of her house as a collective punishment by the occupation changed her life forever and made her follow the same path as her son. After his arrest, she became a political activist participating, despite her illness, in all the sit-ins and hunger strikes that the mothers, wives, and sisters of the prisoners of war used to carry out.⁶⁴⁷ He could not recognize any one of his little brothers who grew and changed over the years except Sa'id, who was twelve years old when he was arrested and who is now preparing himself to join the university. The room that was separately built next to the house and used by him as a study room has changed as well. After the family lost access to their house, they could not afford to rent a house. Since then, this little room has become the family house. The father had sworn that he would not break in the blocked house until his imprisoned son's release. Thus, the released prisoner finds himself surrounded by his beloved family, who do not blame him for their misery

⁶⁴⁶ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 47.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

and hardship. Instead waits for him to bring happiness to the house. While the mother was preparing dinner for him, his father went out to bring a hoe to break in the blocked house; the released prisoner feels great happiness in his heart.

"فبعد كل هذه السنين عاد إليهم... أيّ سعادة – سعادة أمّه الآن – ترى هل تعرف ما يجول في خلدّه؟ لقد شاهد والده ووالدته وإخوته وغرفته. وسيفتح الآن بيّتهم المغلق، وسيحتفلون بدخوله."

"After all these years he returned to them...-how happy is his mother now—does she know what is going in his mind now? He saw his dad, his mum, his brothers and his room. He would open the blocked house now, and all of them will celebrate entering it."⁶⁴⁸

At this joyous moment, he remembers his ex-fiancée, whom he loves profoundly and whom he decided to break up with after his conviction to have a better relationship and life. The father comes back with a sharp hoe and hands it to him to break into their blocked house.

Simultaneously, the mother puts the engagement ring on his other hand, declaring that his fiancée is still waiting for him. On the one hand, the hoe symbolizes destroying all the traces of the colonial occupation. On the other, it is a symbol of rebuilding and cultivating the liberated land. The released prisoner, while surrounded with the unconditional love of his family and his fiancée, grabs the hoe and a book (a symbol of knowledge, education, and science) and tells his mother:

"بهذه الفأس وبهذا الكتاب سنحقّق سعادتنا يا أمّاه"

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

“With this hoe and with this book we will achieve our happiness, mom.”⁶⁴⁹ In his turn, the father takes out a gold coin from a box he hid under the bed and tells his son while smiling that this will help us reach happiness. Love, hard work, education/ science, and some money would guarantee that the released prisoner would have a better future after winning the battle of liberation. This detailed happy-end dream does not last for a long time. The traumatic reality would violently shatter it. The Prisoners would wake up from this day/night dream to find themselves in the same unbearable crowded cells surrounded by their inmates instead of their family members. Moreover, they are forcibly obliged to repress their feelings of loss and guilt towards the beloved ones they abandoned, made suffer, caused troubles to, and left behind. The prisoners have to face their fate alone to resume their continuous, nonstop battle of survival in prison. I‘layan, in this story, also emphasises that pursuing education is very important in the struggle against occupation and is an integral component of shaping the future of both the citizens and the country after liberation. Through the character of the brother Sa‘id the writer encourages the youth not to quit school due to poverty but rather to find creative ways to save money and minimise their expenses. The brother Sa‘id would walk for miles every day to get to his school to save the bus ticket’s money and use it to buy schoolbooks.⁶⁵⁰ Besides, the released prisoner at the end of the story stresses that eliminating all marks of the occupation and cultivating the land should be done side by side with getting an education and should be based on a scientific background to establish a great sovereign Palestinian nation.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., 49.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., 45.

In addition, the story sheds light on one of the occupation's many crimes against humanity that Palestinians suffer from daily that is collective punishment. After arresting the son, the whole family had to pay a heavy price as the son who joined the resistance. Usually, such punishments should be sudden, terrifying, shocking, and very expensive.

"لقد حضروا في منتصف الليل وهم مسلحون.. فأنهضونا بصراخهم وأفزعوا إخوتك الصغار... وركلونا بأرجالهم وبأعقاب أسلحتهم وأخرجونا من بيتنا بالقوة ولم يسمحوا لنا بأن نأخذ سوى الفراش الذي تراه الآن وبعض الملابس لإخوتك."

"They came armed at midnight... They woke us up with their screams. They terrified your little brothers... They forcibly kicked us out with their legs and the butts of their guns, and they did not allow us to take anything except the bedding material you see now and some clothes to your brothers."⁶⁵¹ They blocked the doors and the windows of the house with cement and made the family homeless. "ستنامون هنا على رصيف الشارع"

"You will sleep here on the side of the road."⁶⁵² The soldiers are depicted as tools of oppression and total evil. They have no names, no physical description in the story. The reader sees their brutal acts and hears their voices, whether directly or via the victims' eyes.

"لقد كانوا بقلوب أفسى من الحجر يقهقهون ويسخرون وكأنهم يشاهدون مسرحية ساخرة."

⁶⁵¹ Ibid.

⁶⁵² Ibid., 47.

They had hearts that are harder than stones, laughing loudly and making fun [of us] as if they were watching a comedy play.”⁶⁵³

Finally, the writer in this story shows the deep respect, pride, love, gratitude, and even guilt every prisoner of war, including I‘layan himself, has for their mothers and all the prisoners’ mothers. These strong feelings manifest themselves in more than one story in this collection and in the dedication page in the front of this story collection, where I‘layan bestows a high honour to his mother and all the mothers.

"إلى من أرضعتني حبّ الوطن والشعب.. إلى من جاعت في سبيل نصرّة الأسير.. إلى أمي وكلّ الأمهات.."

“To the one who breastfed me the love of the homeland and the people.. To the one who starved as an act of solidarity with the prisoners of war.. To my mom.. and all the moms.”⁶⁵⁴ Those strugglers who faithfully have adopted the prisoners’ cause throughout the years by expressing their unconditional love, support, and solidarity with the prisoners via holding and participating in demonstrations, protest marches, sit-ins, and hunger strikes.⁶⁵⁵ Moreover, those great women continue to show up during the prison visits despite their old age, their health limitations, the elements, the long tiring travel time, the checkpoints, the long waiting time under the sun, wind or rain, and the humiliating physical searches they undergo before and after every prison visit. These great moms fill the hearts of the imprisoned beloved with warmth. They improve their

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 46.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁵⁵ al-Mahrum, *Da'irat*, 157.

self-esteem by their patience and steadfastness.⁶⁵⁶ They also make their incarcerated sons and daughters feel that they are alive, loved, and cared for even if a physical touch, a hug, or a kiss is impossible due to the net metal barrier that separates the prisoners from their beloved mothers.⁶⁵⁷ In this story, the mother of the prisoner is a simple Palestinian housewife, who had nothing to do with politics before her son's arrest. She was even trying to convince her son to stay away from the resistance. "انتبه إلى دروسك يا بني واترك هذه الأفكار التي لا تسبب إلا خراب البيوت!!!"

“Focus on your studies, son, and leave these ideas that will only lead to troubles.”⁶⁵⁸ However, after his arrest, she became an activist. She started to participate in the sit-ins, and hunger strikes that the mothers of the prisoners of war used to organise despite her chronic illness. This activism made her son proud of her and transformed her life forever.

The third story, "الأرض" "The Land," was written in Nafhah prison in 1981. It deals with another crime of the colonisation that is the policy of confiscating Palestinian land. This story consists of three scenes and two notes at the end. The notes are based on newspaper stories from which the author most likely had the inspiration for his story.

It is worth noting that the only contact the Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees had with the outside world was the monthly family visits until 1979. In 1980, the authorities of the IZSCR prisons allowed the prisoners to subscribe, at their own expense, to “al-Quds” daily newspaper (Arabic), “Ma‘ariv” and “Yidi‘ot” daily newspapers (Hebrew) in

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 158-59.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 148.

⁶⁵⁸ I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 43.

addition to “ The Times” and “National Geographic” magazines that the Red Cross was allowed to deliver. However, the different prisons’ administrations would do their best to delay the delivery of these newspapers or stop the delivery for days or weeks to prevent the prisoners from knowing about the different events as soon as they take place.⁶⁵⁹ It is evident from the wording of the two pieces of news that they adopt the story of the IZSCR and vaguely present the events after eliminating all the human details from them. One piece of news says that a citizen was killed, and four people were injured when the police tried to stop a demonstration in village “x” that was held to obstruct the work of digging sewage ditches in a piece of land that belonged to the killed man. It also adds that the police succeeded to contain the situation by arresting a number of the demonstration organisers, and thus the work on digging the ditches was resumed.⁶⁶⁰

As for the second note, the news item says that the police would not sue the soldier who shot the landowner because he acted out of self-defence and according to orders given beforehand.⁶⁶¹ Such news would provoke anger and lots of pain in the prisoners’ hearts because they joined the resistance in the first place to defend their people and protect them from the colonisation and its crimes. However, being captured temporarily imposed a different kind of battle over them and deprived them of their ability to fulfil their duty towards their colonised and oppressed people. The writer decides to repress and conceal all kinds of pain and guilt expressions he and his inmates experience when they hear such news. He instead chooses to

⁶⁵⁹ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 123.

⁶⁶⁰ I’layan, *Sa’at*, 62-63.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

bring the dead back to life and prefers to give the victim a voice to tell his own story and an opportunity to scandalise his murderer. The first scene takes place in real-time by using the present tense. An omniscient narrator uses the third person pronoun to show us the main character's actions, the "killed citizen." We see him alive, slowly and silently crossing the room back and forth in deep thinking. We also see his wife, Umm Ali, sitting in the same room looking at him. The narrator does not provide direct, straightforward information about the reason behind such a behaviour to trigger our curiosity as readers. One of the ways the writer reveals information about the characters is the device of interior monologue. From the wife's inner thoughts, we learn that he has been walking in this manner for two hours after reading a letter.⁶⁶² As readers, we simultaneously start to wonder, as the wife, about the letter's content. From the interior monologue of Abu 'Ali, we learn that the wife is illiterate and cannot read the letter.⁶⁶³ From the wife's inner thoughts, we know that her husband must be anxious because of the letter, which must have contained bad news. Besides, we learn that the husband is ill tempered, so the wife should wait until he calms down to ask about the letter's content.⁶⁶⁴

The delay in revealing the required information continues, he sits down and asks for a cup of tea. His wife sees this as her excellent opportunity to enquire about the letter. After he sips his tea and smokes his cigarette, he takes out the letter and reads it for her. She hears new terms such as "confiscation," "compensation," and the word "land" repeated many times. She does not fully understand what he is reading and begs him to tell her what is going on. Before Umm Ali,

⁶⁶² Ibid., 53.

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., 54.

the reader would guess that Abu 'Ali has received a warrant from the colonial state informing him that the land would be confiscated, and if he accepts, he will receive a sum of money as compensation. The first scene ends with Abu 'Ali leaving the house after a short dialogue between him and his wife. The wife cries and yells because she realises that they will lose the land, their only income source, while her husband tries to calm her down and assure her that he will not let this happen. The wife continues to cry and asks her husband

"بس شو يدك تساوي يا حسرة أهو الكف بناطح مخرز؟"

"What will you do, alas? Would the hand fight against the awl?" This famous Arabic proverb means that the struggle's weaker party has a limited resistance power and cannot face and win against a vast, brutal power. This rhetorical question foreshadows the tragic end and prepares the reader for it.⁶⁶⁵

The second scene is about Abu 'Ali standing on a hill across from his land. In a lengthy interior monologue, we listen to his thoughts. He has mixed feelings and cannot explain whether he feels a deep love for this piece of land

"العزيزة على قلبه كوله وزوجته وكل أهله"

"[that is] as dear as his son and wife and all his family, or he is frightened of the unknown future in case the land is confiscated. He is also unsure if he feels angry with al-Mukhtar (the head of

⁶⁶⁵ The original proverb uses the word "eye" instead of "hand." However, in the different books that deal with Palestinian resistance, the eye is replaced by the hand as a symbol of action and resistance. 'Ali Lubāni, *Mu'jam al-Amthāl al-Filasṭīniyah* (Bayrūt: Maktabat Lubnān Nāshirūn, 1999), 547.

the village) who collaborates with the colonial state against his people. Then he remembers his wife's last words about the inability of the hand to face the awl. Here and through the association of ideas, the reader is introduced to 'Ali, the son who told his father once, "if all the hands get together, they can face all the world's awls." We learn that he left for Beirut to study agricultural engineering to help his father cultivate the land, and there he joined "the hands that face the awl" that is the Palestinian revolution and the P.L.O.⁶⁶⁶

Through the stream of consciousness, we find out that this land is Abu 'Ali's only living source. After it was a source of his bread, vegetables, and olives and money when he sells the extra produce, the colonial state will dig sewage ditches in it to drain the garbage, urine, and excrement of the settlers who came to "our land" from the West and the East.⁶⁶⁷ Here the reader starts to fill up the missing information in the newspaper report mentioned above. First, neither the landowner nor his village is benefiting from this project. Second, the main issue is confiscating the land and using arms against peaceful, unarmed protesters rather than obstructing the work on a sewage project. Third, as 'Ali says, this sewage project is only one of many excuses that the colonial state uses to fulfil its colonial dreams, i.e., to turn Palestine into a Jewish state, displace and expel the rest of the Palestinians from their land.⁶⁶⁸ Abu 'Ali has many dear memories in this land and when he feels that he may not be able to see it again, he cries. One of these precious memories is the birth of Ali under one of the olive trees that has been named since then after his son's name. Abu 'Ali is still standing up the hill watching his land and

⁶⁶⁶ I'layan, *Sa 'at*, 56.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

feeling deep love inside and wishing to stay in his location to keep looking at it and enjoying its beauty. The second scene ends with Abu ‘Ali waking up of his daydreams with the determination to find a way to rescue his beloved land.⁶⁶⁹

In the third scene, the omniscient narrator tells the reader that Abu ‘Ali and a local club successfully set up a solidarity campaign. They organise demonstrations, protests, sit-ins, and strikes. They try to gain public opinion by giving interviews and sending petitions to newspapers, the media, local and international organisations.⁶⁷⁰

On the commencement day of the sewage project, Abu ‘Ali, his wife, his elderly father, and the club committee formed for that day meet at the land and set up a protest tent in its centre. The inhabitants of the village of all ages start to show up according to the committee’s plan. The committee informs the crowd that they will negotiate with the approaching car and bulldozers, and all they need to do is raise signs and stay disciplined.

The negotiations fail with the sewage project workers because, in their eyes, the people are breaking the law. The government decided to dig the land, and this decision should be carried out. Police and army vehicles arrive. Soldiers and police officers get out of the cars fully armed and ready for a real war.⁶⁷¹ They lay a siege over the land. An officer approaches Abu ‘Ali and orders him to leave the location immediately, or otherwise, they will start shooting. The people raise the signs and start shouting their slogans. One soldier does not wait for commands. He

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 57-58.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., 59

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., 61.

points his machine gun at Abu 'Ali while the latter is still arguing with the officer and shoots him down. The scene ends with Abu 'Ali dying in his wife's arms after realizing that the only way to face such a colonial criminal state is by armed resistance.

"قال عليّ إنّه سيعود، سيعود مع رفاقه ليحموا الأرض، سيعود والأرض في قلبه، سيعود، سي..ع..و..د"

“Ali said he is coming back home, he is returning with his comrades to protect the land, he is returning with the land in his heart, he is returning.”⁶⁷²

I'layan succeeds in shocking the reader as the events develop violently towards the end of the story. The reader does not comprehend why a government which claims that it is a “democratic state” would use such unnecessary aggression and hostility towards its nonviolent citizens. They practice their democratic right of protest even if they belong to a different nationality or ethnic group. The reader is also disturbed by the unnecessary loss of life and the victim's dehumanisation by the police and the army. Their duty is to defend and protect all the citizens rather than killing some of them in cold blood because of their race

"هذا الخنزير لماذا يعيش، ليذهب إلى الجحيم"

“This pig why would he live, let him go to hell.”⁶⁷³ Besides, the reader feels anger and disgust, first, because the newspapers aid and abet the perpetrators and fail to address the real crime committed and, second, because the murderer has been acquitted. Most importantly,

⁶⁷² Ibid., 62.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., 61.

I'layan succeeds to engage the reader in the actions that are taking place in the scene and make him/her feel, as he feels, helplessness and guilt because of the limitations of his position as a reader that deprives him of the ability to change the outcome of the events. Other issues that I'layan highlights in this story and will repeat themselves in other stories of different writers are first the intolerance of the writers towards the phenomenon of collaboration with the colonisers that the Palestinian society is suffering from inside and outside the colonial prison walls. This issue is presented in al-Mukhtar, a marginal character who encourages the village inhabitants to accept giving away their land for compensation and does not participate in the inhabitants' political activities against the confiscation order.⁶⁷⁴

The second theme is the admiration the first generation of the Nakbah, represented by Abu 'Ali, has for the second generation of the Nakbah, represented by 'Ali. The older generation finds that the younger generation is fearless, practical and has more political awareness than the older one. It also trusts and believes in the younger generation's ability to manage and lead the liberation struggle.

The fourth story is "قصة بألف عنوان" "A Story That Can Have One Thousand Titles," was written in Nafḥah prison in 1982. It is a story of a sixteen-year-old boy called Sa'id who is studying at home while babysitting for his three little brothers and waiting for his mother to come back home. The mother is late, and the boy starts to worry. The little boys as well start to make noise and cry, asking for their mom. Sa'id calms them down until they fell asleep, and he puts them in their beds. The mother is four hours late, and Sa'id continues to worry. Through his

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., 59.

stream of consciousness, we learn that he has an impoverished family. They became poorer after his dad, a construction worker, died in a work accident. His mother had to find a job and became the provider for the family. Two months after that terrible event, the oldest brother quits school to help his mother support the family. A few months later, the oldest brother is arrested by the colonial occupation forces and is convicted for a life sentence in prison. Since then, the mother became the only provider for the family and a political activist participating and organising different solidarity activities with the prisoners of war. We also learn that today is “the day of the prisoners of war” and she is participating in a demonstration. In the narration, Sa’id thinks that maybe something terrible has happened to her, and his worries increase.⁶⁷⁵ He goes out to check if she is back, he returns, he turns on the radio and tries to continue reading Ghassan Kanafani’s novel *Umm Sa ‘d*.⁶⁷⁶ It is ten o’clock at night, the broadcaster on the radio declares the beginning of the news broadcast. Sa’id listens. Then he hears in the headlines that the security forces have arrested the riots’ organisers during the demonstration that took place that day on the occasion of what is called “the prisoners of war day” and that the woman who was injured because of the shooting has just passed away. He feels great pain in his heart just because he thinks that this woman could be his mother, and he waits impatiently and stressfully for the detailed news. The story ends with a deafening scream and two tears Sa’id sheds after he hears the broadcaster announce his mother’s name as the name of the murdered woman.

⁶⁷⁵ The Palestinian people and its supporters all over the world mark April 17 of every year as a national day of solidarity with Palestinian prisoners of War and administrative detainees in the Israeli Zionist settler colonial prisons (IZSCP). The Palestinian National Council (PNC) of the PLO decided on this date because, on April 17, 1974, Mahmoud Bakir Hijazi, the first Palestinian prisoner of war to be held in IZSCP was released. By choosing this date, the PNC intended to send a message of hope, solidarity, and freedom to all the prisoners promising them that eventually all Palestinian prisoners of war will be freed. This day is celebrated annually by holding different and various activities of support and solidarity. Yousef Aljamal, “On Palestinian Prisoner Day: A Whole Captive Population Longing for Freedom,” *The Palestine Chronicle- The Authentic Voice of Palestine*, April 16, 2019, <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/on-palestinian-prisoner-day-a-whole-captive-population-longing-for-freedom/>.

⁶⁷⁶ Ghassan Kanafani, *Umm Sa ‘d* (Qubrus: Manshurat al-Rimāl 2013).

I'layan, as a freedom fighter and Palestinian revolutionary, is deeply connected to his people, its cause, and aspirations despite the chains of the prison. He completely aligns himself with the working class to which he belongs. This class is the one who suffers the most under the colonial occupation, as we understand from the mother's words:

"يقولون إنَّ ضربتين على الرأس تؤلم فكيف الحال إذا توالى الضربات المتتالية"

"They say that two blows on the head are painful. How would it feel if the blows continue successively?"⁶⁷⁷ I'layan sides with the poor not because of their poverty and suffering but rather because of the positive stand of their life and what is going around them. Such a stand is the humane and revolutionary duty of all *les miserables* to liberate themselves through armed resistance rather than surrendering to misery and distress. Here, I'layan agrees with Ghassan Kanafani's belief that the ultimate solution of both the oppressed and the proletarian masses is the revolution, as reflected in the novel of *Umm Sa'd*. This novel is the book that Sa'id is reading in the story and the one he is reading to his mother too.

"أفتح رواية "أم سعد"، أحاول القراءة، غدًا سأحاول قراءتها على مسمع أمي"

"I open the novel of *Umm Sa'd*. I try to read; tomorrow I will finish reading it to my mum."⁶⁷⁸

The oldest brother, who found himself "the only man in the house" after his father's death, has to quit school and work in a factory to help the mother with the expenses.⁶⁷⁹ He refuses to

⁶⁷⁷ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 59.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., 74.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid., 72.

surrender to the new reality. He shares with his mother her worries, pains, and sorrows and assures her and his brothers that the armed resistance and the revolution would end their miseries.

"دموعنا يا أخي ستتحول إلى خناجر وصراخنا إلى دوي قنابل"

"Our tears, brother, will turn into daggers and our shouts into bomb explosion sounds."⁶⁸⁰ In her turn, the mother, like Umm Sa'd, represents all the Palestinian mothers who willingly sacrifice their sons and daughters for the sake of the liberation of Palestine. The successive hardships she experiences change her, and she stops pulling her hair and crying in a loud voice. Instead, she would silently cry and quietly burn.⁶⁸¹ Her son's arrest fills her heart with pain and agony and makes her look many years older than her real age. However, she does not complain. She would spend her days working hard as a housekeeper in a hotel and spend her nights grieving. She continues to believe in the revolution and the revolutionary ideas of her oldest son. When Sa'id offers to help her even though he is only eleven years old, she tells him that the poor's age is not measured by years. She asks him to study hard to become a physician or a lawyer in the future and assures him that as his brother used to say, their situation would change as long as they are working on it.⁶⁸² Unlike Umm Sa'd, who could not join the Fida'iyyin like Sa'd, her son, because she had to raise her other children, the mother in this story turns out to be a political activist. She not only participates in all the solidarity activities with the Palestinian prisoners of war and

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., 73.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 72.

⁶⁸² Ibid., 74.

becomes a member of an organisation that supports their cause but she also sacrifices herself for the sake of this national cause.⁶⁸³

As for Sa'id, he was 11 years old when his father died in an accident at the workplace, and his brother was arrested. Since then, he sees his mom burdened with distress and misfortune and feels pain. He tries to help her by focusing on his studies as she wishes, watching after his little brothers when she is not home and sometimes massaging her swollen feet or bent back. Sa'id's life after the ten o'clock news on the night of the crime is turned upside down. His first reaction after hearing the headlines is a total shock:

"يقفز قلبي من صدري، أنسَمّر مكاني، تسودّ الدنيا في وجهي، لم أعد أرى شيئاً... تحتقن الدماء في وجهي... ترتجّ يداي، بل ينتفض جسمي كلّهُ ... تخرج من أعماقي صرخة مدوية... يتجمّد الدّم في عروقي"

“my heart jumps out of my chest, I stand as if I am pinned to the ground, the world blackens in my face, I could not see anything... blood congeals on my face, my hands shake, rather my whole body shivers... a deafening scream comes out of my depths... blood freezes in my veins.”⁶⁸⁴ However, soon his eyes dry out except for two tears he drops on *Umm Sa'd*. One tear turns into “a creek of blood” where cactus trees grow around its banks.⁶⁸⁵ In other words, through this simile, the writer expresses the great pain the son is feeling. The murder of the mother leaves a wound that has a size of a creek that would never stop bleeding deep inside him. The cactus trees symbolise endurance. Thus, he would need a great strength to be able to

⁶⁸³ Ibid., 75.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid., 76.

withstand this loss of the mother. As for the second tear, it turns into a shiny dagger that he would carry in his pocket. Replacing the tear by a dagger highlights revolutionary values borrowed from the new reality of Sa'id, who refuses to reconcile or surrender to such a fate. Instead, he joins the revolution that would put an end to the crimes of the colonial occupation. He finally understands what his mom once told him: "The poor's age is not measured by years."

He starts to experience the change that he is undergoing after he hears the tragic news. Sa'id after 10 p.m. is different from Sa'id before 10 p.m. He has to leave behind the 16-year-old boy and replace it with a mature, responsible man. From now on, Sa'id becomes the caregiver and the provider for the three little orphans who are sleeping in the next room and the imprisoned brother.

He is convinced that Umm Sa'd, the protagonist of Kanafani's novel, signals the revolution's approach and that the revolution is already born and that the new generation whom she foresees carrying the flag of freedom does exist. This generation is already fighting to achieve the people's aspirations despite all the hardships, the agonies, and pains. Thus, revolutionary optimism and hope prevail in both I'layan's story and Kanafani's novel.

In this story, I'layan indirectly sheds light on two of the most painful issues that add up more torment to the prisoners' daily suffering in prison and elevate it to unbearable and unprecedented degrees. The first one is the lack of and/or insufficient financial, emotional, and moral support offered by the masses, the national movement, and the political leadership to both the prisoners and their families. The mother is forced to find a job after her husband's death and the arrest of her son. Al-Qaymari, in his collective testimony *Prison is not for us*, states that the

Palestinian prisoners of war from 1967 until 1979 felt that they and their families were abandoned and left all alone to face their bitter fate. During these years, only the families of the prisoners and some individuals from the avant-garde of the national movement were interested in the case of the prisoners and their cause.⁶⁸⁶

The historical hunger strike of Nafḥah prison in 1980 is considered a turning point in this regard.⁶⁸⁷ During this hunger strike, the prisoners raised three slogans: “No for submission, yes for starvation and save our souls.”⁶⁸⁸ As a result, the Palestinian revolution and the masses’ national movement started to be interested in the prisoner of war cause. Around 1984 they recognised that this cause is as significant as all the other national causes, such as the cause of protecting the land and the cause of defending the masses from the crimes of the colonial occupation and its arbitrary measures.⁶⁸⁹ The mother in the story becomes very active in solidarity activities with the prisoners to the extent that she sacrifices her life for their cause. The message that I’layyan wants to convey is the importance of the unity and interrelatedness between the masses and their revolutionary Avant-garde, inside or outside the prison walls. Without such cohesion, there would not be a revolution. Consequently, the Avant-garde would cease to exist. Thus, the solidarity of the masses empowers the prisoners and helps them endure the distress of their prison experience.

⁶⁸⁶ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 197.

⁶⁸⁷ I will talk about this hunger strike in detail in the analysis of the eighth story of this collection.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 198

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 197-98.

The second painful issue is the loss of a parent, a sibling, or any other family member while in prison. The isolation of the prison intensifies the prisoner's love and appreciation for his family.⁶⁹⁰ The prisoner of war does not enjoy the right to occasionally have a vacation to spend time with his/her family like the Israeli criminal prisoners.⁶⁹¹ He/she is not even allowed to have a special visit to his/her family during happy occasions, such as holidays, weddings, graduations, or sad occasions, such as funerals and visits for a dying family member. On infrequent occasions, Palestinian prisoners of war are allowed to have a "special visit." Such visits take place in prison after a sad or a happy family occasion. The prisoner is allowed to have a 30-45 minute visit in which he meets his family members face to face without the separation net metal barrier that usually separates them apart during regular prison visits.⁶⁹² The loss of a dear family member and the inability to kiss him/her goodbye or pay one's last respects to him/her elevate the "suffering of the prisoner in [his] painful journey of endurance."⁶⁹³ Telling the story from the point of view of Sa'id rather than the oldest brother and ending it at its climax are two narrative tricks that I'layyan deliberately uses to avoid expressing the tremendous pain the prisoners suffer from at such agonising incidents. He does this for many reasons. First, if the story escapes the sudden security checks and confiscation by the prison guards, it would not bypass the censorship when he mails it out as a letter to his family. Thus, out of responsibility, he is unwilling voluntarily to provide the prison administration with sensitive information that the latter would use to invent new methods of torture that aim to crush the prisoners. Second, being in his seventh

⁶⁹⁰ al-Mahrum, *Da'irat*, 163.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., 147.

⁶⁹² Ibid., 149-150.

⁶⁹³ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 197.

year of imprisonment when he wrote the story in 1982 means that he is well entrenched in prison life and knows how to automatically alternate his state of mind, disassociate and surround himself with a protective shield every time he finds himself emotionally and/ or physically vulnerable. Thus, his unpreparedness to clearly express pain because of the hostile environment he lives in and at the same time the suffering from a magnitude of pain that needs to be released in a way or another make him use such narrative tricks to dissociate from the event to enable the telling process and to communicate the agonising feelings. However, I'layan indirectly hints that he and many inmates feel pain and how they usually deal with grief by using two different techniques in the story. The first is via an epigraph that is set at the beginning of the story. This epigraph consists of a line of poetry by the Russian poet and Editor Aleksander Tvardovsky (1910-1971) that says, "if you grieve, [so] grieve with pride without bending the heads."⁶⁹⁴ The other technique is by describing how the characters in the story agonise and deal with their own pain. The prisoners, like both the mother and the oldest brother in this story, learn in the wake of their imprisonment to hide their feelings and conceal any bodily, facial and verbal expressions that can uncover the pain and agony they experience inside their bodies and souls as a defence mechanism.

"يسمع البكاء ولا يبكي، يحزن ولا يشكو، كان يقول دائماً بثقة وبتصميم، "دموعنا يا أخي ستتحول إلى خناجر..."

⁶⁹⁴ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 67.

“He hears weeping, and he does not cry he grieves and does not complain he used to always say with assurance and determination, “our tears, brother, would turn into daggers...”⁶⁹⁵ In another example the narrator says:

"أصبحت صامتة كبئر عميق، تسمع ولا تتكلم، تتألم ولا تشكو"⁶⁹⁶

“She became silent as a deep well, listening without talking, and feeling pain without complaining.”⁶⁹⁷ Moreover, two similes in the story disclose how both the characters and the writer, who represents thousands of inmates, experience pain. The first one describes the pain as a deep wound that penetrates the skin, then the flesh, then the bones until it reaches the heart and stays there inside as an integral part of the person who experiences it

"يلازمنا كظلنا أتى ذهبنا وأنا حللنا"⁶⁹⁸

“It accompanies us like our shadow wherever we go.”⁶⁹⁹ The other simile depicts suffering as a “creek of blood.”⁷⁰⁰ In this simile, Suffering and the creek have two features in common, i.e., the endless flow and the continuous change or renewal of its water/blood. Thus, according to the second simile, the deep wound does not turn into an unchangeable part of its owner that he/she

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., 73.

⁶⁹⁶ Grammatical mistake in the original text. Well in Arabic is feminine and the adjective should be in the feminine form (عميقة).

⁶⁹⁷ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 73.

⁶⁹⁸ A typo mistake in the original text it has to be "أتى".

⁶⁹⁹ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 69.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 76.

could embrace or reconcile with over time. It would rather intensify and accumulate with every extra moment prisoners spend in prison due to the non-stop, evolving and continuous physical and psychological torture imposed over them by the prison administration. Consequently, the prisoners have to make tremendous and constant efforts to discover new “cactus trees,” i.e., inner powers and elements of resistance to endure the magnitude of their suffering and “grieve with pride” without submitting to their pain and/ or being consumed by it.

In addition, I‘layan sheds light on another economic and social phenomenon that the Palestinian society suffered from and is reflected in many literary works in the seventies and the eighties of the twentieth century, such as the novel “*al-Sabbar*” (*Wild Thorns*) written by Sahar Khalifeh in 1976.⁷⁰¹ It is the phenomenon of Palestinians working in Israel. Due to the occupation and inundating the Palestinian markets with Israeli goods, Palestinian peasants could not compete with the coloniser’s market or handle the costs of cultivating their land. Many abandoned their land and joined the Israeli job market as workers in the factories, farms, and building/construction sectors. Their salaries were indeed much higher than the salaries of doctors and engineers in the occupied territories. However, these salaries were less than the salaries of the Israeli workers. Moreover, the Palestinian workers did not enjoy any rights under Israeli labour laws, such as benefits, health, life insurance, paid vacations, etc. I‘layan, in this story, as well as the previous one, indirectly opposes this phenomenon. The father in the story, who worked as a construction worker in Israel, returns home in a box, and the family does not receive any compensation.⁷⁰² Abu ‘Ali, in the previous story, decides to reject the warrant of

⁷⁰¹ Sahar Khalīfah, *al-Ṣabbār* (Bayrūt: Dār al- Ādāb, 1999).

⁷⁰² I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 72.

confiscation for many reasons. One of these reasons is that he does not want to beg for a job in the Israeli factories and workshops after being a landowner.⁷⁰³

Finally, I'layan manages through the technique of delay, the gradual unfolding of the events through the stream of consciousness of Sa'id, the main character, and the open ending at the climax of the plot to attract the readers, engage them in the reading process and shock them with the tragic end that is contradictorily full of hope. Such an end is not an end indeed, but rather the beginning of many stories. Some examples of such stories could deal with the fate of Sa'id and his little three brothers, the effect of the mother's murder on the imprisoned son, the reaction of the community of the prisoners or /and the masses to the mother's sacrifice, etc. The many possible stories would haunt the readers and urge them to imagine the different scenarios of their events and closures. Thus, the writer was very successful in picking the story's title because a story that can conceive endless stories or have numerous closure possibilities is definitely "A Story that Can Have One Thousand Titles."

The fifth story is "عائدة على الدّرب" "Aida is following the path" was written in Nafḥah prison in January 1983. It is a story of a prisoner whom the prison governor calls to inform him that the prison administration agrees on releasing 'Aida, his dying daughter, only if the prisoner agrees to collaborate with the prison authority and write reports about the activities of the prisoners who reside with him in the same section of the prison. The prisoner makes his mind after a short conflict within himself and rejects the despicable deal.

⁷⁰³ Ibid., 57.

In this story, I‘layan calls attention to the incessant hostile policy of the psychological and physical torture that aims at crushing the prisoner’s pride by focusing on one of its elements. That is the prison administration’s persistent attempts to turn the prisoner to a degraded collaborator by abolishing his/her human dignity, his/her national/ revolutionary honour and uprooting him/her from his/her people and his/her national movement. As Jean-Paul Sartre states in the preface of Henri Alleg’s book *The Question* “it is the man himself that they want to destroy, with all his human qualities, his courage, his will, his intelligence, his loyalty—the very qualities that the colonizer claims for himself.”⁷⁰⁴ These non-stop attempts to recruit collaborators start from the first minute of the interrogation and continue throughout all the years of incarceration.⁷⁰⁵ The prison administration needs different kinds of information about the prisoners’ society that the collaborator could make available. First, the prison authority needs to know the most challenging, most influential, and most politically aware inmates. This information is required to focus on crushing them, isolating them, and even recruiting those who show any weakness. Second, the prison authority wants to know the prisoners’ plans and intentions ahead of time to take the right measures to disrupt and deactivate them. Third, it also needs to know the prisoners’ personal or family secrets to resume its attempts to recruit the prisoners and their family members as collaborators. Fourth, the prison authority uses the given information as a means to force the informers to continue collaborating with it or else face punishment or even death in their cells if the other inmates discover their involvement in such activities.⁷⁰⁶ Still, collaboration is not only limited to collecting and transmitting information,

⁷⁰⁴ Sartre, “Preface,” 33.

⁷⁰⁵ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 134-5.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 139.

but also it is about carrying out special dirty missions. Spreading rumours and lies, false accusations, and slanders against certain inmates to stir social and personal quarrels and contentions amongst the prisoners are only a few examples of such missions. Another kind of mission would aim at causing troubles among the various political factions that the prisoners are affiliated with and which are very different in their ideologies and political views. Forming new groups with no political affiliation to increase the contradictions and deepen the prisoners' internal disagreements that aim to weaken the prisoners' movement is another such task.⁷⁰⁷

al-Qaymari adds that the role of the collaborators developed with time to the extent that they started to recruit other collaborators by using "أشكالاَ ممعنة في قذارتها وبشاعتها" "the filthiest and ugliest methods" such as using sexual seduction and homosexual activity to force their victim to collaborate or otherwise to be scandalised.⁷⁰⁸ The prisoners' movement in al-Sab' prison (1974-1976) and 'Asqalan prison (1979-1981) decided to fight against the collaborators' phenomenon. Thus, they established security committees and started internal interrogations. As a result, many collaborators were discovered, and many others disclosed their collaboration when they started escaping from their cells because they were too morally degraded to regain their dignity and return to their people. After a group of collaborators decided to escape together from their cells in 'Asqalan prison, the prison authority moved them to a separate prison section called the cells of shame by the prisoners.⁷⁰⁹ Since then, the prisoners prohibit any contact or relation with the disclosed collaborators who live in the cells of shame in the different prisons. After establishing

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid., 140.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid., 141.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., 137.

the shame cells, their role became limited to use devious and/or violent ways against new detainees during and after the interrogation to make them confess, as we have seen in the previous chapter.⁷¹⁰ The phenomenon of collaboration in the IZSCR prisons is a small-scale phenomenon. The number of the collaborators, from 1967 to 1984, did not exceed a couple of hundreds. However, the prisoners had to pay attention to it, study it, find ways to terminate it, and protect themselves from it at all times.⁷¹¹ The security committees who handled the interrogations with the collaborators concluded that the ultimate goal of this phenomenon whether it targeted the individual prisoner or the prisoners' collective it aimed at turning the Palestinian prisoner of war to a sub-man "empty of any kind of human and national content." Thus, every individual prisoner is the one who is responsible for preserving his human and national self and never giving up his human dignity in any circumstances in prison.⁷¹² Moreover, the responsibility of the political faction that the prisoner belongs to and the prisoners' movement, in general, is to protect this human and national self, because belonging to a group empowers the individual and increases his/her possibilities of endurance.⁷¹³

I'layan suffered like the rest of the prisoners from the devastating effects of the collaboration phenomenon on the prisoners' society during the seventies. He also witnessed with his own eyes the success of the prisoners' movement in controlling this phenomenon and the escape of the collaborators to the cells of shame. Thus, it was very important for him to offer his

⁷¹⁰ Ibid., 142.

⁷¹¹ Ibid., 144.

⁷¹² Ibid., 137.

⁷¹³ Ibid., 105.

Palestinian readers, many of whom are potential future prisoners, a real story that had happened to comrade Sa'id Ahmad al-Hajj (Abu 'Aida). He deliberately uses a real story to show his readers that the possibility of surviving all the attempts of the prison authority or its collaborators to recruit new collaborators is a fact. As long as the prisoner feels deeply connected to his people and considers that their suffering is an essential part of his own suffering, he would turn this suffering into greater energy from which he would derive new powers of endurance to preserve his human and national honour.

Abu 'Aida refuses the disgraceful offer of the prison governor:

"ابنتي تموت .. لأنكم تقتلونها كلَّ يوم- أنتم المسؤولون ولا أوافق، تموت ابنتي إن وافقت، وأموت أنا أيضًا،

وتحيا ابنتي وأحيا أنا أيضًا إن حافظت على شرفنا وشرف ثورتنا"

"My daughter is dying.. because you kill her everyday- you are the one who is responsible [for her death] and I reject [your offer], my daughter will die if I accept, and I will die as well, and my daughter will live and I will live if I preserve our honour and the honour of our revolution."⁷¹⁴

When the prison governor tells him that he is stupid and that his daughter will die, Abu Aida answers him:

"تموت.. ثلاثة آلاف من اللاجئيين العزل من شعبي ماتوا في ليلة واحدة، إنه ثمن الحرّية وأنت لن تفهم ذلك"

⁷¹⁴ Ibid., 99-100.

“She [will] die.. three thousands of unarmed refugees of my people died in one night, it is the price of freedom and you would never understand that.” There is an indication to Sabra and Shatila massacres that took place from the 16th -19th of September 1982.⁷¹⁵ Abu ‘Aida here relates himself to the suffering of his people and concludes that his daughter is facing the same fate as many Palestinians. Losing one’s life is the heavy price the freedom fighter who chooses to join the revolution, like his daughter, pays for the sake of liberation and achieving the people’s aspirations. Thus, this prison governor “the colonialist” as Fanon states in his book *A Dying Colonialism* “is incapable of grasping the motivations of the colonized.”⁷¹⁶

The story consists of six parts that are narrated by an omniscient narrator. The first part introduces the reader to the main character, Abu ‘Aida, through a dialogue between him, the warden who came to the cell to take him out, and his cell inmates. The warden calls his name, asks him to get ready, and does not inform him where he is taking him and why. From the dialogue, the reader learns that a year ago, Abu ‘Aida submitted a request to the prison administration to visit ‘Aida, and the inmates think that maybe he is called now to see her. The writer provides the reader with three pieces of information through the same dialogue. First, ‘Aida is in the women’s prison. Second, she is suffering from Hemiplegia disorder.⁷¹⁷

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., 100. al-Hout states in her book that the figure for those dead cannot be estimated at less than 3500. See: Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout, *Sabra and Shatila: September 1982* (London: Pluto Press, 2004) 289-9.

⁷¹⁶ Fanon, *The Wretched*, 63-64.

⁷¹⁷ Hemiplegia disorder is, in its most severe form, complete paralysis of half of the body. Hemiplegia can be caused by different medical conditions, including congenital causes, trauma, tumors, or stroke. “Hemiplegia.” Def. medical-dictionary. *thefreedictionary.com*. Accessed on 12 September 2020, <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/hemiplegia>.

Third, a request for release was submitted in her name to enable her to travel abroad for treatment. This scene ends with one of the inmates putting a small plastic heart in Abu 'Aida's pocket as a small gift for Aida. The prisoner made the plastic heart by drawing Palestine's map on one side and writing the phrase "we are returning" on the other side.⁷¹⁸ Abu 'Aida is touched and is afraid that the heart may be confiscated if the guards search him. The inmate assures him that he does not need to worry because it is too small to be recognised. The writer succeeds in drawing the reader's interest and curiosity by being very economical in revealing the information. The reader is eager to continue reading to fill up the gaps. In addition, the writer does not reveal direct information in many places in the story. Therefore, this technique requires a very attentive and active reader. In this scene, for instance, he uses it twice. First, he does not identify the relationship between 'Aida and the protagonist. However, from his *Kunya*, i.e., "Abu 'Aida," the reader guesses that it is a father-daughter relationship. Second, the writer does not mention the political affiliation of Abu 'Aida and his inmates. However, from using the word "comrade" in the dialogue, the reader concludes that they belong to the PFLP faction.

The second part is about Abu 'Aida walking with the warden and, through the omniscient narrator, the reader has access to Abu 'Aida's thoughts and how he is preparing himself for the meeting and imagining how he would react and what he would say.

"سيضم رأسها إلى صدره ويقبلها على مفرق شعرها... ويستمع إلى أخبارها ويحدثها كثيرًا كثيرًا، عن كل شيء، عن اعتزازه بها، عن أمله في أن يفرج عنها، وأن تذهب للخارج للعلاج "

⁷¹⁸ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 81.

“He will press her head to his bosom and will kiss her on her hair parting... he will listen to her news and tell her many things, about everything, about how proud of her he is, about his hope that she would be released and be able to travel abroad for treatment.”⁷¹⁹

At this point of the narration, he feels that the walk is taking too long and asks the warden about their destination. The warden informs him that he is taking him to the waiting room without any further information. Here doubts start to conquer his mind regarding the reason for calling him in. He arrives at the waiting room, and the writer, via the omniscient narrator in the third-person pronoun, and first-person pronoun monologues, presents the state of confusion that Abu ‘Aida has reached. His thoughts start to alternate between despair and hope.

”تملكه إحساس بالخيبة، لماذا أحضر إلى هنا إذا لم يكن من أجل زيارة عايدة - تفحص الأمر من كافة

الوجوه، أياكون المحامي؟ لا يعقل... فقد قابله قبل أسبوع فقط، أياكون مقابلة طبيب؟ شعر بسخافة الفكرة لأنه

منذ أربع عشرة سنة لم يطلب مقابلة طبيب...”

“He felt disappointed, why I was brought here if it was not to meet with Aida- he thought about all the possible options, was it to meet with the lawyer? That was not possible because he met with him a week ago. Was it to see a doctor? He felt that this is a ridiculous idea because for fourteen years he has not requested to see any doctor”⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁹ Ibid., 82.

⁷²⁰ Ibid, 83-84.

He convinces himself that the reason behind being in the waiting room rather than the visiting room is first because the visit requires a security arrangement, and this takes time. Second, the meeting cannot take place in the visiting room because ‘Aida is in a wheelchair. To keep himself busy, he looks at the drawings and the writings of the prisoners on the walls of the waiting room,

"نموت ولا نركع" و"أشعر أنني قويّ وأني أهزم زنزانتي"

“We [prefer to] die over submitting” and “I feel that I am strong and that I am defeating my cell.”⁷²¹ The writer employs these two slogans here to foreshadow the decision that Abu ‘Aida takes at the end of the story. Moreover, he uses the image of the map of Palestine drawn by cigarette ashes on the wall to provide the reader with background information about the characters. Seeing the map on the wall makes Abu ‘Aida take out the small heart that has a map of Palestine coloured with the Palestinian flag colours on one of its sides. The map “turns into earth and stones.”⁷²² It takes him, fourteen years back to the day of his arrest. The reader learns that Abu ‘Aida is from Jerusalem and that he is a shepherd. When he returned home with his sheep, ‘Aida, the three-year-old girl, ran towards him, crying out of fear to warn him. Within seconds, Abu ‘Aida carried her, and dozens of soldiers surrounded him while pointing their rifles at him. He put the girl down, kissed her, and wiped her tears. The soldiers handcuffed him and dragged him to the vehicle. This part ends with one of the soldiers carrying Aida to prevent her from following her dad and throwing her on the ground in her mother’s direction while she is

⁷²¹ Ibid., 84.

⁷²² Ibid.

shouting, asking her father to take her with him. This brutal act provoked the chained father, so he spat on the soldier. The soldiers began to beat and curse him until they threw him in the car. The echo of the screams of his wife and daughter and the sounds of his sheep are still ringing in his ears. No doubt that humiliating the father/husband, brutally arresting him in front of his wife and daughter, the violence the little girl encounters, and the mother who was left alone to find ways of keeping her daughter from “starving to death” “ have inflicted grave traumatism upon the family.”⁷²³ This deep scar that ‘Aida has inside shaped her personality and paved the way for her to join the revolution later in her life. The reader can conclude two pieces of new information about ‘Aida and her father: first, his arrest took place in 1968 if the reader subtracts 14 years from 1982. Second, if the reader adds 14 years to the three-year-old girl, he/she would know that ‘Aida was 16 years old when she was arrested.

In the third part, Abu ‘Aida is still waiting and keeps himself busy by looking at “names, lines of poetry.. messages.. drawings.”⁷²⁴ that are written on the walls of the waiting room. Suddenly he finds a message that is addressed to his daughter which says:

"تحياتنا الثورية إلى الرفيقة البطلة عابدة سعيد وعهدًا على الدرب سنبقى"

“Our revolutionary greetings to our heroine comrade ‘Aida Sa’id, and we promise you that we would stick to the path.”⁷²⁵ This message brings a tear in his eye and takes him and the reader back via flashbacks to incidents that took place in both the recent and distant pasts. One incident

⁷²³ Fanon, *The Wretched*, 97.

⁷²⁴ I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 86.

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

happened a year ago when his wife came alone to the prison visit and informed him that 'Aida was arrested and indirectly blamed him for encouraging her to follow the revolution path. When he hears the bad news, he sank in his thoughts, and the reader learns that he was illiterate and learned to read and write in prison in order to write letters for 'Aida and read to her during the prison visits. From another flashback, from a more distant past, the reader learns that the father is delighted when he realises that his daughter has grown up and that the seed he sowed in her is sprouting when she informs him that she was arrested for two days after stoning a police officer in a demonstration. I'layan shows the reader a new quality of the personality of Abu 'Aida that is perseverance. He did not waste his time in prison, but he improved himself by learning to read and write and educating himself. In addition, he showed a massive responsibility towards his family, and despite his physical absence from home, he played a central role in raising his daughter according to the values he believed in.

In the fourth part, Abu 'Aida begins to stress out, especially because an hour has passed while he is still waiting. The reader notices that the prison administration exercises the game of waiting as one of the prisoner's psychological and mental pressure tactics. This tactic aims to let the prisoner's fears of the unknown and the uncertainty of what is waiting for him consume him and cause him to collapse, have a nervous breakdown, be unable to make a sound decision, and, consequently, submit to his perpetrator. The reader sees Abu 'Aida walk back and forth in the waiting room-cell, smoking one cigarette after another. Besides, through the omniscient narrator, the interior feelings of Abu 'Aida are exposed to the reader. He begins to lose hope and feels pain. The pain is expressed via metaphors and is manifested by an external agent of pain and bodily symptoms.

"ارتسمت علامات الاستفهام واتخذت شكل منجل، وبألم وبعذاب داخليّ راح يتلقّى ضرباتها الموجعة على رأسه"

"The question marks took the shape of a sickle, and with pain and internal suffering, he started to receive its painful strokes on his head."⁷²⁶ The other metaphor is: " اقتربت " خيل إليه أنّ الرّزانة تضيق، صارت بحجم علبة سردين شعر بالاختناق " "he imagined that the cell was becoming tighter, the walls moving towards each other. It became the size of a pack of sardines, and he felt suffocated."⁷²⁷ These two metaphors are typical examples that show that pain has no "referential content." The writer uses the weapon that is pictured as creating this pain, which is the sickle in the first simile and the pack of sardines shaped room in the second one, as well as the mutilation that is pictured as accompanying this pain, which is the headaches in the first simile and the feeling of suffocation in the second one. However, even though neither the sickle/tight room nor the headaches/suffocation are identical with the physical pain itself, they are "referential," and the writer uses them to convey the experience of pain itself.⁷²⁸

As a well-experienced prisoner, Abu 'Aida disassociates himself from this pain by changing his state of mind and by preoccupying himself with the message that is addressed to his daughter on the wall. He mixes the ashes of his cigarette with some saliva and writes over the fading words.⁷²⁹ The word "heroine" in the message through the association of ideas takes Abu 'Aida and the reader back via a flashback to fill up another gap in the story that is the reason behind 'Aida's health condition. The reader and Abu 'Aida simultaneously hear the lawyer

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 89.

⁷²⁷ Ibid.

⁷²⁸ Scarry, *The Body*, 6, 15.

⁷²⁹ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 90.

saying that his daughter is a heroine, an adamant one, because she survived the interrogation without confessing even after the interrogators confronted her with evidence.⁷³⁰ He also says that the Shabak (Public security services) insist on taking her to trial although she is suffering from hemiplegia because of torture, and he suggests to him to submit a request for release. Abu 'Aida, who had no idea about the health condition of his only daughter, is shocked. The shock manifests itself by irritability, difficulty talking, dryness of the mouth, and severe pain all over his body.

يتحرّك الأخطبوط الكامن في أعماقه، يخزه بمخالب أذرع الحادة، يمتزج الألم بالدّم، يحسّ به

في كلّ أجزاء جسمه، يصعد إلى رأسه، يشعر بدوران شديد، الغرفة تدور، المحامي يدور، هو يدور"

"The octopus who is resting inside him moves, it pierces him with the sharp claws of its arms, pain mixes with the blood, he feels it in every part of his body, it reaches his head, he feels strong vertigo, the room is spinning, the lawyer is spinning, he is spinning."⁷³¹ Before Abu 'Aida passes out as a natural automatic defence mechanism that the body uses to protect itself from the severe pain, the writer cuts off the scene and ends this part of the story. The writer's ability to interfere and end the narration before he exposes his readers to more painful occurrences or to protect himself or his characters from reliving traumatic events is another textual technique that the writer employs in his stories.

The fifth part begins with the warden coming into the room and bringing Abu 'Aida back to the present time. He takes him to the prison governor's room. Abu 'Aida continues to wait to

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

⁷³¹ Ibid., 91.

see his daughter even after entering the room and meeting with the governor. During the dialogue between Abu 'Aida and the governor, Abu 'Aida as an experienced prisoner, puts on his protective shield by concealing any gesture, whether in his voice, face, or body language that could uncover what is going on inside him in terms of thoughts or emotions. Thus, he either ignores the questions or gives very brief answers. However, at the same time, the reader is exposed to Abu 'Aida's feelings, thoughts, and both his mental and emotional reactions through a monologue that takes place simultaneously with the dialogue and is separated from it by brackets in the text. The prison governor gradually presents his offer. First, he tells Abu 'Aida that he accepts to grant 'Aida a release. For a moment, Abu 'Aida could not believe the surprise and was so happy.⁷³² However, the governor adds, "but," then "everything has a price," then "as you know granting a release is not easy, especially because she only served one year of her ten years sentence."⁷³³ Here, the reader hears Abu 'Aida addressing the prison governor as "Shylock of the twentieth century, who does not give except if he takes," wondering about the price that should be paid and showing his willingness to give part of his flesh so "'Aida could be released and get treatment and live."⁷³⁴ In other words, the writer shows that the prison authority never offers anything good for the prisoners free of charge, but rather it seizes every opportunity to achieve its goals in enslaving them and crushing their inner-self. Abu 'Aida reaches this conclusion when the prison governor tells him that if he wants his dying daughter to be released, he has to write daily reports about the activities of the inmates in his section, " الذئب لا يمكن أن يصبح "

⁷³² Ibid., 94.

⁷³³ Ibid., 95.

⁷³⁴ Shylock is a character in William Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*. He is a Venetian Jewish moneylender who lends money to his competitor Antonio and sets the security at a pound of Antonio's flesh. William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, trans. 'Umar Abd al-Aziz Amīn (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Mulūkiyah, 1927).

إنساناً" "it is impossible for a wolf to become a human being." He understands that Shylock "does not want a piece of his flesh; he wants more than that. Shylock wants something dearer and more precious than a piece of flesh."⁷³⁵ No doubt that the real Abu 'Aida would not consider such a despicable offer and would reject it right away. However, for educational purposes, the writer presents a conflict inside his character to show his readers whether they are current inmates or potential future prisoners, how and why one prisoner would accept such an offer while another would not.

As al-Qaymari states in his book *Prison is not for us* when the prisoner loses his connection with the prisoners' collective and consequently with his people and when the prisoner focuses his interest on his own salvation, he/she would be finished not only as a revolutionary but also as a human being.⁷³⁶ I'layan conveys this idea via the first part of the interior conflict where the main character tends to accept the offer. Abu 'Aida suffers from severe pain and guilt because he finds himself responsible for the current critical medical situation of his daughter.

"حقاً أنا المسؤول... كنت أحرضها في رسائلي، في زياراتي"

"Indeed I am the one who is responsible [for this]... I used to incite her in my letters and during my visits."⁷³⁷ However, when Abu Aida stops seeing anything except the image of his half

⁷³⁵ I'layan, *Sa 'at*, 97.

⁷³⁶ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 133.

⁷³⁷ I'layan, *Sa 'at*, 97.

paralysed daughter sitting in her wheelchair and when saving her becomes his only interest and priority he ceases to be human.

"حاول أن يتنفس، لم يقدر استحال تمثالاً من حجر، توقّف قلبه عن الخفقان والدّم عن الجريان، تجمّدت أحاسيسه"

“he tried to breathe, he could not he turned into a statue made of stone, his heart stopped beating and the blood [stopped] flowing, his emotions froze.”⁷³⁸

He continues to convince himself to accept to collaborate by magnifying the benefits his daughter would enjoy, firstly, and by minimising and/ or totally ignoring the destructive consequences of collaboration on him and the prisoners’ collective, secondly. If Aida is free, she will travel abroad to get treatment; she will heal and become once again pretty and tough, she will join the university and become a doctor and will continue to write him letters with her right healed hand.⁷³⁹ She could benefit from all these advantages in exchange for

"ورقة صغيرة أكتبها كلّ صباح... قد تكون المعلومات كاذبة"

“A small paper I write every morning... the information could be false”

"ورقة صغيرة أكتبها كلّ صباح وألقيها في صندوق الممرض دون أن يلاحظ أحد"

⁷³⁸ Ibid.

⁷³⁹ Ibid., 97-98.

“A small [piece of] paper I write every morning and secretly drop in the nurse’s mailbox.”⁷⁴⁰

He refuses to understand the sad fact that what the perpetrator seeks in the first place is not the information but rather stripping him from everything he stands for and represents to turn him into a sub-man, a tool and weapon against his inmates and his people. First, writing a small paper every morning would only be the bait that would lead to the perpetrator's fulfilment of this ultimate goal. Second, giving a moral justification for accepting the immoral involvement in collaboration activities is another way the prisoner uses to justify such involvement to himself and others. Abu ‘Aida assures himself that if his inmates discover his cooperation with the enemy, they will recognise his motives and forgive him when they know that he was obliged to make such a sacrifice to save his dying daughter and fulfil his duty as a father.

"سيفهمني الجميع، من لا يفهمني يكون جاهلاً حقيقة المشاعر الأبوية، لن يحصل معي كما حصل مع الجواسيس الذين هربوا،
بالتأكيد لن يحصل ذلك، ولماذا يحصل؟ ألسنت حالة خاصة، نعم حالة خاصة جداً"

“Everybody would understand me, only the ones who do not know the essence of fatherly feelings would not understand me, nothing similar to what happened with the spies⁷⁴¹ who had escaped would happen to me. Definitely, it would not happen to me, and why would it happen? Am I not a special case, yes a very special one.”⁷⁴²

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹Here, the writer refers to the mass escape of collaborators from the collective cells in ‘Asqalnān prison in 1979 towards the prison administration and moving to the cells of shame. I mentioned this escape at the beginning of the close reading of this story.

⁷⁴² I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 94.

In the second part of the conflict, I'layan presents the prisoner's attitude, who refuses to collaborate. Such a prisoner is deeply connected to his people, its suffering and aspirations, and consequently to the prisoners' collective. This connectedness, as well as the endless survival and defence mechanisms he awakens inside him/her, preserve his/her emotional and mental balance and make him/her endure any distress in prison and any attempt to evacuate him/her from his humanity. Here Abu 'Aida imagines his daughter dies in his arms and becomes a martyr "because she refused to confess, resisted and challenged death" and because he rejected to collaborate by putting a report a

"قطعة من لحم إخواني ورفاقي أنهشها كل صباح"

"a piece of the flesh of my brothers and comrades that I will snap every morning" in the mailbox of the prison nurse.⁷⁴³ He justifies his decision through an imaginative dialogue with his daughter, in which he explains how much he loves her as a daughter and appreciates her as a comrade. However, one should stay faithful to the revolution and its principles and not sacrifice them for personal interests. Both Abu 'Aida and his daughter, like all the other revolutionary men and women, are aware that the path they have chosen to take is "شاق ووعر" "hard and rough." Still, they put their souls on their palms and walked its dangerous routes, sparing neither their own blood/life nor their suffering for the revolution's victory. When Abu 'Aida makes his mind to refuse the despicable offer, he becomes alive once again, "عاد دمه يتحرك وقلبه يخفق" "his blood started flowing and his heart beating once again."⁷⁴⁴ He chooses to preserve his dignity

⁷⁴³ Ibid., 99.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid.

and the “honour of the revolution.”⁷⁴⁵ He refuses to collaborate with his oppressor. He takes his destiny back into his own hands, willing to pay his share of the suffering that his people endures.

I‘layan ends the story, in the sixth part, with a figurative metaphor. Abu ‘Aida leaves the governor’s room, and while he is returning to his cell, he feels the warmth of the sun on his cheeks, and the plastic heart in his pocket becomes alive and starts to beat and pound and “soon it would bloom... it would bloom.” This metaphor reflects the feelings of Abu ‘Aida, who just won his battle against his oppressor. He feels so alive to the extent that he feels the plastic heart beating in his pocket because he did not die by excluding himself from the prisoners’ collective/ his people and because its spirit was protecting and guiding him during his battle. Such a spirit as Julias Fuchik articulates in his book *Notes from the Gallows* is “devoted to battle and convinced of final victory.”⁷⁴⁶ A victory that would flower because Abu ‘Aida the *fidā’i*, as Fanon states, does not retreat “before the possibilities of losing his life.” However, “at no moment does he choose death” because he has “a rendezvous with the life of the revolution.”⁷⁴⁷

The sixth story is "خالد لازم يعيش" “Khalid Must Live” written in Nafḥah prison in November 1983. This story is symbolic, and it indirectly points to the disunion that took place in Fatah in 1983.⁷⁴⁸ This disunion led to creating a new Palestinian militant faction called “Fatah-

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid., 100.

⁷⁴⁶ Julius Fuchik, *Notes from the Gallows* (New York: New Century Publishers, 1948), 41.

⁷⁴⁷ Fanon, *The Wretched*, 57-58.

⁷⁴⁸ Aḥmad Muḥḥarrām, “Ḥarb al-Mukhayyamāt: al-Faṣl al-Mansi fi al-Kifāḥ al-Musallaḥ al-Filaṣṭīni,” *www.ida2at.com-Iḏā’āt*, April 4, 2017, accessed on 15 July 2020, <https://www.ida2at.com/war-of-the-camps-the-forgotten-chapter-in-the-palestinian-struggle/>. See also Mamdūḥ Nawfal, *Maghdūshah: Qiṣṣat al-Ḥarb ‘Ala al-Mukhyyamāt* (Rām Allāh: Muwāṭīn, 2006), accessed on July 15, 2020, https://archive.org/details/skrdieh_lau_20161219_1806/page/n1/mode/2up.

al-Intifāḍah” (Fatah Uprising). Fatah Uprising and other Palestinian militant factions who were affiliated with the Syrian regime at the time, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC) and al-Sa‘iqah (the Vanguard for the Popular Liberation War), joined powers and clashed against ‘Arafat’s supporters in Palestinian refugee camps around the city of Tripoli that is located in Northern Lebanon. These clashes led later to what is known as the camps war from 1985-1988, and they are considered as the darkest pages written in the history of the Palestinian revolution. There is no doubt that these devastating events inflicted a tremendous pain over I‘layan and all the prisoners as a collective. They were seized and used by the different prison administrations as a new weapon in their psychological war against the prisoners’ collective to continue provoking them and sustain their sufferings. However, I‘layan avoids presenting these events from a prisoner character's point of view to stay at bay from any direct confrontation with agony. The structure of this story is very special. It takes the form of 12 sketches or a children’s storybook. The writer divides it into twelve short sections and every section has its own title that reflects the main idea of the given section. The language used in the story is very simple and straightforward in order to fit the main character that is Intisar (Victory) a little refugee girl. At the end of the story, the writer adds two notes. A technique that he uses in the third story as well. At the end of the story, he employs it to hint at certain information and convey a message, as I elaborate below. In addition, the writer continues to use the technique of short-term delay by delaying certain information about both the characters and the events in order to attract the curiosity of the reader and keep him/her turning the pages.

The title of the first sketch is “Intisar,” the writer gives a physical description of the main character "انتصار بنت صغيرة... انتصار بنت حلوة" “Intisar is a little girl... Intisar is a beautiful girl.”

Her features are not original Palestinian features "شعرها أشقر... عيناها زرقاوان" "her hair is blonde, and her eyes are blue." However, the writer deliberately uses these features to connect her indirectly to the Palestinian hometown that her family was displaced from in 1948 that is Jaffa "إن نظرت إليها من بعيد يعود إلى ذهنك بحر يافا" "if you look at her from a distance you will recall the sea of Jaffa."⁷⁴⁹

In the second sketch titled "Khalid" (Eternal), there is a physical description of Khalid, a marginal character. "خالد طفل صغير صغير... عمره ليس أكثر من سنة وشهرين" "Khalid is a very little baby... his age does not exceed 14 months."⁷⁵⁰ There is a very special relationship between Intisar and Khalid. She is very protective of him

"تحبه انتصار كثيرا... ترفض أن يمسه أحد غيرها، حتى أمها."

"Intisar loves him a lot.. she refuses to let anyone touch him even her mother." The omniscient narrator does not explain why she behaves in such a way. He also increases the reader's curiosity by providing another ambiguous piece of information.

"لكنه ليس من أمها وأبيها، هي تذكر ولا تنسى من أين جاء وكيف جاء"

"He is neither from her mother nor her father, she remembers and does not forget from where and how he came."⁷⁵¹

⁷⁴⁹ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 103.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid., 104.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid., 104.

The third sketch is called “The House that is Made of Tin” (a metonymy of the houses of the refugees in the camps that replaced the tents with time). In this sketch, the writer sets up the location where the events take place

"تسكن مع أمها وأخيها خالد، في غرفة صغيرة تقع في طرف البدّاوي جدرانها من التّنك"

“She lives with her mom and her brother Khalid in a small room at the end of al-Baddawi [refugee camp] its walls are made of tin.”⁷⁵² The reader’s curiosity increases. He wonders about the father and whether he will be introduced to him or know his fate later in the story or not in addition to the secret of Khalid. The fourth sketch is “Fear.” The sounds of shootings wake Intisar up and terrify her,

"شبهقت انتصار.. خافت.. دفنت رأسها في صدر امها"

“she sobs.. she is afraid.. she buries her head in her mother’s bosom” and asks her about what is going on.⁷⁵³

The fifth sketch is “The Gift.” The mother who does not lie to her girl informs her that her cousins are shooting at each other as an indication of the civil war that burst in 1983 between Fatah and some of its opponent Palestinian factions in al-Baddawi refugee camp. Intisar remembers that one of them has promised her to bring her an empty bullet as a gift from Sidon to

⁷⁵² This Palestinian refugee camp is located in northern Lebanon next to the city of Tripoli. It is the second biggest camp in this area and it was established in 1955. “Beddawi Camp,” *United Nation Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East*, accessed on December 1, 2019, <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon/beddawi-camp>.

⁷⁵³ I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 105.

wear around her neck. In other words, he would shoot this bullet at the Israeli Zionist invader who occupies the city.⁷⁵⁴ The other cousin promises her to send her an orange blossom from Jaffa as a gift to put on her hair. In other words, he will join the *fida'iyin* to liberate his colonised land. Here the writer indirectly criticises the irresponsible devastating bloody clashes and emphasises that the Palestinian rifle should be pointed only at the one and only enemy of the people and the revolution that is the Zionist coloniser and his allies.

The sixth sketch is “The Bullet.” A bullet penetrates the tin wall, and Intisar is terrified she asks her mom what is going on? The mother informs her that this bullet belongs to one of her cousins who is shooting at her other cousin. Intisar, the little innocent kid, is confused. She thinks it is the promised gift. She does not want to listen to her mother when she tells her that this bullet

"هذي بتقتل يا انتصار.. هذي مش هديّة"

“This one kills Intisar.. this one is not a gift” because she is sure that both of her cousins love her and none of them would cross the red lines and cause any harm to her. She picks the empty bullet and connects it to the necklace around her neck that she received from Khalil. The sketch ends with a new character’s name and makes the reader more eager to find out his story. The seventh sketch is “The War that was not an Eid (holiday).” In this sketch, the writer uses the second person pronoun as the narrative voice. He aims to make the reader a character in the story to live the atmosphere of war to be aware of the seriousness of the events and that what is going

⁷⁵⁴ Sidon was liberated on Feb 16, 1985. “Sa‘d fi Dhikrā Tahrīr Şaydā wa Mantīqatihā,”
 أرشيف-الاخبار/لبنان/سعد-في-ذكرى-تحرير-صيدا-ومنطقتها-<https://www.lebanonews.net/>, 28 August 2019, <https://www.lebanonews.net/>.
 /تحرير-ا

وتسمعين أزيز الطلقات.. ويصم أذنيك هدير المدافع.. وهي تقصف " on is not a joke but rather a catastrophe. " "أرجاء المخيم "and you hear the buzzing of the bullets.. and the bang of gunfire deafens you while they are shelling all the sides of the camp." Besides, he wants the reader to feel a total shock just as Intisar and every Palestinian had felt at the time of this bloody insane war.⁷⁵⁵

"تفغرين فاك دهشة وحيرة.. يستعر جسمك بالانتفاض تصطك أسنانك ويقشعر بدنك"

"You open your mouth out of puzzlement and confusion.. Your body heats up and shivers, your teeth chatter and your skin gets goose flesh."⁷⁵⁶

Intisar sticks to a state of denial to protect herself from facing the horrible reality. She tries to convince herself that what she is hearing and seeing must be the same as the gunfire sounds that occurred when the whole camp was celebrating the Eid last year. It is painful to believe "ترفضين أن تصدقي" that the cousins (part of the freedom fighters who joined the revolution) can break all the taboos of the revolution, cross all the red lines and fight against each other.⁷⁵⁷ They committed such a betrayal after taking an oath to preserve the revolution (Intisar), protect it, and achieve its ultimate goals (the liberating of both Lebanon and Palestine - an empty bullet from Sidon and an orange blossom from Jaffa).

It was tough to absorb that the one who is bombing the camp and shooting at Intisar (the symbol of the young Palestinian revolution) is not the real enemy that is the IZSCR, "من أخذوا "

⁷⁵⁵ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 107.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid., 108.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid.

الذين طردوك من صيدا "يافا... الذين طردوك من صيدا" "those who took Jaffa...who expelled you from Sidon" as her father told her before he passed away.⁷⁵⁸ As Khalil informed her before she left Burj al-Barajneh refugee Camp in Beirut.⁷⁵⁹ "من أخذوا صيدا هم الذين يفرقون بيننا الآن" "Those who took Sidon are the ones who are separating between us now."⁷⁶⁰ Remembering both the deceased father and Khalil's words leads to the flashback that is represented in the next sketch. In addition, using the second person pronoun as the narrative voice plays another role in this story. The writer is speaking directly to the main character and all the Palestinians masses to wake them up to warn them that the future of the revolution is at stake. He urges them to face the deadly reality and rescue the revolution by uniting their forces and facing the one and only enemy of the revolution.

The eighth sketch is "Burj al-Barajneh." Through a flashback, the narrator uses the second person pronoun to communicate his warning conversation with the reader/Intisar. He initially reminds her of her best friend Khalil, the son of the Beirut (a symbol of the Lebanese resistance) whom she "كنت تحببته ولا تفارقينه" "whom you used to love and stick to all the time."⁷⁶¹ After that, the narrator takes her back to the disturbing memories of Beirut's Israeli invasion in 1982 that she and Khalil, who lived in the same house, had experienced (the bombings, the destruction, the fear, and the smell of burning flesh).⁷⁶² The narrator reminds her of the horrific scene of a man carrying a pregnant woman with an open abdomen who came one day to her

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁹ This refugee camp is one of the biggest Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut it was established in 1948 by the Red Cross organization. "Mukhayyam Burj al-Barājnih," *palcamps.net - Encyclopedia of Palestinian Camps*, accessed on August 24, 2019, <http://palcamps.net/ar/camp/59/مخيم-برج-البراجنه>.

⁷⁶⁰ 'layan, *Sa'at*, 107.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid., 109.

⁷⁶² Ibid.

house and how that woman died after giving birth to Khalid, who became her brother. By this shocking scene, the writer hints at Sabra and Shatila massacres that took place in September 1982, and if the reader subtracts the age of Khalid, i.e., 14 months from the date of writing this story, that is November 1983 he will come to the same conclusion.⁷⁶³ The writer wants to remind the Palestinians that Khalid, who symbolises the eternal Palestinian people, the Palestinian cause, and the Palestinian aspirations, is still targeted by the enemy and its allies.

The ninth sketch is “The Shelter.” The writer/ omniscient narrator continues to address Intisar in the second person pronoun to make her remember her recent past and distinguish between foes and allies. He reminds her of the time she spent in the shelter with Khalil during the aircraft attacks that used to shell the camp and its tin houses with cluster munition and how she used to feel safe in his company. " لا تخافي.. احنا بالملجأ " “do not worry we are in the shelter.” Khalil is the one who consoled her when the invaders killed her dad. He is the one who promised her that

"سبيقي معك حتى الموت. وعندما يكبر سيأخذك مع أولاد عمك إلى يافا كما وعدك أبوك"

“He will stay with you until death. And when he grows up, he and your cousins will take you back to Jaffa as your dad had promised you.” Khalil’s unconditional love and sincere support make her feel that he has become a part of her.⁷⁶⁴ In other words, the writer emphasises the fact

⁷⁶³ Ibid., 104, 115.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., 111.

that allies and supporters are an essential element in strengthening and empowering the revolution.

The tenth sketch is “The Second Bullet.” In this section, the writer takes the reader back to the present time of the story, and the narration takes place in the third person pronoun once again. Intisar finally realises that what is happening in the camp cannot be Eid but rather war. This recognition saddens her and makes her cry because this war is different from the war she experienced in Sidon and Beirut. However, when she hears a second bullet penetrate the tin wall, she becomes fully alarmed and rushes towards Khalid

"تخطف خالد كما العصفورة تخطف فرخها من بين فكي أفعى"

“She grabs Khalid like a bird who snatches her baby from the jaws of a snake” and she is back to fulfil her duty in protecting Khalid. ⁷⁶⁵

The eleventh sketch is “A Song.” Songs in general and revolutionary songs, in particular, play an essential role in uplifting the spirits of the people, especially during difficult times. They mobilise the masses and push them forward to continue their struggle by glorifying the sacrifices that have been made, the heroic deeds of the martyrs, and the bravery of the survivors and infusing hope and comfort in the hearts of the masses. The song in the story has the same function as all the other revolutionary songs. The song addresses Intisar in the second person pronoun. It converses with her, shows her the points of strength that she has, and admires her

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.

actions and reactions. Intisar is adored because she does not give up her duty in protecting Khalid. When she could not find a safe place

"كوخ التّنك الصدئ والطّين المتشقق لا يحميك .. ويحمي خالد وأمك"

"The hut that is made of rusty tin and cracked clay does not protect you.. Khalid or your mother," she would use her own body as a shield to encase him. Intisar is praised because she keeps the promise she gave to Khalil on the day of the forcible departure that is the day Intisar, her mom, and Khalid left Beirut and moved to al-Baddawi refugee camp.⁷⁶⁶

"رايح أشوفك يا انتصار.. ديرى بالك على خالد.. خالد أخوي وأخوك"

"I would see you Intisar.. Take care of Khalid.. Khalid is my brother [as much as] he is yours."

In the symbolic level, this day refers to the forcible exodus of the PLO leadership and forces from Beirut in 1982 and the compulsory separation between the Palestinian revolution and its supporters in the Lebanese resistance.⁷⁶⁷ Thus, the writer indirectly glorifies that the Palestinian revolution succeeded in surviving this fatal blow of the exodus due to the unity between the revolution, the Palestinian masses, and their supporters wherever they are located. The writer conveys this idea in the last part of the song, where Intisar and Khalid become one.

"خالد الذي صار قطعة من قلبك ... قطرات دمك... رثة من رنتيك.. يد من يديك... خالد هو حياتك.. بل أعلى

من حياتك.. هو خليل... هو والدك الذي مات وهو يقاتل أمام الملجأ..."

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid., 113.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid., 114.

“Khalid who became a piece of your heart... your blood drops... your lung.. your hand... Khalid is your life rather he has more value than your life.. he is Khalil... he is your dad who died in combat in front of the shelter...”⁷⁶⁸

Thus, Khalid has no other choice except surviving and growing because the writer believes as Adolfo Gilly in the Introduction of Fanon’s *A Dying Colonialism* interprets Fanon’s testimony that during the most difficult times the masses would reorganise themselves and continue to exist mainly if they have a common goal i.e., the objective of national liberation.⁷⁶⁹

The twelfth sketch is “A call from the Depths of the Heart.” Intisar, very frustrated, informs her mom that she worries about Khalid’s future, and the story ends with her shouting that Khalid must live three times. This open call is not only Intisar’s. It represents every Palestinian’s desire at the time, including the prisoners’ collective, to put an end to the forbidden bloodshed and the clashes between the brothers to stop the ongoing self-destructive insanity.

The writer adds two notes at the end of the story, first to eliminate any misunderstanding that could be reached by the reader. Second, he sends an indirect message/ response to the provocations of the prison administration. To the first note, “A Note that Cannot Be Avoided,” he adds, “the story is not over yet.”⁷⁷⁰ The note’s content is that Intisar is still shouting, and her

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁹ Gilly, “Introduction,” 15.

⁷⁷⁰ I’layan, *Sa’at*, 115.

voice is broadcasted via the media all over the Arab homeland every time the clashes resume between the rival factions. As a result,

"يسمعه الجميع.. ويبيكي واحد.. ويبتسم آخر."

“everybody hears it.. and one cries.. and other one smiles.” By the one who cries, the writer means the Palestinian people, its supporters, including the prisoners’ collective. As for the one who smiles, the writer refers to the IZSCR, its representatives, including the prison staff and its allies. Also, the reader should not forget that the writer was a prisoner of war in 1983. The only way of hearing the news was either through a minimal number of newspapers (mostly Israeli), the news broadcast in the “Voice of Israel” radio channel (that would be operated on the prison speakers for few hours every day) or the prison staff. The prison administration would use these three hostile sources of information as weapons in its continuous psychological war against the prisoners’ collective. Thus, in the name of all the prisoners, the writer fights back and denies that the story has been in any way a story of frustration and despair. Contrary, “the story is not over yet,” and one could fill up the dots that follow with the proverb “he who laughs last laughs best.” The following note would support this interpretation and validate it. In the second note titled “A More Important Note than the First,” the writer tells the reader that

"انتصار الصغيرة .. واثقة أن المدافع ستخرس وأن خالد الصغیر الصغیر، الذي تذكر ولا تنسى من أين جاء وكيف

جاء. سيعيش ويكبر... سيعيش ويكبر"

Khalid, whom she remembers and does not forget from where and how he came, would live and would grow up... would live and grow up.”⁷⁷¹ The writer clings to hope, and revolutionary optimism prevails at the end of the story because, first, adhering to despair in prison means death. Second, like Intisar, he believes in his people, its sufferings, and its magnificent endurance powers. He witnessed it rising from the ashes like a phoenix one time after the other during its recent history, and he knows that a defeat here and/ or a setback there would delay and sabotage its progress towards its ultimate goal of liberation. However, “[t]here is no power, no conventional or atomic weapon that can destroy it.”⁷⁷² This absolute belief in the masses’ potentials is what empowers the prisoners’ collective to endure any distress and preserve their inner balance.

The seventh short story in the collection is "الحمامة" "The Dove." it was written in Nafhah prison in March 1984.⁷⁷³ The author uses the narrative device of parallel stories to present his ideas. The first story is about a prisoner who succeeds in starting a friendship with a wild dove. Every day during the break time, he imitates the sound of doves to call her in. She comes, extends her head from under the iron door that separates her from him, and eats the breadcrumbs he brings. Then she allows him to touch her neck and back. One day after eating the breadcrumbs, the prison’s cat attacks the dove. She fiercely fights back to release herself from his paws but in vain. The prisoner from the other side of the door yells at the cat and starts screaming, asking the guard to open the door. The other prisoners join their inmate and ask the

⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷⁷² Gilly, “Introduction,” 15.

⁷⁷³ I’layan, *Sa’at*, 138.

guard again to open the door, but he refuses. The dove flock tries to rescue the injured dove by attacking the cat. As a result, the cat leaves her. She tries to fly but falls after a few seconds on the ground. During this time, the prisoner is screaming, clapping, and jumping to encourage her to try to fly. However, the cat attacks her again and puts her head in its mouth, and she stops trembling. At that moment of the narration, the guard declares the end of the break, and the story ends. The parallel story is the love story between the prisoner and his ex-fiancée. She loves doves and is very skillful in attracting the birds by making certain sounds that she learned from her deceased dad. She is the one who taught him how to communicate with doves. They were about to get married when he was arrested and convicted for a life sentence. In her first visit to the prison, he tried to convince her to break up with him. She refused and insisted on saving the relationship. Ten years passed. During these years, she could not visit him, and he stopped writing letters to her. He used to hear her news from his mom. During all these years, she refused to marry anyone else and was determined to wait for him. She also used to send her greetings to him with his mom while keeping herself busy working. Then there were rumours about prisoner exchange that would take place soon. She was very optimistic and was hoping that he would be released soon. However, his name was not included in the deal, and he stayed in jail. As a result, she was very disappointed and isolated herself at home, and after a while, she agreed to marry another man.

In this story, I'layan puts his finger on a bleeding wound that many Palestinian women and male Palestinian prisoners have been suffering from since 1967. This wound is forced separation and breaking up of love relations between the prisoners and their fiancées or lovers due to long-term imprisonment. Male prisoners sentenced for long years in jail would be more practical, make their minds, and try to convince their lovers to leave them and proceed with their

lives. The Palestinian women, in their turn, will resist and refuse to end up their commitments. Many of them bravely faced their families and the social pressure, continued to wait for their lovers until their release, and looked at this colossal sacrifice as their own way of resistance against colonialism. While many others, for many personal and/or social, reasons submitted or freely chose to go on with their lives. If we pay attention to the date of writing the story that the author left at the end of the story, we realise a historical indication in this story to the prisoner exchange in November 1983 between Fatah and the IZSCR.⁷⁷⁴ In this prisoner exchange deal, only sixty-five prisoners were released from IZSCR's prisons. The author indirectly criticises the deal through the mother's character due to a small number of released prisoners. " وفرصة خروجك " "and the opportunity of your release was lost, she stopped talking. As if she was swallowing an agony.. why did they not take advantage of it.. why? Why.." ⁷⁷⁵

Unfortunately, prison exchange deals are still the only option for Palestinian prisoners of war and detainees to be released before the end of their conviction. The prisoners, their families, and their lovers look forward to them, build hopes, and wait patiently for them, although they usually include a limited number of prisoners. The prisoner's mother in the story, when her son asked her, what if I stay in prison? she said,

⁷⁷⁴ "Amaliyyāt Tabadul al-Asrā," *www.info wafa.ps - Wafa* n.d.. Accessed on July 15, 2020,

http://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=4004>. See also Samar [Assad](#), "Information Brief: History of Israeli-Arab Prisoner Exchanges." *electronicintifada.net- The Electronic Intifada*, accessed on September 5, 2019, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/information-brief-history-israeli-arab-prisoner-exchanges/6096> and "30 Years, 4 Prisoner Exchange Deals: Will there be Another to return Israelis in Gaza?," *Ynet news.com - Ynet News*, November 7, 2015, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4678530,00.html>.

⁷⁷⁵ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 135.

"..لا ستخرج .. عملية التبادل قريبة"

"No, you will be released...the prisoner exchange is coming soon."⁷⁷⁶ After the prisoner exchange deal, only a few would be delighted, but the majority would be deeply disappointed.

"..بنت كبار الآمال على التبادل – ليست هي فقط.. بل نحن أيضاً"

"She built huge hopes on the prisoner exchange deal- not only her .. we too"

"والآن تحطمت... تحطمت الآمال ... اعتزلت في البيت... لا أحد يراها"

"And now she [the lover] collapsed ... hopes broke down.. She isolated herself at home..

Nobody sees her."⁷⁷⁷

In this story, as well the author avoids entering the inner world of the main character to let us find out and feel the effect of the news of the marriage of his ex-fiancée on him. Instead, he focuses on bodily signals that refer indirectly to these effects.

"رقصت السّجارة بين شفّتي.. شعرت بحبّات العرق تتدحرج من رقبتني حتّى أسفل العمود الفقري"

"The cigarette danced between my lips.. I felt sweat drops rolling down from my neck to the lower part of the spine."⁷⁷⁸ Besides, I'layan, in a very skillful way, makes the climax of the first

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid., 134.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid., 135.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid., 136.

story (the cat attacking the dove) an analogical end to the parallel story. This analogy indirectly explains in a figurative way the battle against the forced separation the prisoner and his ex-fiancée have faced mainly because of the colonial occupation and its devastating effects on the lives of every colonised Palestinian. This battle ends up with two emotional murders. On the one hand, after ten years of resistance and desperate attempts to save the relationship, the ex-fiancée ends up strangled in despair and declares her emotional death by surrendering to the status quo and the social pressure when she agrees to marry someone that she does not love. On the other, the author indirectly hints at the emotional death that the prisoner himself has encountered because of the traumatic loss due to his helplessness and inability to control any aspect of his life as long as he is in captivity. As for the other story of the dove, the author ends it immediately after the dove's death when the guard declares the end of the break. He does not give the readers the chance to see the effect of the dove's death on its prison companion. That is the prisoner who loved and shared with it daily a part of his small meal that is not enough to fill up his stomach. "أحبّها وصار يقضي معها ساعة الفورة الكاملة" "he loved it, and he started spending the whole hour of the [daily] break with it."⁷⁷⁹ Using the narrative technique of an open-ended story, the author succeeds once again in avoiding the expression of pain and the disclosure of any vulnerability.

The eighth story "Sa'at ma qabl al-Fajr" is based on real events that the writer had experienced during the historical hunger strike of Nafḥah prison in July 1980, which was called "The Battle of the Empty Stomach." Nafḥah Prison is a small prison located in the Negev Desert. It was originally designed to host up to 100 prisoners, and it was put to use in May 1980.⁷⁸⁰ The

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid., 126.

⁷⁸⁰ Isā Qarāqī, *al-Asrā al-Filastīniyūn fī al-Sujūn al-Isrā'ī liyah ba'd Oslo 1993-1999*

purpose of establishing this prison was to serve as an exile prison for the leaders of the prisoners' movement and its cadre of organisers. The prison administration aimed at separating them from the prisoners' collective; prevent them from leading the struggle against the degrading living conditions of the prisons and the administration's ill-treatment, and consequently crushing the movement all together by turning Nafḥah to a centre for terrorising the whole prisoners' collective.⁷⁸¹

The location of the prison and its physical layout were deliberately chosen to cause physical and psychological harm to its residents.⁷⁸² Every prisoner had only two square meters of space. The cells had the shape of an airtight box with a low ceiling, heavy metal doors, and a few tiny holes in the walls that barely allowed fresh air and natural light to enter.⁷⁸³ Besides, the prison administration in Nafḥah deprived the 80 prisoners that were moved to it from all the rights they used to have in their original prisons, including the right to have family photo albums and stationery materials. It also packed every cell with a large number of prisoners, served them spoiled food full of sand, and continued with the policy of medical neglect and a violent and hostile daily treatment. As a result, the 80 prisoners decided to fight against the prison administration's plan that intended to exterminate the prisoners' movement. They started a 33-day hunger strike on July 14th 1980 to protest against the brutal conditions of the prison and

(Bīr-Zaeit: The Graduate Institute of international studies, 2001), 29.

⁷⁸¹ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 386. See also Qaraqī', *al-Asra*, 29.

⁷⁸² al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 31.

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*, 30.

demand fundamental and natural rights, such as having enough air to breathe, decrease the number of prisoners in every cell, and allow beds in the cells.⁷⁸⁴

By 1980, the Palestinian prisoners' national movement was more mature and well experienced after 13 years of incessant struggle in IZSCR prisons. It was aware of its points of strength and its points of weakness and developed its tactics accordingly in managing the struggle against the prison administration. Thus, the organisers of the historic hunger strike in Nafhah prison succeeded in putting a plan that guaranteed to achieve the maximum of demands with the minimum of suffering. On the one hand, they managed to mobilise and get the support of the Palestine masses and all the national and international human rights organisations and solidarity groups. Moreover, they were successful in drawing the attention of the Palestinian media outlets and the international and Israeli ones to their sufferings and cause. On the other, they prepared the prisoners mentally, physically, and psychologically for the strike and uplifted their spirits and zealotness to defeat the administration's plan that aimed at crushing and annihilating them and to force on the administration improving their living conditions in prison and turning them from inhumane to humane.⁷⁸⁵

The Prison Administration could not tolerate the hunger strike and faced it as usual with violence and coercive suppression.⁷⁸⁶ On the eighth day of the strike, 26 out of the 80 hunger strikers were brutally transferred to Ramleh detention centre where they were "subjugated to

⁷⁸⁴ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 8.

⁷⁸⁵ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 369-70.

⁷⁸⁶ "Get the Facts on Palestinian Hunger Strikes," *Addameer.org*, April 25, 2017, <http://www.addameer.org/news/get-facts-palestinian-hunger-strikes>.

painful, humiliating, cruel, criminal, and murderous torture to stop their strike.”⁷⁸⁷ As a result, two prisoners were killed in cold blood by filling their lungs instead of their stomachs with salty white liquid during the force-feeding, and all the attempts of the prison staff and the medical personnel to force the other 24 prisoners to stop their hunger strike had failed. On the contrary, on July 21, all the prisoners in all the prisons joined the hunger strike as a solidarity act after they heard the news about the crime committed in Ramlah detention centre.⁷⁸⁸

This hunger strike emphasised two facts, as al-Qaymari concludes. The first fact is that the prisoners’ national movement proved to be an undivided entity and to guarantee its victory in any future struggle against the prison administration, it has to stay united. Thus, since then, the battle of any individual prisoner has become the battle of all the prisoners in all the prisons. The second fact is that the prisoners are not alone anymore in facing their incarceration brutality, but rather they have the unconditional support of their people and the solidarity of the international community that seeks justice and peace.⁷⁸⁹

The 1980 Hunger strike accomplished many achievements. First, it displayed the IZSCR as a regime that violates international and humanitarian laws and commits crimes against humanity. Second, it shed light upon the prisoners’ striving capabilities and their willingness to sacrifice their lives to preserve their human dignity and national honour.⁷⁹⁰ As for the materialistic achievements, some were particular to Nafḥah prison and led to better prison

⁷⁸⁷ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 346. See also Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 9.

⁷⁸⁸ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 346. See also Qaraqī‘, *al-Asra*, 29.

⁷⁸⁹ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 371.

⁷⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 371-2.

conditions and daily treatment similar to the ones the rest of the prisons had at the time, such as having better lighting, better air circulation in the cells, and adding a room in the prison for family visits. Other achievements were general, and all the prisoners in all the prisons benefited from them, such as having two family visits each month instead of one, allowing beds into the cells, and having the same food that the Israeli criminal prisoners receive in terms of quality, quantity, and variety.⁷⁹¹

I'layan, personally participated in the 1980 Nafḥah hunger strike and was one of the 26 prisoners who were force-fed. The Palestinian author Jamāl Banūrah mentions this information in his introduction to the collection.⁷⁹² Thus, dedicating the story to the two martyrs killed in cold blood during the 1980 Nafḥah hunger strike, 'Ali al-Ja'fari and Rasim Ḥalawah, draws the reader's attention to the testimonial and historical elements in the text rather than the fictional ones.⁷⁹³ Moreover, this dedication reflects the writer's feelings of guilt because, first, he was too overwhelmed and too helpless by the traumatic events that accompanied the hunger strike to prevent the death of the two martyrs. Second, he feels this guilt because he was lucky enough to

⁷⁹¹ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 372. See also Qaraqī', *al-Asra*, 30.

⁷⁹² I'layan, *Sa'at*, 15.

⁷⁹³ 'Ali al-Ja'fari (1946-1980) joined the Palestinian revolution while studying in Jordan in 1967 and was arrested after clashes against the IZSCR forces in 1968 in the Jericho area. He served a life sentence in prison when the medical staff in Ramlah detention centre leaked to his lungs salty hot water during the force-feeding and refused to offer him any medical treatment before ending his hunger strike. After 14 hours of the force-feeding, he passed away, and the IZSCR held his body until 1993. See: "Iḥyā' al-Dhikrā al-36 li-Shuhadā' Idrāb Sijn Nafḥah fī Bayt al-Shahīd 'Ali al-Ja'fari," *www.alwatanvoice.com - Dunyā al-Waṭan*, accessed on August 28, 2019, <https://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2016/07/23/949706.html>.

Rāsīm Ḥalāwah (1953-1980) joined the Palestinian revolution in 1967 and was arrested in 1970 because of his involvement in armed resistance against IZSCR occupation. He also was serving a life sentence in prison when his lungs were damaged due to a force-feeding procedure. He was denied any medical treatment for more than 8 hours. This deliberate medical neglect led to his death after two days from the fatal incident. Samī Ibrāhīm Fūdah, "Dhikrā Istish'hād al-Asīr Rāsīm Ḥalawah," *pulpit.alwatanvoice.com - Dunyā al-Waṭan – Maqālāt*, accessed on September 2, 2019, <https://pulpit.alwatanvoice.com/articles/2019/07/26/497994.html>.

survive while his murdered inmates were not.⁷⁹⁴ The writer also indirectly attempts to scandalise the murderers and request that they pay for their crimes as an act of faithfulness to the dead, which is “a common burden of the traumatized survivors.”⁷⁹⁵

This story is an example of the post-traumatic stress disorder PTSD that the writer, who has been subjected to 7 years of prolonged, repeated trauma, has developed. After 21 months of the force-feeding event, the writer is still reliving it as if it is taking place in the present time. However, he does not use the first-person pronoun as the narrative voice in the story except in short dialogues in some parts of the story. Most of the narration is done via the third person pronoun. The use of the third-person pronoun as the narrative voice could be seen as a constriction feature of trauma that indicates that the writer is feeling as if the event is not occurring to him, as if he is watching it from outside his own body as if there is a split between his “self” and the “bodily experience.”⁷⁹⁶ Laurie Vickroy adds in her book *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* that the use of the third-person pronoun as the narrative voice also gives the reader the impression that he/she is not only reading the trauma experience but also “participating in it as he goes along.”⁷⁹⁷ The writer chooses to distance himself from the enactment to maintain a satisfactory balance between what Herman calls “the two contradictory responses of intrusion and constriction” that constitute “the dialectic of trauma.”⁷⁹⁸ In other

⁷⁹⁴ Survivors universally do not attribute their survival to their personal resilience capacity but rather to “good luck” or/and fate. Herman, *Trauma*, 59-60.

⁷⁹⁵ Caruth, “Introduction,” 8.

⁷⁹⁶ Cathy Winkler, “Rape Trauma: Contexts of Meaning,” *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, ed. Thomas J. Csordas (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 249-68. See also, 43.

⁷⁹⁷ Vickroy, *Trauma*, 11.

⁷⁹⁸ Herman, *Trauma*, 47.

words, the writer attempts to sustain the “balance between the emotion recurrently breaking through the ‘protective shield’ and numbness that protects this shield” to relieve these symptoms and achieve some comfort and “self-catharsis” through the act of writing as well as through receiving acknowledgement and acceptance from their fellow survivors and their readers.⁷⁹⁹

The story is divided into eight parts. The first part begins with the main character, who has no name lying on the floor, trying to get some sleep to no avail, in a small confinement cell with intense lighting. The omniscient narrator provides us with a detailed physical description of the character and his sense of memory to let the reader feel the pain and fear the main character is experiencing.

"الألم يسري في كلّ أنحاء جسمه، وأمعازه تتلوى وتصرخ، ورأسه يدور وضوء المصباح الساطع يخز عينيه كالإبر،
وصراخ من بعيد يزيد من أرقه واضطرابه"

“pain flows all over his body, his guts twist and scream [out of hunger], his head spins and the glaring light stings his eyes like needles, and distant screaming sustains his insomnia and anxiety.”⁸⁰⁰

Such methods are used in many fictional narratives that deal with trauma to offer “bits of history and of lived experiences of the past that are not totally recoverable.”⁸⁰¹ The first part

⁷⁹⁹ Friedlander, “Trauma,” 51. See also Henke, *Shattered*, xii. And Herman, *Trauma*, 182-3. And Vickroy, *Trauma*, 19-20.

⁸⁰⁰ I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 141.

⁸⁰¹ Vickroy, *Trauma*, 12.

ends with the prisoner sitting on the floor, waiting for “his turn.”⁸⁰² For the reader who has no idea about the historical event of the hunger strike, this kind of ending would increase his/her curiosity and encourage him/her to continue reading, especially after engaging him/her in the prisoner’s experience to know what the prisoner is waiting for and the reason of his suffering and inability to fall asleep.

In the second part, the fear of the prisoner intensifies as time passes. The main character is still in a state of terror. Thus, his attention is narrowed. He focuses on his thoughts and somatic symptoms to the extent that he loses his sense of time and any interest in the confinement cell details. He feels very hot and very thirsty. The idea that he might be killed while thirsty preoccupies his mind. This idea of the threat of death enables the writer to introduce to the reader, through the flashbacks of the main character, both the inmates of the prisoner who were transferred with him in the prison car and the hunger strike. Neither the main character nor his inmates are sure if they would be able to survive this hunger strike or not. From previous hunger strike experiences, all they know that the prison authority committed murder every time it brutally tried to break one.⁸⁰³ The threat of death usually keeps the victim in a constant state of fear.⁸⁰⁴ The main character fights this idea fiercely by altering his perception, focusing on uplifting his spirits, and relying on his will power to go on with his strike. He acknowledges his physical weakness (pain all over his body, migraines, and excessive thirst) after eight days of ongoing hunger strike, the transfer to the new prison, and standing in a stress position for a long

⁸⁰² I‘layan, *Sa ‘at*, 142.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁸⁰⁴ Herman, *Trauma*, 77.

time during the admission to the new prison before entering the confinement cell. Still, he reminds himself of two main issues. First, starting a hunger strike is his last weapon, and resort to achieving his demands that aim to ease his suffering and humanise the prison's dehumanizing policies. Second, profound connectedness to the prisoners' collective empowers the prisoner as Herman states, "her image of herself in relation to others must include a person who can lose and be lost to others."⁸⁰⁵

These inspiring thoughts cannot distract him for a long time from his somatic pain, and his body fails him. He could not stand up. He falls and feels that he is "burning" out of thirst. Again, he uses the technique of alteration of consciousness to form a positive hallucination through which he sees himself moving from a well to another, drinking all the water without quenching his thirst.⁸⁰⁶ (At this moment of the narration, he realises that he can withstand starvation for many days but not thirst. The prison staff deprives him of water; put him in an empty black-walled confinement cell that has neither a toilet nor a sink and has only a small hole in its ceiling that provides poor ventilation, to destroy the prisoner's "sense of autonomy," to debilitate his body and demoralise him.⁸⁰⁷

⁸⁰⁵ Herman addresses the victim in her book *Trauma and Recovery* as she rather than he. See: *Ibid.*, 93.

⁸⁰⁶ I'layan, *Sa 'at*, 144.

⁸⁰⁷ Herman, *Trauma*, 77.

Waiting is another method of torture that keeps the prisoner in a constant state of fear. The prisoner's inability to anticipate what will happen to him next and when makes him suffer more. "الانتظار هو أصعب ما يواجهه الأسير... ينتظر شيئاً لا يعرف نتيجته".

“Waiting is the most difficult thing a prisoner could confront... waiting for something that he does know its consequence.” Moreover, hearing the screams of tortured inmates is, by no means, less traumatising than being tortured. "الصّراخ المتواصل الذي يسمعه يدلّ على أنّه شيء رهيب." "the continuous screaming that he hears suggests that it [the thing he is waiting for] is a horrible thing."⁸⁰⁸ Rajjub states that the terrorising atmosphere due to the painful loud screams that all the prisoners Arabs and Jews heard that night in the prison, the whining of the beaten hunger strikers in the solitary confinement cells, the cries for help, the screams of the wardens and the sounds of violently slamming the iron doors after returning the hunger strikers from the ‘slaughter’ was more cruel and terrorising than being beaten.⁸⁰⁹ This part ends with the character hearing the guards taking one prisoner and returning another while waiting for his turn.

The third part begins with the main character still waiting for his turn and assuring himself that the screams he is hearing are clear evidence of his inmates’ perseverance and the prison staff’s failure in breaking their strike. At this point, he remembers his inmates one by one and admires their endurance capacities.

"ما أعظمهم، هؤلاء الذين يتحدّون أقسى أنواع التّعذيب بإرادتهم الصّلبة وإيمانهم العميق"

⁸⁰⁸ I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 144.

⁸⁰⁹ Rajjub, *Zanzanah*, 21.

“How great they are [!] Those who are confronting the most hostile torture methods with their concrete will and profound belief.”⁸¹⁰ The deep love that the main character cherishes in his heart for his inmates and the strong attachment he has to them is the “strongest protection” against “overwhelming terror.”⁸¹¹

"هذا الحب الذي يظهر إلى السطح ويتجلى بأروع أشكاله في مثل هذه اللحظات الزهية التي أحسن خلالها أنه مرتبط برفاقه أيما ارتباط "

“The love that appears to the surface and manifests itself in its splendid way in such dire moments during which he felt genuinely connected to his comrades.”⁸¹² This profound connection between the inmates who share the same fate is an indication of “the generosity, courage, and devotion that people can muster in extremity.”⁸¹³

At this point in the narration, the writer breaks the “chronological narration” because as Lawrence Langer argues in his book *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* that “[s]urvivor’s experience resists normal chronological narration or normal modes of artistic representation.”⁸¹⁴ Thus, after he recognises one of the prisoners from his screams, the main character takes the reader back in time through a flashback to cover the brutal transfer of the 26

⁸¹⁰ I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 146.

⁸¹¹ R. R. Grinker and J. Spiegel, *Men under Stress* (Philadelphia: Blakiston, 1945), 365. See also Kardiner and Spiegel, *War*, 1.

⁸¹² I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 144.

⁸¹³ Herman, *Trauma*, 91.

⁸¹⁴ Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 14-15.

prisoners from Nafḥah prison to Ramlah detention centre, the admission process, and the torture they faced before sending them to the solitary confinement cells and beginning the force-feeding procedure.

The prisoners were transferred by the prison transport van (al-Bostāh) while their hands were tied up to their backs, and every pair of them shared a feet-cuff. They also suffered from nausea and headaches because of the constant sudden breaking that the driver deliberately used to do, the disgusting smells of the bad mouth-breath and the prisoners' released bile, the released exhaust gasses that filled up the ill-ventilated van box, and the loud noise of the van's engine. Still, they continued to uplift each other's spirits and emphasise that the hunger strike is an active resistance measure through which the prisoner "asserts his defiance by his willingness to end his life." However, it is in no way suicidal, but rather it preserves "an inner sense of control."⁸¹⁵

"نحن لا نحبّ الموت ولا نسعى إليه... ولكننا لا نخشاه إن اعترض طريقنا"

"We do not like death, and we do not seek it... However, we do not fear it if it gets in our way."⁸¹⁶ They reminded each other that *sumūd* (endurance), willpower, and sustained stamina were all they needed to protect their revolutionary honour, "لا يهمّ عذابنا الجسديّ، المهمّ أن نحافظ على "our body pain does not matter, what matters is that we preserve our honour, our weapon."⁸¹⁷ In order to boost their vehemence, they also wished to have the same fate as some of the Palestinian prisoners of war who were murdered in the IZSCR prisons such as, 'Abd al-

⁸¹⁵ Herman, *Trauma*, 86.

⁸¹⁶ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 144.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 151.

Qadir Abu al-fahm, Muhammad al-Khawaja, ‘Umar Shalabi, and Qasim Abu ‘Akar as well as Julius Fuchik who sacrificed their lives for a revolutionary and a just cause.⁸¹⁸

The prisoners were terrorised and exposed to brutal beatings, verbal abuse, and humiliation to harshly crush their will and force them to break their hunger strike. All hunger strikes have been faced with direct and indirect repression by the different prison administrations since 1967, as al-Qaymari states in his book *Prison is not for us*. However, such terrorising severe physical torture methods were dominant up to 1970. The Prison administration reused them against the 26 hunger strikers of Nafḥah as a dramatic and sudden measure to achieve its goals as fast as possible to get rid of the pressure exercised over it by the national and international solidarity campaigns accompanied the hunger strike.⁸¹⁹ The prisoners were welcomed in Ramlah prison by two lines of wardens equipped with plastic clubs in their hands and helmets on their heads. They were ordered to stand still in a constricted position facing the cell walls while they were still hand and feet cuffed. They were denied any drinking water. For few hours, the wardens beat them on their heads, the back of their necks, their waist area, their spines, and thumbs, after every movement, sound or request, the prisoners had made.

⁸¹⁸ ‘Abd al-Qadir Abu al-fahm was murdered by filling up his lungs with milk during a force-feeding procedure that took place on May 5, 1970. Muhammad al-Khawaja was assassinated by hanging him in his cell on June 2, 1976. ‘Umar Shalabi was murdered in cold blood on October 22nd, 1973 when the wardens attacked him in prison with clubs, shields and tear gas bombs after he sabotaged the equipment in the prison ironing room. As for Qāsim Abu ‘Akar, he died as a result of torture in June 1969. ‘Abd al-‘Alīm Da‘nā, *Shuhadā’ al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah al-Asīrah fī al-Sujūn al-Isrā’īliyah*, (n.p., n.d.) 22, 37, 80, 96. Julius Fuchik was a journalist, an active member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and part of the vanguard of the Czechoslovakian resistance against the Nazis. He was imprisoned, tortured, and executed by the Nazis on September 8th, 1943. His biography and words empowered thousands of Palestinian prisoners of war: “We who did our duty. And I repeat, we live for happiness, for that we went to battle, for that we die. Let grief never be connected with our name.” Julius Fuchik, *Notes from the Gallows* (New York: New Century Publishers, 1948), 51. See also I’layan, *Sa’at*, 150.

⁸¹⁹ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 346.

Nevertheless, the prisoners withstood this stage of torture with barely any uttered loud complaints or moans “‘Fascist..Fascist’ he whispered”⁸²⁰

"كم ضربة تلقيت دون أن تتأوه.. أو تنن؟! .. تسقط لتنهض مجددًا"

“How many blows have you received without wailing or sobbing? You fall down and immediately stand up on your feet.”⁸²¹ In addition, they got over this stage without any harm to their elevated spirits.

"وأحسن رغم ما حدث أنه قوي"

“He felt despite everything he went through that he was strong.”⁸²² The wardens, on the other hand, do not recognise or even identify with the pain they incessantly inflict on the chained prisoners because, first, the prisoners’ experience of “annihilating negation” that is enormously felt all over their bodies even if it is made visible to those wardens, cannot be sensed by the latter. Second, torture denies the reality of the pain that it produces by shifting the torturers’ perception “which converts the vision of suffering ...into the wholly illusory but wholly convincing spectacle of power.”

⁸²⁰ I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 151.

⁸²¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁸²² *Ibid.*, 159.

Thus, torture is recognised as power rather than pain and it converts all the “conceivable aspect of the event and the environment into an agent of pain.”⁸²³

"بعد قليل سأدعوكم لحفلة ديسكو- سترقصون على قدم واحدة"

“After a while I will invite you to a disco party- you will dance on one foot.”⁸²⁴ In other words, a torture session becomes a party, and the human reactions to torture become a dance. By so doing, the wardens aim to break up the bonds between the prisoners and their bodies as well as their perceptions of the world as if “all else has been upended and emptied of its contents.”⁸²⁵ When the prisoners asked for water to quench their severe thirst, the officer turned this need into a weapon. He offered the main character a cup of water, but before handing it to him, he dropped it on the floor, laughed loudly, and told him to “drink his dirty urine.”⁸²⁶

Not only the wardens tortured the prisoners, but also the medical staff took part in it during the admission procedures. Thus, medical services as all other objects are “are unmade by being made weapons and actual agents of the pain and demonstrations of the effect of pain on human consciousness.”⁸²⁷ Before checking the weight, blood pressure, pulse, and temperature of each prisoner

⁸²³ Scarry, *The Body*, 27, 36.

⁸²⁴ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 151.

⁸²⁵ Scarry, *The Body*, 32.

⁸²⁶ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 159.

⁸²⁷ Scarry, *The Body*, 43.

"اختبر الممرض قوّته بتوجيه اللّكّمات والرّكّلات على الأماكن الحسّاسة في الجسم" "The nurse checked his physical fitness by punching and kicking the private parts of the body." Besides, the wardens provided the prisoners with larger sized prison clothes to humiliate them further and then led them to their confinement cells. This part of the story ends with the prisoner' disappointment after discovering that the cell was tiny, empty, and had neither a toilet nor a sink.⁸²⁸

In the fourth part, the inmate's screams who is taken back to his cell after being force-fed bring both the reader and the main character back to the present moment of the narration. He manages to hear him saying, "no..no....I will not eat." He assumes that his inmate survived the hostile procedure and that he has undergone horrible suffering; otherwise, he would not continue to scream. As a result, his fear intensifies as the thought that he may submit and break his hunger strike, preoccupies his mind. However, he immediately alternates his thinking and begins to assure himself that he would withstand this experience and would not betray his revolutionary honour just like his other inmates, the prisoner-martyrs and Fuchik. He makes up his mind that

"لن يسلمّ سلاحه الأخير لأعدائه، سيحافظ عليه مهما كآف الأمر"

"He would not hand over his last weapon to his enemies; he would safeguard it at all costs." Once again, the sounds of walking feet, moaning, dirty curses, and jangling keys interrupt his thinking and attract his attention. When the key is inserted in the hole of his cell's door, he clings to images of human connectedness to empower himself and uplift his spirits. He remembers his striking inmates who stayed in Nafḥah. He remembers his mother participating in a hunger strike

⁸²⁸ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 160.

at the Red Cross office in Jerusalem as an act of solidarity with the prisoners.⁸²⁹ The reader hears the main character's direct voice assuring his mother that he would never let her down while the key is turning into the hole.⁸³⁰

In the fifth part, the main character walks with the warden through a hallway in the prison clinic's direction. He focuses on describing the hallway because he would employ the images he describes at the end of the story. There are hanging planters of unscented flowers on both sides of the walls; on the wall, there is a big faded colour painting of a tall palm tree standing on a beach and metal cages with different kinds of mute bird toy.⁸³¹

In the sixth part, the main character enters another small hallway consisting of several confinement cells and ends with the clinic. In one of the cells, the prisoner finds a collaborator inmate sitting on the floor and eating with voracity. Deliberate exposure of the striking prisoners to such scenes is a tactic that the prison staff usually use to weaken the prisoner's resistance by giving him the false impression that all his inmates have broken their strike and that his resistance is futile. However, he looks at him with despise and continues in his way.⁸³²

The seventh part covers the force-feeding procedure. Sumer Dayal, in his article *Prosecuting Force-Feeding: An Assessment of Criminality Under the ICC Statute*, contends that

⁸²⁹ The mothers of Nafhah prisoners started a hunger strike at the Red Cross headquarters in Jerusalem to support their sons in their endeavor. This solidarity act bestowed upon the prisoners' hunger strike a public and a political dimension locally and internationally. See: al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 346-7.

⁸³⁰ I'layan, *Sa 'at*, 161-2.

⁸³¹ Ibid.,163.

⁸³² Ibid.

force-feeding is considered as a violation of international law and a method of torture because it aggressively and non-consensually imposes feeding over an individual who has decided not to accept food. According to the World Medical Association, he supports his argument by relying on the definition of the force-feeding procedure that looks at it as “unjustifiable” and “never ethically acceptable” with a sound-minded person. Dayal states that evaluating force-feeding as torture should be done through the lens of ICC’s statute on crimes against humanity, and if there is a lack of evidence that force-feeding counts as torture, it could still be prosecuted under the ICC’s statute covering “other Prison authorities and/ or regimes who use force-feeding procedures mainly justify their actions for two reasons. First, they use it to fulfil their responsibility in safeguarding and conserving the life of all the individuals who are in their custody. Second, they use force-feeding when individuals in their custody endanger the national or prison security.⁸³³ Thus, force-feeding is perpetrated whenever one or both of the above objectives outweigh “the autonomy and basic rights of the imprisoned individual” regardless of the suffering and severe pain caused by it.⁸³⁴ However, it is worth noting that the prisoners use the hunger strike as their ultimate expression to resist the prison’s coercive control and maintain their autonomy, integrity, and self-control by subjecting themselves to “greater deprivation than that willed by [their] captor.”⁸³⁵ By so doing, they force the hostile regimes who live in a “fantastic illusion of power” to face their actual reality, i.e., that they are no more than unstable

⁸³³ Sumer Dayal, “Prosecuting Force-Feeding: An Assessment of Criminality Under the ICC Statute,” *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 13.4 (2015): 693–716.

⁸³⁴ Azadeh Shahshahani and Priya Arvind Patel, “From Pelican Bay to Palestine: The Legal Normalization of Force-Feeding Hunger-Strikers,” *Michigan Journal of Race and Law* 24.1 (2018): 1-14.

⁸³⁵ Herman, *Trauma*, 79.

entities; otherwise, there is no need for them to use torture.⁸³⁶ Thus, force-feeding is utilised by these regimes to preserve their control and illusory of power.⁸³⁷

Through the omniscient narrator, monologues, and dialogues, the reader observes the development of the events closely. The main character enters the clinic and scans it in order to anticipate what is waiting for him. He provides the reader with a detailed physical description of the room: it is a large room. On the right side, he sees a table that has some bread slices and tomatoes on top. Near the table, a rubber tube is connected to a big container full of a white liquid. On the left side, the nurse and many prison officers are standing next to a scale, water pitcher, and plastic clubs. The nurse's white coat is stained with blood. Vomit and blood cover most of the floor. These scenes fulfil their role in instilling terror in the victim's heart. Consequently, the main character shivers, and tries to control his reactions to prevent his perpetrators from reading his body language and using his vulnerability as a weapon against him.

The prison staff attempt to increase the prisoner's fear "by inconsistent and unpredictable outbursts of violence and by capricious enforcement of petty rules" in order to achieve total submission of the prisoner and consequently make him stop his hunger strike.⁸³⁸ Both the medical staff and the officers will take turns in playing the roles of the good and bad persons, and every session of hostile violence would be followed with a verbal attempt to convince the prisoner to accept food. The Nurse plays the role of the bad person, and vigorously slaps the

⁸³⁶ Scarry, *The Body*, 27.

⁸³⁷ Shahshahani and Patel, "From Pelican Bay," 14.

⁸³⁸ Herman, *Trauma*, 77.

prisoner on his face. After that, the officer plays the role of the good person and tries to persuade him to eat by informing him that he is now a prisoner in a new prison that has much better conditions than Nafḥah in terms of the prison living conditions and prisoners' rights and that all his inmates have already broken their fast.⁸³⁹ However, political prisoners who are aware of forcible control reject to receive rewards or adhere to petty demands. For that reason, the prisoner refuses to extend his hand to the cup of water that the officer has offered him. Besides, the prisoner knows that the officer is lying about his inmates and decides to end the ongoing game. Thus, he makes it clear to the officer that he will not stop his hunger strike except if all the eighty hunger strikers decide to do so and only after all their demands are accomplished. Most importantly, he informs the officer that he is aware of his vicious tactics and asks him to proceed with the force-feeding procedure.⁸⁴⁰ As a result, violence breaks out once again. The nurse who betrays his Oath becomes the torturer instead of making significant efforts to offer a less painful procedure; he punches the prisoner under his ear, kicks his abdomen, curses him, and orders him to take off all his clothes. The writer uses the real name of the nurse that is "Roymi"⁸⁴¹ to emphasise the testimonial nature of the story and to scandalise the murderer who has not been taken to trial or convicted for his crimes yet. The narration during the description of the violence rounds is narrowed and it focuses on the naked, slim, rough-skinned, helpless body that has been laughed at, violated by the kicks of the Nurse and blows of the officers' clubs on his face,

⁸³⁹ I'layan, *Sa'at*, 167-8.

⁸⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 165-9.

⁸⁴¹ Many medical personnel have been involved in the physical and psychological torture of Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees. Rafael Roymi is one of them. He is the nurse who brutally killed Ali al-Jafari and Rasim Halawah during the Nafḥah hunger strike and put the lives of many other inmates at risk. al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 53-54.

abdomen, penis, and testes. Every violent round would be accompanied with one repeated question: "هل ستأكل؟"

"Would you eat?" And one repeated answer: "لا... لا..." "No...no..." When the violence reaches an unbearable moment;

"شعر بأوصاله تنفصل، غامت عيناه، وتحول صراخه إلى أنين"

"he felt [as if] his limbs are cut off, he almost passed out, and his screams turned into moaning;" the "good" officer would interfere to help the prisoner to stand up, drag him to a nearby chair and start a "rational" conversation with him

"لن تستطيع الاحتمال أكثر من ذلك، ستأكل عاجلاً أم آجلاً.. وقر على نفسك كلّ هذا العذاب وأنه إضرابك"

"You will not be able to persevere any further you will eat sooner or later.. Save yourself from all this torture and stop your strike.." ⁸⁴² However, the prisoner insists on refusing to eat, and when the conversation becomes unproductive and futile, the "good" officer uses the death threat as his last tactic to control the prisoner "أمامك فرصة أخيرة للحياة.. لا تكن مجنوناً"

"You have the last chance to live.. Do not be crazy." After the failure of the "death threat" tactic in achieving its goal comes the last tactic's turn, which is the actual death encounter. A new round of violence resumes; the nurse drags him by his hair and violently shakes him while the other officers hit him with the plastic clubs. As a result, he falls on the floor, and the nurse keeps

⁸⁴² I'layan, Sa'at, 170-2.

pressing his foot against his neck. At first, the prisoner has difficulty breathing; he tries to remove the nurse's feet but to no avail. Then, because of the increased pressure on his neck, he passes out.⁸⁴³ Losing consciousness is one of the many automatic defence mechanisms that the body uses when it is overwhelmed. The purpose of using such a tactic by the prison staff is not only to instil fear of death in the prisoner but also gratefulness for being allowed to live so that the prisoner would paradoxically feel that his torturer has saved him and consequently starts to cooperate with him. When the prisoner opens his eyes, he feels happy. He attributes this joy to the fact that he is still alive.

The "good" officer informs him that he saved his life when he stepped in at the last minute, wishing that the prisoner would be grateful and cooperate with him. However, the prisoner refuses to thank him, and the officer realises that the physical and psychological torture has failed to achieve its goals, and it is the time to proceed with the force-feeding procedure.

The force-feeding procedure was not at any cost less brutal or violent than the previous torture sessions, and it was done in three phases. First, the nurse pushed the prisoner on the floor and pressed his foot against his back; then, the officers held him down. At the same time, the nurse inserted a rubber tube into his rectum and released the liquid amidst the prisoner's screams and cries " نار " "شعر بأمعائه تغلي نار.. نار" "he felt his guts on fire on fire." Second, the nurse raised him back to the chair, tied up his hands to his back, and struggled in pushing the same rubber tube into the prisoner's narrow nostril opening and then releasing " السائل الأبيض شديد الملوحة الذي يلهب " "جوفه" "the white very salty liquid that burns his abdomen." The prisoner smelled his excrement and felt choked. He desperately tried to remove the rubber tube and continued to scream with all

⁸⁴³ Ibid., 174.

his being "לא ..לא.." "No..no.." ⁸⁴⁴ Third, the nurse inserted and took out the rubber tube several times into the prisoner's stomach through the mouth before he released the feeding liquid. The prisoner was held against the chair in a very helpless position. His desperate attempts to stop the feeding liquid from entering his guts by biting the tube had failed. After emptying the rest of the feeding liquid into the prisoner's stomach, the nurse made sure to hit the stomach wall with the tube's tip several times before taking it out to cause additional damage. This part of the story ends with the prisoner throwing out all the force-fed liquid mixed with blood and bile and being ordered to pick up his clothes and leave the clinic naked. ⁸⁴⁵

Giving this detailed literal description of the torture and force-feeding procedure that the writer himself had encountered around 21 months before writing the story sheds light on the profound effects of such human brutality on memory. As Herman contends in her article, *Crime and Memory* contradictory disturbances occur to memory, and they are tough to apprehend because trauma simultaneously impairs and boosts memory. "On the one hand, traumatized people remember too much; on the other hand, they remember too little." ⁸⁴⁶ At the same time, he ends the story by the main character proudly crossing the decorated hallway on his way back to the cell. However, the memory of the two murdered inmates is missing. Besides, being in a hostile, unsafe environment at the time of the writing prevented the writer from expressing his emotions and interpretations of the event despite the recitation of detailed facts and bodily reactions to the inflicted torture. Thus, writing down the trauma event as a story functions as a

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid., 175.

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid., 177.

⁸⁴⁶ Herman, "Crime," 5.

mechanism of survival to the writer and his fellow prisoners rather than a therapeutic means because without freedom and painstakingly” detailed description of emotions, there can be no safety and no recovery.”⁸⁴⁷

Part 8: The victorious “Protean” prisoner walks erect, naked, and with a raised head in the direction of his cell after he won the battle against his perpetrator, who aimed at turning him into a submissive and compliant prisoner. He achieves triumph by preserving his revolutionary honour and staying faithful to his moral principles and human attachments. Surviving both emotional and physical death “bears some relationship to symbolic immortality... and implies physical and mental strength as well as intelligence and even a certain amount of organismic wisdom.” Thus, the victorious prisoner is filled with tremendous liveliness, joy, hope, and pride in being alive despite undergoing “an experience that is illuminating in its pain.”⁸⁴⁸ He feels as if the whole world around him is coming back to life to celebrate his pride in triumph, including the mute puppet birds who receive him with singing, the unscented flowers who spray perfume over him, and put a laurel wreath on his head.⁸⁴⁹

Moreover, the writer uses the second-person pronoun as the narrative voice in the eighth part of the story. Firstly, this narrative voice is used to cheer up and empower the reader, who was exposed to an incredible amount of violence and make him participate in the joy of victory and feel as if it is his victory. Secondly, the writer utilises it to converse with the prisoner and

⁸⁴⁷ Herman, *Trauma*, 172, 177.

⁸⁴⁸ Lifton, *Protean*, 82.

⁸⁴⁹ I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 177.

assure him that his survival is a fact and not an illusion. Thirdly, this narrative voice is employed to emphasise the poetic aspect of the closure of the story. In other words, this closure is full of metaphors and similes, and it functions as a poem and or a song that glorifies the real force of the willpower, the governing power in the nature of the human being that is the power of decision and choice, which is always available to be exercised even in the face of extremity.

Conclusions:

I'layan's *Few Hours Before Dawn* is a collection of eight realistic stories based on true stories that the author either personally experienced, eye-witnessed, or heard about in prison. Every story acts as only one example of endless examples of incidents that emotionally wound the prisoners' collective and add anguish to their constant suffering in prison. To convey the idea that the prisoners' collective is entrapped in a vicious circle of a perpetual pain, the writer deliberately avoids organising the stories according to chronological order. Instead, he places the story that carries the same title as the collection at the end of the book to emphasise the circular narrative structure. However, pain is not vividly expressed in the stories not only because of its "unshareability" but also because the writer at the time of the writing is located in a hostile environment (the prison), and his stories could be confiscated at any time or go through censorship. Thus, the prison authority would use every expression of vulnerability as a weapon against the prisoner and his inmates. In addition, at the time of writing, the writer is in the second stage of trauma in which he becomes an expert in concealing all kinds of pain expression, whether in his face, body language, or even his writings. Thus, to be able to communicate the different traumatic events, pain, and guilt the author and his fellow inmates suffer from, the writer has to detach himself from the narrative by employing specific narrative techniques. Some

of these techniques are 1- the usage of the third person pronoun as the narrative voice; 2- telling the story from the main character's perspective, which is not a prisoner; 3- the utilisation of open-endings; 4- the employment of foreshadowing, hints, and analogies to direct the reader or give him/her a clue about the pain, traumas, and guilt the prisoners experience and endure.

Moreover, silence has a strong manifestation in the stories. Most of the time, it is represented in what is absent, concealed, avoided, or cannot be said. In a few instances, it is textually represented with section breaks and metaphors.

The stories are full of indications of Palestinian historical events that took place at the time of the writing (1977-1984). Most of them have negatively influenced the prisoners. The author, through the characters, indirectly criticises them. Besides, the stories contain lots of cultural signs and lexical terms, expressions, and words specific to the Palestinian culture and Palestinian prison experience in the IZSCR's prisons. If the reader/ researcher is not acquainted with the modern Palestinian history and culture as well as the Palestinian prison experience, it would be difficult for him/her to comprehend and grasp the meanings of the text thoroughly he/she is reading as the case of the fifth story "Khalid must live" for instance.⁸⁵⁰

All the main characters of I'layan are realistic ordinary people who belong to the Palestinian masses, the working class he comes from, the poor, the hard-working men and women. They represent the most exploited sector by the colonial occupation and the most affected by its crimes. They belong to different age groups. They have different professions

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid., 103-15.

(peasants, workers, and shepherds). Most of them are either prisoners or prisoner's family members. Moreover, every main character suffers in a way or another from the reality of the colonial occupation either by undergoing some kind of transformation or by losing his /her life while resisting this hostile reality.

The author detaches himself from the narrative by letting the protagonists in some stories speak for themselves and act via the first-person narration. In other stories, he uses the third person omniscient narrator to introduce the main characters, allow the reader through monologues to enter their inner worlds, witness the conflicts they are going through and see them change. Giving these silenced victims a voice in the world via the stories, the author, as a revolutionary freedom fighter, proves that the prison fails to isolate him and his fellow inmates from the people and its cause, struggle, and aspirations. On the contrary, he is still deeply connected to the masses and their struggle. He suffers for their suffering and feels guilty for becoming a burden on them and being incapable, while in prison, to protect them or change their tragic reality by actively participating in the liberation struggle.

Some of the marginal characters represent the Palestinian masses, such as workers, children, mothers, dads, brothers, sons, daughters, students, and inmates. Others represent the IZSCR colonial power, such as prison staff, soldiers, and police officers. The author does not pay attention to their personal details or inner worlds. They are flat characters that are used to develop the narrative and move the plot forward. The reader hears their voices sometimes, but, in general, they have no names and no physical description. However, in the case of the representatives of the colonial occupation, this neglect is deliberate. The writer shows that by dehumanising the colonised, these representatives of the colonial occupation simultaneously

dehumanise themselves. They achieve such dehumanisation by willingly turning into tools or/and weapons in the occupation's hands to commit and sustain its crimes. Thus, they lose their humanity and dissociate from their feelings when they exercise coercive power over the colonised and become "camouflaged victims, at an advanced stage of psychosocial decay."⁸⁵¹

I'layan does not present romanticized Palestinian women in the stories but rather different types of ordinary and real ones as both round and flat characters. For instance, there is 'Aida, the revolutionary teenager prisoner who suffers from hemiplegia because of torture in the fifth story, and there is Umm 'Ali, the illiterate middle-aged- wife who does not dare to ask her husband about the cause of his worries when he is upset in the fourth story. Their lives have transformed because of the IZSCR colonial occupation and its crimes. All of them resisted their new realities, and each one of them paid a heavy price in her way.

I'layan, via his Palestinian characters, whether flat or round, conveys his ideas. He sheds light on the reality of Palestinians under the IZSCR colonial occupation. Suffering, hardships, pain, and loss of life and/or property is the inescapable fate of the colonised. He also mobilises the masses and encourages them to join the resistance because resisting the occupation is the only way to rid the people from all their miseries, as Abu 'Aida tells his daughter in the fifth story:

"لم أنت فرح يا أبي؟"

⁸⁵¹ Ashis Nandy, *At the Age of Psychology: Essays in Politics and Culture* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1980), xv-xvi.

“Why are you happy dad?” He answered:

"لأني عرفت الطّريق يا ابنتي"

“Because I found the Path, my daughter.”⁸⁵² This path is not at any cost easy. It is full of sacrifices, losses, and pain, especially when one is arrested, tortured, and incarcerated for a prolonged time. However, what is essential during this time is endurance and being willing to sacrifice even one’s own life to preserve one’s “revolutionary honour” and to “refuse humiliation and submission” as the protagonist of the last story says when he decides to continue with the hunger strike until death.⁸⁵³ During the liberation struggle, the masses should not lose their faith in their ultimate ability to end up the colonial occupation and should always cling to hope. There was no place for despair in the heart of Sa’id, the teenager when he heard in the news about his mother’s murder at the demonstration.⁸⁵⁴ In his turn, Abu ‘Ali does not lose hope, and while dying, he assures his wife that their son ‘Ali who joined the *fiḍa’iyin* in Lebanon, will come back and protect the land.⁸⁵⁵ The author also describes the feelings of the protagonist of the last story:

"عارياً كنت تسير شامخاً كالجبل.. ورأسك المرفوع كان كالعلم، يشع من عينيك الأمل"

⁸⁵² I‘layan, *Sa‘at*, 88.

⁸⁵³ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁸⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

“You were naked walking with pride like a mountain.. and your head was raised like a flag, while hope was radiating from your eyes.” This hope that consoles *Les Miserables* and assures them that sooner or later this colonial occupation is coming to an end "خيوط الفجر قد انبلجت من رحم الليل" "the threads of dawn shined in the womb of night."⁸⁵⁶ In the eyes of the writer, faith and hope are inseparable companions. “Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, achieves the impossible” as Helen Keller articulates.⁸⁵⁷

I‘layan’s readers, as we have seen, should be acquainted with the Palestinian history, culture, and prison experience as well as trauma theories to actively engage in the reading process. They have to trace the silences, fill up the gaps and imagine the missing information the writer consciously or unconsciously hints at, ignores, and forgets rather than reveals because they are too painful or “the memory is too unreliable for the past to be fully known or reconstructed.”⁸⁵⁸ The stories recreate the painful, traumatic experiences to make them real for both the victims and the readers to encourage them to remember what was silenced and repressed instead of ignoring it. By so doing, the writer urges his readers to take responsibility for the testimonies they witness in the stories, be empathetic, and take an active role in transmitting the appalling information to enable what Vickroy calls the “public mourning process.”⁸⁵⁹

Fragmentation is a prominent feature of traumatic memory. It manifests itself in the stories through different narrative devices that the author intentionally employs, such as

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid., 177.

⁸⁵⁷ Margaret Davidson, *Helen Keller* (New York: Scholastic, 1989), 86.

⁸⁵⁸ Vickroy, *Trauma*, 144.

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid., 218.

flashbacks, alterations in the narrative voices, and parallel stories. Also, the form of the short story itself assisted the author in communicating eight painful memories that he either bore witness to, personally experienced, or heard about in prison in one literary work.

Finally, it is worth noting that I'layan wrote and published only these eight short stories. Some of them were published in Palestinian newspaper before publishing them in one short story collection. When I met him in his office in Jerusalem back in 2004, he informed me that he did not go back to writing after his release. He also complained that he was still suffering from his inability to communicate his prison experience with his close family members even after twenty years after his release. The only escape he had was the weekly meeting with other released inmates that he attends every Thursday. This information indicates that no full healing has been achieved and that he is still carrying his cell inside. The weekly meeting to I'layan and his other inmates functioned actually as a healing group. Writing the short stories functioned as a survival mechanism that helped him and his inmates-readers in prison maintain their sanity. They also aimed to connect to and mobilise the masses to join and sustain the struggle against the IZSCR colonial occupation and its atrocities.

Conclusions

This thesis suggests that the “prison literature” genre in the Arab Homeland should be redefined. It should include all the literary works written in prison, whether they deal with the prison experience as their central theme. It should exclude non-literary prison accounts, whether personal or collective, even if established writers produce them. Besides, this thesis emphasises that prison writings are not limited to prison literature. The other types of prison writings are not at any cost less critical than the literary works produced in prison. They should attract the attention of different scholars from different fields to get a sound grasp of the prison as a system and its devastating effects on its residents.

Writing in prison for the Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees was a very complicated and exhausting process. Before 1971, some prisoners used to write with their blood on toilet paper. Others utilised the wrapping papers of the margarine cubes they used to receive with their meals as papers and made ink from cigarette ashes mixed with margarine leftover. In 1971, one pen was allowed for every four prisoners and one notebook for every prisoner. However, prisoners had to hand in their used notebooks to the prison staff before receiving a new one.⁸⁶⁰

Through their continuous struggle against the prison administrations, the prisoners changed this regulation and enjoyed the unrestricted use of stationary material. In addition, prisoners are subjected to sudden security searches that may end up by confiscating their papers and notebooks. The fear of losing one’s papers doubles the suffering of the prisoner-writer because s/he always worries about her/his writings and their fate. He thinks about how to hide,

⁸⁶⁰ al-Qaymari, *al-Sijn*, 135.

secure, and smuggle them. Sometimes s/he has no choice except to destroy them before they fall into the hands of the wardens. For instance, Qatamish, in the introduction of his novel “al-Rihlah” (*The Journey*), states that one chapter of his novel was confiscated during one of the sudden security searches. He had to write it again from scratch. This “bitter” and unpleasant incident turned into a premonition that accompanied him until he finished writing the novel.

This dread alarm manifested itself in the novel by a motif that disrupted the narration and repeated itself in various variations in different parts of the novel.⁸⁶¹ It is crucial for the writers to inform the readers about the hostile circumstances surrounding the act of writing.⁸⁶² They demonstrate their strong motivation to write despite the risks, sufferings, and difficulties involved with the act of writing in prison because such writing has many tasks. First, writing is an act of resistance to violate the prison policy that aims at isolating the prisoners and cutting their relations with the outside world. Resistance is not only one of the functions of the act of writing but also a fundamental theme in the narratives of Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees. The IZSCR occupation, like French colonialism in Algeria, “has wanted nothing other than to break the will of the people, to destroy [their] resistance, to liquidate [their] hope... [I]t has avoided no extremist tactic whether of terror or torture.”⁸⁶³

⁸⁶¹ “Two red eyes watching eagerly, and around the waist, there is a pistol ready to shoot.” “The fierce two red eyes are watching, and there is a handgun holster on the waist.” See: Qatamish, *al-Rihlah*, 6, 24.

⁸⁶² Qatamish’s novel “al-Rihlah” was written amidst protests that the administrative detainees organized against the prison authority such as intermittent hunger strikes, demonstrations, burning of mattresses, and boycotting courts. The prison administration faced these protests by surrounding the prisoners with fully armed soldiers and throwing tear gas bombs in the cells that led to many injuries and choking cases amongst the prisoners and transferring the leaders of the protesters to other prisons. *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁶³ Fanon, *A Dying*, 57.

Imprisonment is one of the tactics that the IZSCR has adopted since the beginning of its occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967. It has been used to separate Palestinians from each other ‘to divide and conquer,’ isolate the resistance fighters/leaders from the masses, fragment the populace, and stymie Palestinian political cohesion.

However, this colonial occupation has failed to mute Palestinian political activists’ and freedom fighters’ voices. On the contrary, their arrests and confinement in hostile prisons have helped manufacture new freedom fighters and political activists and drive existing activists into even more excellent resistance. To these prisoners, writing has been another arena of the struggle. Resistance is a central theme of their writings, as Fāḍil Yūnis (a freedom fighter and a prisoner of war writer) states in his book *Zanzānah Raqam 7 (Cell Number 7)*. “The enemy could not prevent me from resuming my resistance [after incarceration]; I merely temporarily replaced my gun with [a] pen.”⁸⁶⁴ It becomes an arena of struggle as long as the writer cannot resume his armed struggle against the colonial occupation because of his imprisonment.

Second, writing is one of the mechanisms of survival that the writer who suffers from acute prolonged trauma uses to relieve trauma and gain back his agency- his voice in the world. Being in the second phase of imprisonment, the phase of apathy, avoidance, and constriction at the time of writing, most likely prevented any pain expression or weakness. Thus, their testimonies are considered more as a provisional healing strategy, one of the many mechanisms of survival that prisoners use to preserve their sanity and innermost self in prison rather than recovering from trauma. Many of these writer-prisoners did not produce more than one testimonial work in prison, and most of the ones who wrote more than one book during their

⁸⁶⁴ Fāḍil Yūnis, *Zanzānah Raqam 7* (‘Ammān: Dār al-Jalīl lil-Nashr, 1983), 9.

incarceration stopped writing after their release. This fact proves that the defence mechanism is one of the writing tasks in prison.

Some writers, such as Fadil Yunis and Muhammad I'layan, chose to bear witness to their prison experiences via writing fiction. The writers create another protective shell to cover up their vulnerabilities by writing fiction. Language distances one from the act of trauma. Thus, talking about the prison experience from the point of view of fictional characters (in the first or third-person pronouns) doubles that distance. Consequently, trauma is integrated and able to be told to others. In addition, the writers avoid the direct expression of pain by using specific formal and textual techniques such as open ends, parallel stories, and ellipses, as well as telling the story from the point of view of non-prisoner narrators and fictional characters.

Third, as someone exposed continuously to annihilation, the writers feel the urge to write down their testimony, document all the crimes of their perpetrator, and leave evidence behind in case they lose their life in prison. Besides, feelings of guilt haunt them towards their family members. Thus, their testimonies and fictional works earnestly express their profound love, admiration, gratitude, and deep respect for their moms and wives for all the hardships the families face due to their imprisonment. Out of guilt, it is significant for them to address their children in their texts. They express their unconditional love to them and tell them the story behind their absence. This absence is the price they had to pay for taking the revolutionary path to pave the way for a better future for all the children of Palestine.

Forth, one of the most critical writing tasks is to write the history of those who are silenced and have been deprived of the right to speak for themselves, i.e., the masses, the oppressed, victims, the martyrs, the ordinary people, and other inmates. The personal and collective testimonies document and bear witness in detail to the history of both the individual

Palestinian prisoner and the prisoners' collective movement in the different IZSCR prisons. Together they constitute an essential part of the history of the Palestinian revolution and modern Palestine. It is about educating the younger generation and future potential prisoners on enduring their bitter reality and beginning a long struggle towards change.

Fifth, the prisoners (in the second phase of imprisonment- the apathy phase) use the act of writing as one of the dissociation tactics. It enables them to defy the hostile prison life by detaching themselves and immersing themselves in imaginative worlds that their wardens can neither reach nor confiscate. The writers achieve comfort, relief, and freedom by expanding the self beyond the boundaries of the agonised body and cold, dark, crowded cell. In short, writing not only helps the writer-prisoners to survive, integrate and maintain their struggle but also educates and influences their community outside the jail to promote freedom and seek justice. They try to achieve what Jean-Paul Sartre once said, "Writing is a way of wanting freedom."⁸⁶⁵

During this phase of apathy, the prisoner is "reduced to a goal of simple survival."⁸⁶⁶ Such reduction appeals to all life aspects. This narrowing explains the focus on the now and here in both the testimonies and the fictional works of the prisoners. The writers inspire their stories from the news they hear on the radio or read in newspapers and the stories they hear in prison from other inmates and family members during prison visits, and their own experiences in prison. They inspire their characters from their own experiences, their inmates and family members. This narrowing also makes clear why personal and collective testimonies focus on how to survive, stay alive, and adapt to life in prison and make it more bearable. However, this reduction tactic fails to repress the fragmented traumatic memories that remain entirely vivid,

⁸⁶⁵ Sartre, "Preface," 59.

⁸⁶⁶ Herman, *Trauma*, 87.

alive, intense, clear, and immediate. Thus, as a victim of acute prolonged trauma, the prisoner continues to practice “doubling” and to exist simultaneously in two worlds for many years after liberation. ‘A’isha ‘Awdah, a Palestinian female prisoner who spent ten years in the IZSCR prisons from 1969-1979, published the first part of her testimony in 2004. The reader will be shocked by the immediacy and vividness of her traumatic memories after 40 years of liberation.

Without the trauma theory, no reading of prison testimonies or fiction can be thorough. Trauma theory explains and answers all the questions related to the form and content of these writings. Trauma memories are fragmented. They reject causality, sequence, place, and time. These features, among others, will manifest in the texts as distorted time, fragmentation, flashbacks, and scatter plots. Despite these common features in trauma texts, the texts are in no way identical or talk about the same experience. Prisoners have different reactions even to the same event. Individual differences, resilience, and the nature of the traumatic event determine the impact of the traumatic event. In addition, as we have seen in the first chapter, prison experiences vary even within the same prison system for many reasons, such as the continuous change of the physical layout of the prison, prison staff and tactics of torture over time.

Contrary to Western literary conventions, the authors are not ‘dead.’ They are revolutionary men and women involved in a liberation struggle. They believe that literature should play a vital role in serving the revolution’s goals and the people’s aspirations.

These freedom-fighters writers do not write for writing’s sake; their writings in prison seek to affect someone somewhere. Thus, there is an urgent, didactic, and crucial message about the current historical condition. Their literary works are resistance literature or combat literature, as Fanon articulates:

literature of combat, in the sense that it calls on the whole people to fight for their existence as a nation. It is a literature of combat, because it moulds the national consciousness, giving it a form and contours and flinging open before it new and boundless horizons; it is a literature of combat because it assumes responsibility, and because it is the will to liberty expressed in terms of time and space.⁸⁶⁷

Some of these writers are not content with only letting their fictional characters and narrators voice the writer's views, beliefs, and opinions regarding an event, action, or issue. Instead, they emphasise their existence by endorsing the end of the book with the prison name and the date the writer finished writing that book. Some add introductions and epilogues to present their purpose of writing the text or provide the readers with extra information that is not necessarily related to the text's content. For instance, some of them apologise to the reader for typos or grammatical mistakes due to the prisoner-writer's inability to hire professional editing services. Others provide the reader with information regarding the surrounding circumstances at the time of writing. Qatamish, in his two novels *al-Rihlah* and *'Ubor al-Nahr*, goes too far to let animals or things such as stones and a donkey comment and speak out their opinions on a specific event.

The writers have a specific reader in mind in personal and collective testimonies and fiction that deals with the prison theme. An empathetic reader that is not indifferent to their fate. The readers of the writings of the Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees should have a historical and ideological background of the region. In addition, they have to be acquainted with the theories of trauma in order to be able to understand the texts thoroughly,

⁸⁶⁷ Fanon, *The Wretched*, 193.

trace the trauma and silences, and enable the texts, especially the personal and collective testimonies and the fiction that focuses on the prison theme, to open up. These writings force the readers to bear witness to hideous events. They request them to remember, engage, and act upon these happenings. Readers must take sides and choose between the victim and the perpetrator because neutrality is morally impossible in this context, i.e., when crimes are committed.

The ultimate goal of the Palestinian survivor writer is to break the walls of silence and secrecy that the IZSCR has been hiding behind for more than 55 years. They want to persecute it for the atrocities it has been perpetrating without any deterrent or scruple. Thus, the readers are encouraged to take responsibility and actively participate in this endeavour because if they do not and prefer to turn a blind eye or side with the perpetrator, they become passive participants and accomplices in these atrocities historically. On the other hand, these writings aim to educate Palestinian readers, mobilise them, increase their political awareness, and prepare them to endure the hardships of their reality under occupation and prison life as future potential prisoners.

Finally, for many reasons, the released Palestinian prisoners of war and administrative detainees did not get a chance to communicate their traumas. First, former Palestinian prisoners live in a patriarchal society that does not allow its members (mainly males) to express pain or weaknesses. Second, The Palestinian society, in turn, is traumatised on different levels because of the ongoing crimes of the colonial occupation. For instance, there are constant military raids, shootings, bombings of civilian areas, house demolitions, daily beatings, and humiliations of people at checkpoints. Third, Palestinian society considers these prisoners heroes. Thus, it deprives them of many of their human qualities. Heroes, like gods or saints, have superpowers and never collapse. It is time for the Palestinian society and culture to be aware of its

responsibility to provide support for healing even though it is still suffering under colonisation and even if some or all the healing process conditions are absent in the present.

This thesis addresses the Palestinian people, the Palestinian leadership, and Palestinian human rights organisations. A political movement is required that has the power to legitimise an alliance between investigators and victims and thwart social processes of silencing and denial. On the other, the structure of torture in IZSCR, personal and collective testimonies, and the prisoners' collective movement's history should become an integral part of the curriculum for pupils between the age of 11 and 18. These potential prisoners should learn to create cognitive meaning and imagery schemes to survive the prison trauma with minimal damage to their psyche and strengthen their qualities of resilience.

In addition, prisoners' organisations are invited to organise workshops for the released prisoners and their family members. These workshops should focus on educating them about chronic trauma and post-traumatic stress disorders to know how to support the prisoners effectively and help them healthily restore their humanity, mainly if collective healing is not possible at present. The prisoners should know that their testimonies have not been told yet. Remembering, telling, and retelling the truth about terrible events without fear of reliving these overwhelming events are essential tasks for the healing process to take place. Moreover, Palestinians should be aware that unfortunately they would continue to suffer from the wounds and scars of colonialism for a long time after achieving liberation and establishing their national sovereign state. Thus, they must support each other, learn how to survive and share the burden of pain and responsibility to make this healing process possible when a safe environment becomes available in the near future.

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