



Faculty of Graduate Studies

# Subversion: An Embodied Means of Anti-Colonist Resistance

## On Palestinian Women Political Prisoners

أساليب تجسيد المقاومة ضد الاستعمار الكولونيالي: عن الأسيرات الفلسطينيات

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The thesis was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master Degree in Gender and Development Studies at the Institute of Women's Studies from the Faculty of Graduate Studies at Birzeit University, Palestine.

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For the bodies that have been living in the shadow

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## Abstract

The focal point of the thesis is to illustrate the ways the “*subalterned*” speak and write their narrations of history. On one hand, most of the Western/Orientalist/Zionist discourses portray Palestinian women political prisoners as agentless and voiceless victims of Palestinian patriarchy. On the other hand, many of nationalist literature on Palestinian women political prisoners focus on the oppressive Zionist tactics that are done upon the prisoners’ bodies. Although it’s very important to study the systems of power that are constantly trying to discipline and punish Palestinian women political prisoners’ bodies, this research focuses on the ways these bodies speak back. In other words, it studies the ways Palestinian women fight the colonist inside Zionist jails using their bodies as a strategic means of resistance. Therefore, an Interpretivist qualitative research approach is adopted to carry out the analysis of the collected data throughout semi-structured interviews conducted with a sample of 9 Palestinian women who were detained in Zionist jails between 2014 and 2017. Consequently, the collected data contained the narratives of these women. The research followed two methods to interpret the collected data. The first one is the paradigmatic mode of analysis which seeks to find general features and common categories in the data. The second method is the narrative mode of analysis which basically attends to the particular characteristics of human actions that take a place in a specific setting.

Eventually, the research concluded that Palestinian women political prisoners use subversion as an embodied means of anti-colonial resistance to challenge the tactics that are done upon them, while simultaneously creating fluid and agent subjectivities. Their narratives convey a sense of irreducible humanity and demonstrate a counter-hegemonic kind of knowledge

## الملخص

نقطة الانطلاق المركزية للرسالة هي توضيح الطرق التي يتحدث بها "التابع" وكيفية سردهم وكتابتهم لتاريخهم. من جهة، تقوم الخطابات الغربية/الاستشراقية/الصهيونية بتمثيل الأسيرات الفلسطينيات على انهن ضحايا صامتة للعنف البطرياركي الفلسطيني وتقوم بمحاولة نفي فاعليتهن ووكالتهن السياسية الوطنية. ومن جهة أخرى، العديد من الأدبيات الوطنية تتناول موضوع الأسيرات الفلسطينيات من مقاربة العنف والقمع الموجه عليهن في المعتقلات الصهيونية. بالرغم من أهمية دراسة الأنظمة والخطابات وعلاقات القوة التي تحاول أن تطوع وتهذب أجساد الأسيرات الفلسطينيات، لكن هذا البحث يركز على كيفية قيام هذه الأجساد بالرد على محاولات القمع والتطويع. أي تتناول هذه الدراسة كيفية قيام الأسيرات الفلسطينيات بمقاومة المستعمر الصهيوني داخل المعتقلات وذلك باستخدام أجسادهن كطريقة مقاومة استراتيجية، ولذلك تتبنى الرسالة منهج كفي تحليلي لتحليل المقابلات التي تم اجرائها مع نساء فلسطينيات تم أسرهن في المعتقلات الصهيونية بين عامي 2014 و2017. من خلال المقابلات، تم جمع قصص 9 أسيرات فلسطينيات محررات. لتحليل هذه القصص، اعتمد البحث أسلوب التحليل النمطي والذي يبحث عن أنماط متشابهة ومشاركة في القصص. واعتمد البحث أسلوب التحليل السردى والذي يهتم ويركز على سلوك الانسان في حيز معين. وخلصت هذه الدراسة الى أن النساء الفلسطينيات اللواتي تم أسرهن بالمعتقلات الصهيونية بين عامي 2014 و2017 يقمن بتجسيد المقاومة من خلال الاستخدام الاستراتيجي لأجسادهن وذلك من أجل تخريب وزعزعة البنية والقوى الاستعمارية وفي نفس الوقت في بناء ذات مرنة وذات فاعلية.

## Introduction to Chapters

Chapter one *Research Problematic and Methodology* begins with highlighting the importance of the study. The point of departure is that Palestinian women political prisoners and their embodiments are an open-ended space, instead of a fixed one-dimensional entity. Women in Zionist prisons suffer, yet simultaneously they resist and challenge the colonial powers. The research employs a qualitative methodology and adopts an Interpretivist approach. Nine qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture the narratives of these women. The narrative inquiry aims to challenge the modernist view of a single truth. Nine Palestinian women who were political prisoners between 2014 and 2017 narrate their experience of imprisonment; beginning with the moment of arrest, transfer into the military jeep, interrogation sessions, prison and court visits, until they are out of prison.

Chapter two *Literature Review* demonstrates the ways the Palestinian society and its individuals are portrayed in prominent Western/Orientalist/Zionist discourses. A main concern of the chapter is that such discourses obviate detailed descriptions of the political context, the overall structures of power and focuses on individuals as the main point of investigation. Narratives like this cause a loss of context and a loss of history. Palestinian women political prisoners are reduced into being objects and therefore, the chapter reveals the importance of situating such discourses in their overall context. Nevertheless, some anti-colonial literature attempts to do so by exposing the imbalance of power relations in such discourses. Other anti-colonial literature approaches the colonial structures from the point of view of resistance. Towards the end of the chapter, it reveals the ways the research is going to build on anti-colonial literature.

Chapter three *On the Interplay of Orientalist Discourse and Ethnic Cleansing* and Chapter Four *Colonist Violence met with the Colonized Subject's Violent Resistance* both

emphasize that the Western/Orientalist/Zionist discourses isolate the Palestinians from their colonial context and obviate detailed descriptions of the history and the imbalanced power relations. Therefore, the chapters attempt to situate the discourses in their overall structure of colonial/structural violence. To do so, chapter three provides the historical settings of the Zionist colonial roots in Palestine since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while chapter four gives detailed description of the main events which took place in Palestine between 2014 and 2017. Furthermore, these chapters expose the interplay of such discourses (as discursive violence) and the ethnic cleansing of Palestine (as material violence). In addition, the chapters demonstrate that these discourses represent the colonist's desire to build a superior society in stark contrast to the subaltern Palestinian. This desire was manifested strategically through the actual and material ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people.

Chapter five *Analysis and Discussion* presents the narratives of the participants. The participants are Palestinian women who were imprisoned in Zionist jails between 2014 and 2017. Not only their narratives subvert the epistemic violence in Western/Orientalist/Zionist discourses, but also subvert the material violence done on their bodies while they were inside colonist prisons. Subversion as an embodied means of anti-colonial resistance not only allows women to subvert colonial power and discourses, but also to build new political subjectivities. Eventually, subversion challenges old western liberal notions which rest on dichotomous thinking. Subversion mainly distorts the binary opposition of the mind/body and individuality/collectivity and the one dimensional mode of being and one truth.

## **Chapter One: Research Problematic and Methodology**

### **Purpose of the Study:**

This study is an attempt to write the history of Palestinian women political prisoners' bodies by using their own narratives; it aims to see how these women's bodies speak back to the oppressive techniques that are done upon them and the ways they produce new subjectivities. Generally, these bodies have been living in the shadows of Zionist prisons and the harmful linguistic representation that try to regulate, homogenize and punish them. On one hand, inside the prison the attack on the bodies is direct, upfront and militarized. On the other hand, in the main canons of knowledge the attack on the bodies is epistemic and discursive. Both attacks are interrelated, relational and cannot be easily compartmentalized; they are mutually violent because they strategically and purposefully attempt to subaltern and other these bodies. Most of the times, even the most benevolent nationalist efforts repeat the very silencing they aim to fight, in the sense that Palestinian women who fight for their freedom are considered either a hero or a victim. In other words, they are defined in one fixed state of being.

I use the phrasal verb 'speak back' as to put it in direct confrontation with Gayatri Spivak's question 'can the subaltern speak'? Spivak answers that the subaltern cannot speak, in the sense that the third world subject cannot be studied without cooperation with the colonial project. Yet, even before Spivak provides readers of a blunt answer; the structure of her question gives the answer away. It is a yes/no question which doesn't allow room for an open-ended answer. An auxiliary verb like "can" formulates a polar question, which eventually presents an exclusive disjunction and a dichotomy of which only one answer is acceptable. However, to question

how/the ways the subalterned speak allows room for an open-ended answers on agencies, subjectivities and bodies.

This is where this study becomes important; first it doesn't assume that these women and their embodiments are fixed entities. Instead, the point of departure is that these women's bodies inside the colonizer's prisons can exist simultaneously in multiple states of being; in other words, they suffer and face setbacks yet they simultaneously resist and rebel. Second, it's not an act of giving voice to the "voiceless", there is no "savior" attitude because Palestinian women's voices are already there. Yet, their embodiments should be voiced using their own words and narratives; not someone else's.

### **Research Question:**

How did Palestinian women political prisoners' bodies subvert the Zionist's oppressive tactics in colonist prisons between 2014 and 2017?

### **Methodology:**

The research employs a qualitative methodology. This methodology follows interpretivism as an epistemological approach; it also relies heavily on capturing the meanings of individuals' experiences and interactions and to see how one makes sense of what is perceived as truth (Edirisingha 2012). Moreover, interpretivism is interested in the way people think and formulate ideas about the world; therefore we are looking at multiple realities rather than a fixed one. A good way of showing the various meanings that an individual attaches around a certain truth or experience is by simply asking the people themselves. Therefore, the methodology of this research relies profoundly on capturing the narratives of Palestinian women political prisoners.

Narrative inquiry is the way one systematically gathers people's stories as narrated by them and takes account of the relationship between the individual's experience and cultural [and political] context; this challenges the modernist views of a unified truth (Etherington 2004). Narrative inquiry aims to overcome the usual tendency to decontextualize the participants' meaning making from their settings and the larger contexts (Michler as cited in Bamberg 2011). When narrators tell a story, they position [themselves] and other characters in a specific space and time and they make sense of what happened (Bamberg 2011).

Many methods for narrative data analysis are available; however I combined two methods to interpret the data. The first one is the paradigmatic mode of analysis which seeks to find general features and common categories in the data and organizes the collected narratives under several categories (Kim 2016). The second method is the narrative mode of analysis which basically attends to the particular characteristics of human actions that take a place in a specific setting; this mode of analysis helps the reader to understand why and how things happen the way they did and why the participants acted the way they did (2016).

So how is the research going to benefit from the narrative kind of knowing? First, it shows the various meanings which Palestinian women political prisoners attach to their imprisonment experiences. Second, it allows room for complex constructions of identities that are irreducible; narrations convey a sense of the irreducible humanity of the individual (Etherington 2004). Finally, it demonstrates a counter-hegemonic kind of knowledge that brings together intersectional multiple layers about individuals, their culture, and their political and social contexts. In a world that is seeking an objective one dimensional truth, stories became marginalized (Mendeita 2013). Not all stories were marginalized, but the stories of subalterned groups. Postmodernist thinkers refuse the idea of a single metanarrative and point out that



multiple truths and stories exist (Bressler 2007). Metanarratives had always belonged to the more powerful and dominant groups, while the subaltern narratives are unjustly stifled and subordinated. The narratives of Palestinian women political prisoners are being repressed, thus their narratives must be captured. Minh-ha (1989) points out women's own narratives gives women a chance to affirm their identities in a way that is sensitive to the particular and open to the complexities that they are.

Abu Lughud (1991) is arguing for a form of writing that would express the actions of individuals living their actual lives, inscribed in their bodies and their words. She assures that when one is writing, one must bring closer the language of everyday life; doing this would reverse the mode of creating "*the other*". If we think of agency in terms of speech, then silence indicates a lack of agency; therefore narration is considered a form of speech, and this speech invokes the idea of a *self*-originating presence (Shandilya 2014). Following Abu Lughud's lead, the research narrates the everyday lives of these women during their experience of imprisonment. Using their own narratives, women speak of and through their bodies.

To capture the narratives of these women, I conducted in-depth interviews with Palestinian women who were political prisoners between 2014 and 2017. In these interviews, the women describe and narrate their own experiences in Zionist prisons. Being a political prisoner, one has to go through four stages; the moment of arresting, interrogation, transfer and actual detention. In the interviews it's important to notice how bodies responded in these four stages (which are not as clear cut as they sound) and even shortly after they went out of prison. So why is the body central in capturing one's narrative? Because the body is the intersectional link of the ideational and physical; the body connects a racialized [ignored] past with a present and it is very important

to pay attention to what those bodies suffered and achieved [during their imprisonment] (Shinko, work in progress). Furthermore, Helene Cixous (1976) argues that language arises from the body and goes beyond the body; it is the site of language and an entry into history (Shandilya 2014). In other words, the participants' narrations stem from their lived embodied experiences of the body. Narratives and story-telling involve the participants' bodily existence in Zionist prisons.

### **Positionality**

On my part, I identify as a woman and a Palestinian. As an insider, my knowledge is not innocent; my biases are loud and clear. I am driven by certain affiliations of my identity and cannot be stripped off them. I was also driven by the haunting presence of the absent Shorouq Dwayyat who was one of my students. In 2014 Shorouq was brutally shot and left to bleed and then taken to Zionist prisons. I was moved by her present absence whenever I called her name to take attendance; Shorouq however was sentenced to serve 16 years in colonist jails.

Studying became such a gut wrenching challenge as well; as I commuted to Birzeit University (where I continue my graduate studies) I had to go through multiple checkpoints and endure countless hours of closures and clashes occasionally. In addition, between 2014 and 2017, a decent amount of acquaintances were wounded, imprisoned or martyred by the colonist. In brief, these are some of the factors which personally helped me develop a bigger of a national sentiments and consciousness. As a result, I was moved to do this research and to choose this specific timeline.

## **Research Method**

### **Research Instruments and Sample:**

I conducted 9 semi-structured interviews during March and April 2018. The participants are Palestinian women who were imprisoned in Israeli colonist prisons between 2014 and 2017. This was a time when many political events took place in Palestine (which will be explained with details in chapter four) and therefore restrictions and punishment measures were imposed upon Palestinians. Yet, the latter didn't accept these restrictive oppressions the way they were, they fought back and resisted. As a result, the amount of political prisoners escalated. According to Addameer (2013, 4) "political prisoners are those who are detained in relation with the occupation, as opposed to detainees suspected or convicted of crimes/offenses unrelated to occupation". When it came to selecting the participants, I chose purposefully women from different regions; Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Hebron and Nablus. Second, I chose women who come from different backgrounds; camps, villages and cities. Third, the participants' ages vary between 21 and 56. Finally, they are different in socio-economic and educational status. Achieving diversity among the participants' personal characteristics provided the research with a deeper understanding of various experiences of these women. Furthermore, achieving diversity is important to my research because it is one way of staying away from generalizations and stating solid fixed facts about these women.

Getting contact information for women who were once political prisoners wasn't an easy task. In Bethlehem (because it's my hometown), I was able to get some numbers through mutual connections. Yet to contact women from Ramallah, Nablus, Jerusalem and Hebron I had to

contact Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association. Even after I got the contact information, it was still difficult to get in touch with these women because they often changed their phone numbers. Also, some of them didn't want to conduct an interview because they don't know who I am and can't easily confide to a stranger. Lastly, quite often I talked to women, booked an interview and once I reached the site I was cancelled on the spot. Consequently, I had to schedule an appointment with Addameer and book interviews using their name. This method provided more fruitful results.

Once the interviews were conducted, they followed a semi-structured approach. The structure comes close to an everyday conversation, yet involves a specific approach of questioning (Kvale and Brinkmann 2008). Thomas (2013) argues that semi-structured interviews provide the research with the best of both worlds, where on one hand, the list of issues to be covered will be listed, yet the interview allows room for follow up points. At the beginning of each interview, I explained to each participant a little bit about my research then asked to hear their own narratives. As we were speaking, I noticed that each participant (except for one) narrated her experience chronologically starting with the moment of being arrested, then the transfer in the jeep and into the prison, the interrogation, court sessions, Bosta vehicle transfer, actual detention, and then once they went out of prison.

### **Issues Raised in the Interviews:**

I had few basic questions as follow up points, but I found that the participants usually covered the issues that I want to tackle without me having to ask them. While they were narrating, I often asked them how they felt about a certain situation because I am very interested

in seeing how they create meanings around their experiences. Also, I am interested in understanding the ways these women react to certain situations, and therefore this was one of the follow up questions “how did you react”. Another follow up question was “who was with you” whether when she was arrested, or who shared her cell. This was useful in highlighting the significance of other people in the experience of imprisonment and to see the ways the narrator’s network of relationships impact on this experience.

The interviews covered five parts: the first part of the interview revolved around the moment of being arrested. What was she wearing? Where was she? What was she doing? How did she feel? Who shackled her hands? Who inspected her body and how did she feel about that? Who was around her (family members for instance and how did they interact)? What happened in the jeep? How long did she stay in the jeep? Was she hungry, thirsty, cold or needed the bathroom etc...? How did she cope with those needs? Did someone verbally or physically or sexually harass her? How was she seated?

The second part of the interviews revolved around interrogation. How many interrogators were there? What kind of questions did they ask her and how did they ask them? Were any of the questions purposefully provocative? Did any of the questions contain sexual connotations? Was she tired? How many hours did she stay there? Did she eat or drink?

The third part of the interviews covered the actual stay in the prison. How were the living circumstances of the room? How many girls were with her? Who are they and how was her relationship with them? How did she spend her day? What did she do during the Forah (break)? How did she take care of her body inside prison? How did she feel about strip-inspection? How did she react to it? How did her body change inside prison (lost or gained weight got any

diseases; i.e caught a cold or a flu etc...) How were her sleeping, eating and hygienic habits? How was she able to deal with menstruation? Did she take any pills etc...? Was there any violation of her personal space, her body for example? How many times were her family members able to visit? How did she feel knowing she can see her family only through glass? Not being able to touch or hug them? Did she ever get in conflict with one of the prison guards?

The fourth part of the interview tackled visits to the court and transfer using the Bosta (Israeli transfer vehicle). How many times did she go to court? How many hours did she stay in the Bosta? How did she feel in the Bosta? How did she spend time in the Bosta? How did her body react to the Bosta since her hands and feet were shackled and her movement was restricted? How many people were inside? Who was inside with her? Inside the court and before her trial, where was she situated? What was the cell like? How did she spend her time there? What happened inside the court room? What was her legal status (administrative detention or charges)?

Finally, participants talked about life after prison. From the very same moment of their release what happened? How did they feel? Who was there to welcome them? How were they able to cope and get back to their lives? Did their habits towards their bodies change? How did their relationship with their surroundings change (family, friends etc...)?

Most of the participants tackled the topics without even being asked. The interviews lasted between one hour and two and sometimes three. I used only my phone as a tool to record the participants' voices. After each interview, the voice was turned into transcriptions word by word, even the laughs and cries were transcribed. After transcription, the interviews were scanned quickly and then read thoroughly. The relevant words, phrases and sentences were labeled; it was similar to a coding process. Common themes in the interviews were highlighted.

## **Ethical Engagement:**

The coding process of which the interviews were decoded carries within its fold the tendency to be biased and selective; I do not deny that. Yet, I don't claim to represent or homogenize the participants in my research; it's just a small synopsis of their experience inside Zionist prison as they narrated it.

The first ethical engagement that I have is to remain leery of assuming a final position or a fixed truth of these women, and to stay alert to the fluidity of possibilities and actions. The second ethical engagement that I have is to capture these women's own narrations as they are and this would be done mainly by showing the participants as the first person narrators of their stories. Of course, this cannot be absolute, because I get to select the narrations that fit with my own interpretations of the world.

## **Conceptual Framework**

I start my argument based on the general idea that Palestinian women political prisoners' bodies subvert the colonial oppression done upon them in Zionist jails. By subversion, I don't just mean the act of trying to destroy or damage an established system (Cambridge 2018); but also the act of trying to build new subjectivities. My definition of subversion draws upon Lorde's *Uses of Anger and Erotic*, Cixous's *Medusa* and Minh-ha's *Commitment from the Mirror-Writing Box*. Subversion is an embodied means of resistance that shows us the ways women respond to anger. Subversion is the response to the anger of which Audre Lorde (1981) vigorously talks about; the anger of racism, exclusion, distortion and marginalization. Subversion is the power to feel in our bodies (Lorde 1978); subversion is re-appropriating the body which

was conceived as a site of violence, into the space where the same violence is reversed in ways that challenge the colonizer. Subversion is when Palestinian women political prisoners destroy the boundaries of their own bodies and collide with other bodies; it is Minh-ha's fragmented "i". In subversion, women render their bodies audible, they are the laughing Medusas... their laughter is heard from distance like Maya Angelou's singing caged bird, their laughter is heard from below and beyond culture (Cixous 1976).

Another key concept that I use in this research is the body. I employ Butler's concept of the body in the sense that a body cannot exist outside of social conditioning and the discourses that are trying to shape it; however bodies are always in the process of doing and undoing through iterations of subversion (1990). I use this theory in the Palestinian context by assuming that bodies should be conceptualized as an unfinished open ended space that is contentiously in process. I view the body as the site which subverts the clear line between the ideational and material (Shinko, work in progress); and between the private and the political.



## Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter aims to demonstrate the ways that Palestinians and their society are constructed in prominent Orientalist/Zionist discourses. By showing this, the material violence embedded in epistemic violence would be brought into a clearer relief. Second, the chapter dives into descriptive details of the ways Palestinian women political activists are reduced into objects in Zionist discourse and reveals the need for situating these discourses in their political contexts. In addition, the chapter shows the ways Palestinian women political prisoners are represented in nationalist literature. By doing this, the chapter illustrates what is missing in such literature and what Palestinian literature needs to be built on.

### Introduction

*“It is the colonist who fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonized subject.” -Frantz Fanon (1963).*

Fabrication seems like a treacherous word to start with! Yet, the colonizer not only invades lands, dispossesses its natives and liberally sprinkles hordes of settlers all over the place; the colonizer codifies knowledge about the colonized subject. This codification is discursive, but within its discourse it doesn't seek to describe the colonized subjects; it seeks to construct them. These constructions are fabrications, which in turn rationalize and legitimize the violence perpetrated towards the colonized.

Linguistically, colonize is a verb used with an object. Objectification of the colonized subject is the objective that the colonizer relentlessly pursues to achieve. The colonized is fabricated into an image of barbarous evil and declared as the enemy of values (Fanon 1963, 6).

Albert Memmi (1974, 131) rhetorically questions: what is left of the colonized at the stubborn effort to dehumanize him? He is hardly a human being, he tends rapidly toward becoming an object and one does not have a serious obligation toward an animal or object? If one were to answer Memmi, one would conclude that a binary opposition is born; a subject and an object. The colonist is everything the colonized “object” is not; the colonist is the rational Subject.

Within this dichotomy, Edward Said’s orientalism resurfaces; the orientalist creates the orient (east) through his writings by creating stereotypical images where the orient is seen as irrational, backward, inferior and depraved (1978). Mohanty (1984) assures that writing about a group of people is not production for the sake of knowledge, but it is politically focused and ideologically driven. Said (1978) however believes that these images are not realistic portrayals of the orient, but they are constructed based on anxieties which seek to legitimize Western imperialism. It also seeks to legitimize the colonist’s police and legitimate severity (Memmi 1974).

In other words, a close correlation exists between orientalism as a profession [the process of codifying knowledge and creating a series of stereotypical about the orient] and colonialism (Shabanirad and Marandi 2015). An orientalist discourse is not a group of harmless words and sentences, on the contrary, any written body of knowledge should be read in relation to culture, history, society and other factors (Bressler 2007). Nevertheless, the orientalist discourse obviates description of historical, colonial and political context, and focuses on the characteristics of individuals in a certain society. Therefore, an orientalist discourse makes people suffer a loss of context. A colonizer who produces discourse on the colonized subject is thus the systematic attempt of the colonizers to clean their hands and to get an excuse to discipline and control the Orientalized colonized subjects.

## **The Orientalist Discourse about Palestinians**

In the Palestinian scene, the orientalist discourse on Palestinian women who commit acts of anti-colonist resistance highlights that these women are moved by personal reasons and avoids mentioning that they are mainly moved by the colonist context that they live in. In such discourses, the specific political context, territorial conflicts and international power relations are largely left aside; on the other hand [Palestinian] women are depoliticized and represented as the irrational other (Brunner 2007). And because the orientalist discourse is built on dichotomous notions, the irrational Palestinian woman is starkly contrasted to the rational Israeli.

Massive Zionist bodies of knowledge were created about the Palestinian society. In this discourse, Palestinians are objectified and othered. “Israel” on the other hand, declares itself as the only democratic voice in the Middle East. Kevorkian, Ihmoud and Nashef (2014) affirm that the Zionist has been indulged in an exclusion colonial logic where Palestinians are constructed as the other, in opposition to the white Jews who are the bearers of European civilization.

In 2002, a young Palestinian woman called Wafa Idris blew herself up on a street in Jerusalem. Idris was the first Palestinian woman to blow herself up and kill other two Zionists. The responses to Idris’s action varied widely as Dorrit Naaman points out; journalists and analysts could not explain her action, and therefore the solution was to search for a personal explanation (2007). The various explanations isolated Idris from the political colonist context that gave rise to her action; which makes such explanations orientalist at heart. The Western media highlighted the fact that Idris was infertile and had allowed her husband to marry another

woman and hence, her life was unworthy (2007). In fact, Barbara Victor (2003) finds personal problems among all of the women who blew themselves up and points out that Andaleeb Takatah didn't want to get married, and Ayat Al-akhras was protecting her family's honor. All of these explanations stem in one direction, they create an orientalist discourse about these Palestinian women and adopt a thesis that they are victims of Palestinian patriarchy, not Zionist colonization. As a result, Palestinian women are depicted as overtly emotional, depoliticized, mindless and patriarchal victims; thus, disciplining them is a must to regain control.

### **Zionist Representations/Fabrications of the Palestinian Society**

The Orientalist/Zionist discourse persists until this day. When Anat Berko was asked to shed lights on recent events (Palestinian knife stabbing), she avoided any discussion of the political colonist context in Palestine; rather she chose to highlight that the oppression of women in the Palestinian patriarchal society is the only reason for women's participation in 'suicide' missions. Berko is a Zionist criminologist and a politician, she considers herself an "expert" in the field of Palestinian counter-terrorism (The Tower 2015). Furthermore, Berko is a former lieutenant colonel in the Zionist "defense" forces; she served in the army for 25 years. In 2015 she agreed to join the Likud party (2015).

In her various publications, Berko gives the very same introduction about the Palestinian society: in 2007, 2010, 2012 and 2015 she presents the same information about Palestinians. In her reductionist introductions, she generalizes facts about the Palestinian society that to her seem to stand the test of time. In her eyes, the Palestinian society remains the same over the course of the years; Palestinians' societal structure and characteristics and the gender roles and relationships remain frozen in Berko's time capsule. In brief, patriarchy is her sole answer to

why Palestinian “terrorism” exists. Furthermore, Berko conducted 16 interviews with Palestinian women “security” prisoners in 2004 till 2006. She used the very same interviews in almost all of her publications; even when she co-authored with others.

Not only her orientalist efforts are discursively violent, but her words become physically harmful. Berko’s politics are aligned with those of the Zionist Prime Minister Netanyahu; she proposed many ways to control the Palestinian’s terrorism: “we have to make the attack not worthy so families start controlling their people, the family should pay the price; it doesn’t have to be with house demolitions, it can be with other punishments like fines” (Weinglass 2015).

So how does Berko describe the Palestinians and what’s so harmful about this? They are depicted as a savage tribal community that is based on a fixed hierarchal patriarchy (Berko and Erez 2007); it’s a dystopia where all people are strangely portrayed as religious fanatics, sexually frustrated and fixated on honor shaming (Berko as cited in Weinglass 2015), and brothers find pleasure in raping their sisters (Berko and Erez 2007). Palestinian women are portrayed as pathetic and helpless creatures who are victimized by their patriarchs! Palestine is such a sad place for women to exist; they suffer from domestic violence and oppression (Berko as cited in Weinglass 2015). They are confined into traditional modes of femininity; all they know is how to be devoted trophy housewives (Erez and Berko 2007). It seems like a perfect incubator for terrorists and for white Jews to salvage. Berko and Erez (2007) claim that the Palestinian society is just like any other Arab society, it is based on social homogeneity. Thus, all Palestinians are so savage that they don’t deserve a land because they might rape it just like they raped their sisters!

On the other hand, Berko (2016) describes Israel as the island of stability and the savior of the Palestinian. The occident assimilated Israeli is developed, rational and sane. Israel is the

sanctuary of democracy and pluralism; it is the only country in the Middle East that enjoys free elections, free press, freedom of religion and a free society (AIPAC 2008). Therefore, as bearers of the European civilization, the Israeli must save the Palestinian. This takes me back to Said's orientalism and Fanon's fabrication; Palestinians are fabricated as a group of backward objects, while Israelis are fabricated as a group of progressive subjects and therefore colonizing Palestinians becomes legitimate.

Anat Berko points out that many of the prisoners "terrorists" interviewed suffer from violence at home, and that the acts of terrorism that lead Palestinian women to imprisonment stem from patriarchal; societal and familial oppression (as cited in Weinglass 2015). Female helplessness in Arab society is intensified by the patriarchal power structure of Arab families which justifies inequality between men and women, and allows male family members to control women (Berko and Erez 2007).

Even when they commit revolutionary acts, they engage in webs of lies and excuses because their fathers or husbands wouldn't normally allow them to do so (Berko and Erez 2007). For example, the prisoners allegedly discussed in details how they had to deceive their fathers and other family members by making up stories about going to see a girlfriend or study (Berko, Erez and Globokar 2010).

Violence at home like sexual harassment or rape leads Palestinian women to conduct terrorist acts Berko claims: a Palestinian woman who previously tried to stab a soldier at a checkpoint related in her interview with Berko that her brother rapes her and there is nothing she can do about it because her father is dead and not there to protect her (Berko as cited in Weinglass 2015).

Furthermore, it is claimed that huge numbers of prisoners were seeking to escape harsh marital circumstances or resolve the despair of being prohibited from the relationships they desired (Anat, Berko and Globokar 2010). Berko claims that Palestinian women often attack because once they become martyrs, they can reach heaven where they can mingle with men and marry for love (as cited in Weinglass 2015). According to Berko and Erez (2007) a prisoner explained the reason why she decided to become a “suicide bomber”; that is her father’s refusal to allow her to marry a deformed man she met on the street. Another one of the interviewees (prisoners) explained that in paradise women get to select their husbands for a change (Berko, Erez and Globokar 2010).

In addition, it was claimed that Palestinian women political prisoners who fight colonialism, only do so because they are some sexually frustrated prudes. Berko says many young Palestinians live with a tremendous amount of social pressure, prohibitions and shame; where in heaven, they can experience all the things that are forbidden in real life (as cited in Weinglass 2015). Berko and Erez (2007) state that one of the prisoners murdered a Jewish boy because she wanted to go to heaven, and that she expressed shyly her desire to have sexual relationships with other martyrs. Other prisoners as allegedly interviewed by Berko expressed that their political involvement presents them with a chance to associate with young men and wear tight revealing clothes (2007, 45). Imprisonment removed these “oppressed” women from the “gaze” of their families; where paradoxically in prison, they were able to express the freedoms they were deprived of (Berko, Erez and Globokar 2010).

Berko and Erez (2007) believe that the inclusion of Palestinian women in “terrorism” is a type of patriarchal oppression because Palestinian men exploit women and use them as tools. Palestinian women are exploited in their homes by a male figure, and even when they commit

acts of resistance they are manipulated by other male figures in the web of Palestinian patriarchy. For instance, one prisoner in an interview with Berko asserted that the man she loved exploited her and told her if she did this “terrorist act” he would marry her; to her surprise he didn’t and she still misses him (2007, 24). The previous extract tells readers that Palestinian men are sadistic manipulative beasts and women are masochistic passive dupes.

Schweitzer (2008) explains that the Western literature usually characterized the women who embark on missions as “not whole” and have physical defect. Palestinian women with personal defect tend to conduct terrorism (Berko and Erez 2007). An “ugly” woman prisoner that Berko interviewed expressed that she conducted terror because she wanted to die and go to heaven where she would become beautiful (Berko, Erez and Globokar 2010). In another interview with a political prisoner, Schweitzer (2008) explains that this woman attempted to blow herself up because she felt she was ugly and a hopeless case for marriage; therefore when she dies she would become pretty.

To sum, Palestinian women political prisoners were reduced to mere victims of Palestinian patriarchy and the rigid standards of their gender roles. They are condensed in a state of objectification; other modes of beings, re-significations and meanings around their embodiments are not taken into consideration. Even during the “Outburst” in 2015-2016, the prominent Zionist newspapers depicted Palestinian women who participated in the national anti-colonialist struggle as victims. Even in their “terrorism” (Gilenson 2017; Arye 2017; Burnbaum 2017) they were still considered “terrified” of Palestinian patriarchy that they had to come up with lies whenever they wanted to commit a terrorist act (Gilenson 2017). In such an orientalist/Zionist discourse Palestinian women are victims of male violence, not the settler



colonist; they are victims of Islam codes and Arab traditions, not a neoliberal economy and a farce of an independent Palestinian authority.

## **Oppressive Language is Violence**

*“Oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence” Toni Morrison (1993).*

These fabrications are one form of oppression; an epistemic one which attempts to colonize the complexities, subjectivities and lives of these women, it attempts to silence these women’s interpretations, motives, re-significations of their bodies, their gender roles and relationships. While describing the Palestinian society, why is there no mention of political colonist violence? Why are power relationships hidden? Why is their effect on Palestinian society bypassed? How can a society and its complexities be reduced into a frozen time capsule? Can we gain certainty about a given society?

## **Subverting the Violent Orientalist/Zionist Discourse**

The Orientalized patriarchy as a discursive frame not only questions women’s agencies, but it negates them completely. Frances Hasso (2005) acknowledges the political agencies of these women and highlights their awareness of colonist racism. Hasso (2005) affirms that Palestinian women who conduct anti-colonial resistance acts view themselves as legitimate militant actors; Wafa Idris and Dareen Abu Aishah were political activists and Ayat Al-akhras was fiercely opinionated as she closely watched the news. The dominant narrative in the Arab media tied these women into a hetero-normative narrative as mothers and brides, Naaman (2007)

points out. Nevertheless, Hasso (2005) argues that the deployment of the bridal trope destabilizes the meaning of wedding day and re-signifies these women's deaths as a source of joy.

Another dominant counter-narrative in the nationalist literature exposes the brutality of the Zionist colonizer and emphasizes the suffering of these women in colonist jails. In other words, they defy the orientalist/Zionist discourse by stressing the imbalance of power relations between them and their colonizers. Moreover, they situate the acts of Palestinian women in their political colonist context. Yet, most of the Palestinian literature dwells on torture techniques and rarely approaches the point of view of resistance (which exists simultaneously with suffering). For instance, In Nashef, Ihmoud and Kevorkian's *Sexual Violence Women's Bodies, and Israeli Settler Colonialism*, they explain with comprehensive examples the ways in which sexual violence is a racialized machine of domination. One of these examples was the story of Aida, a Palestinian woman from Jerusalem. Aida was attacked and beaten by Zionist police, and then she was dragged into the police car. The authors do not explain to the readers the ways Aida reacted, did she fight back as they tore off her hijab and pulled her by the hair? What did she do as she was being dragged into the police car? And what about Sama, the thirty-six-year-old Palestinian who was threatened of sexual abuse during interrogation? How did she deal with that interrogator? In other words, the authors highlight the ways sexual violence is central to the larger structure of colonial power; but do not tackle the ways in which Palestinian women fight back or respond to this sexual violence.

Shahd Wadi (2012) emphasizes Nashef, Ihmoud and Kevorkian's narrative as she states that the culture of honor is related to women's bodies, and that it is often used by Zionist forces as a weapon against Palestinians. Wadi points that these women started to talk openly about rape and torture in Zionist prisons and that such women turn their narrative into a language of

resistance. She takes it a step further as she calls on brief examples where women transform their bodies as subjects of resistance, the ways they re-signify honor and the ways Palestinian women regain their bodies.

Furthermore, Elham Bayour exposes the sexual violence deployed against Palestinian women political prisoners in Israeli prisons (as cited in Meari 2015). She argues that Palestinian women who join the struggle aren't victims of patriarchy, but rather they have a choice and a political agency (Meister 2002). Nahla Abdo shares a similar argument and affirms the agency of these women (Meari 2015). As much as their contributions to the existing body of literature are groundbreaking, Bayour and Abdo overlook the ways in which Palestinian women political prisoners destabilize and re-signify perceptions of culture and gender dynamics (2015, 8).

Lena Meari (2014) breaks free from the dominant frameworks and the one dimensional models of resistance in the sense that Palestinians in *sumud* (translated as steadfastness) express their victimhood and heroism mutually. Meari (2015) approaches the colonial structures from the point of view of the resistance of strugglers. She explains that the praxis of *sumud* by Palestinian struggles destabilizes the significations of the sexed bodies and challenge the fixed associations between women's bodies and the meanings of women dignity within Palestinian society and the Zionist's perception of it (2015, 2).

On that account, the research studies the various ways Palestinian women political prisoners fight back the violent oppression through the strategic and subversive use of their bodies during their imprisonment in Zionist jails. These strategic embodiments will be approached from the point of view of resistance and by using the strugglers' own narratives.

## Concluding Remarks

In the *Laugh of Medusa*, Helene Cixous (1976) states that we must kill the false and reduced image of women, that they must reclaim their own bodies and draw their stories into history. Rosemary Sayegh (1998) affirms that oral life stories offer material to historians of the Palestinian experience; the value of such narratives is that they register the experience of marginal social sectors.

Edward Said employs a mode of reading which he calls “contrapuntal”; in this method, the reader accentuates the affiliation of the text, its origin in social, cultural [and political] reality (Shabanirad and Marandi 2015). Deploying Said’s method of reading, one reveals the extent to which the Western [Orientalist/Zionist] literatures are deeply implicated in the process of imperialism and colonialism (2015). For this reason, this chapter reveals the need to contextualize Zionist orientalist discourse in its framework of colonist violence which will be done in the following two chapters. Moreover, the chapter illustrates the need to record Palestinian women political prisoners’ narratives, which will be also done in the last chapter. By doing this, the women’s narratives could destabilize the fixed linguistic representations about them and subvert the actual physical oppression done upon them during their imprisonment.

## **Chapter Three: On the Interplay of Orientalist Discourse and Ethnic Cleansing**

### **Introduction**

As illustrated in chapter two, the central focus of Zionist orientalist discourse is to generalize that individuals in a certain society are homogenous; nevertheless, political context and international relationships of power are largely overshadowed. Brunner (2007) acknowledges that the orientalist framework obviates detailed discussions of the social, political, economic circumstances and structural violence; In addition, nationalistic histories are reduced to questions of a presumed cultural nature.

The first purpose of this chapter is to situate the Zionist orientalist discourse in its political colonialist context in order to reveal power relationship and political violence in such discourse. The second purpose of the chapter is to expose the interplay of Zionist orientalist discourse as an epistemic violence and the ethnic cleansing of the colonized Palestinian subjects as a material violence. Therefore, this chapter provides the historical settings of Zionist colonialism in Palestine since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It begins by tracking the Zionist colonial roots in Palestine, and then it highlights the various agreements which attempted to divide the Arab nations and Palestine to make it easier to conquer. Next, it addresses the different partition plans proposed to divide Palestine into two nations; one for Jews and another for Palestine. The interplay between epistemic violence and material violence is crystal clear during the Palestinian Nakba 1948 and Naksa 1967. In other words, the physical expulsion and the ethnic cleansing of the colonized Palestinians are interrelated to the Zionist's racial exclusiveness and the belief of their superiority. The Zionist attempted to kill Palestinian bodies or to discipline them.

Moreover, Palestinian's leadership peace talk with the colonizer made life much more unbearable; because under Palestinian- Israeli security coordination bodies fell under more violence. The last purpose of the chapter is to demonstrate that Palestinian bodies do speak back to structural orientalist colonial violence; it shows that violence is met with resistance.

## **Zionist Colonial Roots in Palestine: 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

At the very time nations have come to enjoy their right to self-determination, the Arab people of Palestine were finding themselves helpless to stop the culmination of a process of a systematic colonization to which Palestine had been subjected for decades (Sayegh 1965). In 1897, Zionist leaders held a meeting in Basel Switzerland where they identified Palestine as the land in which to build a Jewish national home and a secure state for Jews (Bunton 2012). Back then, Zionism made a very little progress towards putting its elaborate colonization apparatus to work and had scored very little success in its political efforts to obtain governmental permission to facilitate for colonization in Palestine (Sayegh 1965, 7). Settlement conditions in Palestine were tenuous, many Zionist settlers ended up leaving after a short stay. The Second wave was more committed to the creation in Palestine of separate society built on "Jewish" labor (Bunton 2012). The second wave of Zionist colonization was not so successful because even after 30 years of Zionist immigration, Jews were still a minority and Zionism failed to obtain political endorsement from the Ottoman authorities or any European power (Sayegh 1965).

## **World War I: The "Divide and conquer" Strategy**

During the First World War, Britain and France wanted to expand their spheres of influence in the so called Middle East. Therefore, they concluded a secret agreement known

today as the Sykes Picot Agreement (Hughes 2016). This agreement became the symbol of imperialism, for it aimed to divide the Middle East between Britain and France. In the agreement, an “international administration” was proposed for Palestine; that didn’t happen of course because in 1917 Palestine was transferred to the British control (2016). The British gained control of Palestine under the claim that they are helping the Jews return to the land promised to them by “God”. Therefore, a year after the Sykes Picot Accords, the British Mandate supported the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

### **Alliance: British Imperialism and Zionist Colonization**

*“The promise of who doesn't own, to those who don't deserve”- Palestinians on Balfour’s Declaration.*

The First World War set the stage for an alliance between the British Imperialism and the Zionist Colonization. This alliance facilitated the achievement of a “national home for the Jewish people in Palestine” (Kramer 2017). This coalition was concluded in 1917 under the name of “Balfour’s Declaration” (Sayegh 1965). Arthur James Balfour- the British foreign secretary- expressed the British support for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people. Palestine wasn’t empty though, it was already populated with Arabs.

Between 1919 and 1939 the British rulers supported taking the lands of thousands of Palestinian villagers and gave them to Zionist settlers. As a response to the unfair treatment of Palestinians, Palestinians resisted and called for a strike. In 1936 and until 1939 Palestinian villagers revolted (later came to be known as the Great Revolt) while confronting the colonial practices and discourses that deny their existence and historical connection to their land

(Swedenburg 1990). The Palestinians launched a countrywide revolt against the British Mandate and its official policy of support for Jewish immigration to Palestine (Hughes 2014). Palestinians national sentiments and consciousness were growing even bigger; they wanted their nationalistic independence and refused the idea of a Jewish state on their land (Kanafani 1972). A commission of inquiry was led by Lord Peel came to Palestine to investigate the causes of the revolt; the commission published a report recommending the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab State (Hughes 2014). The 1937 Peel partition plan triggered even more rebellion; thousands of Palestinians were martyred and imprisoned by the British.

## **World War II**

Following the Second World War, many countries (especially in the West) announced their support for an independent Jewish state as home for the Jewish refugees who survived the holocaust (Bunton 2013); Nevertheless, Jewish immigration to Palestine and Zionist Colonization schemes began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and that was long before the holocaust. The United Nations set up a special committee on Palestine (known as UNSCOP), another partition scheme for Palestine was announced (2013, 47). The UN's partition plan came to be known today as 'Resolution 181': it proposed the partitioning of Palestine into two countries, one Jewish and one Arab. The plan also included the termination of the British Mandate and the withdrawal of British armed forces (UN 1990). Even though Jews constituted 33% of Palestine's population and owned less than 10% of the total land area, 55% of Palestine's territory was proposed for the Jewish state (Bunton 2013). The Palestinians rejected the proposal because in the partition plan the Arab state would be deprived of key agricultural lands and seaports; however, the UN's partition plan was passed.



On the very same day Britain relinquished its mandate over Palestine and withdrew its forces, the Zionist proclaimed the establishment of Israel as a state in Palestine.

## **The Palestinian's Nakba 1948**

The Zionist forces occupied Palestinian lands, destructed entire villages and cities and dispossessed huge amounts of Palestinians. Israel invaded 77% of the territory and over 700,000 Palestinians became refugees (Beinin and Hajar 2014). Most refugees were displaced by Zionist military forces using oppressive strategies which violate basic human rights (Badil 2004). It is worth noting that to conduct the attack on Palestinian villages, orientalist and topographic efforts were built up for each village. An orientalist is someone from the West who studies the language, culture, history or customs of countries in Eastern Asia (Collins Dictionary 2018). Zionist orientalists in Palestine recorded precise details about each village, its main sources of income, the roads, water springs and even the people especially those who expressed “hostility” against the Zionist project (Pappe 2006). These Zionist military men commingled with what nowadays we call “orientalist” or “experts on the Arab World (2006, 18). Not only these orientalists study the Palestinian society’s language, culture, roads and people; but also they exaggerate and distort the differences between us/them. They depict Palestinians as backward and uncivilized to the point where colonist domination is justified.

The “democratic” state of Israel passed a variety of racist laws soon after its establishment. The Absentee Property Law designated the personal properties of Palestinian refugees as “absentee property”; these properties were distributed to the Zionist settlers (Ben-Hillel 2013).

## Zionist Dogma of Racial Exclusiveness

Nowhere in Asia or Africa has European race “supremacy” expressed itself in so passionate a zeal for thorough going racial exclusiveness and for physical expulsion of native population; but in Palestine, the Zionist settlers expressed their supremacy over the Arab natives by isolating themselves first and later evicting the Arabs (Sayegh 1965). The Zionist colonizer represents a desire to establish a superior, more advanced, more civilized society than the “others” (Elia 2017); this desire was manifested *strategically and systematically* through the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian people.

## Ethnic Cleansing of Palestinians: The Bodies of the Condemned



Figure 1: Abu Shusha Massacre 1948



Figure 2: Qibya Massacre 1953

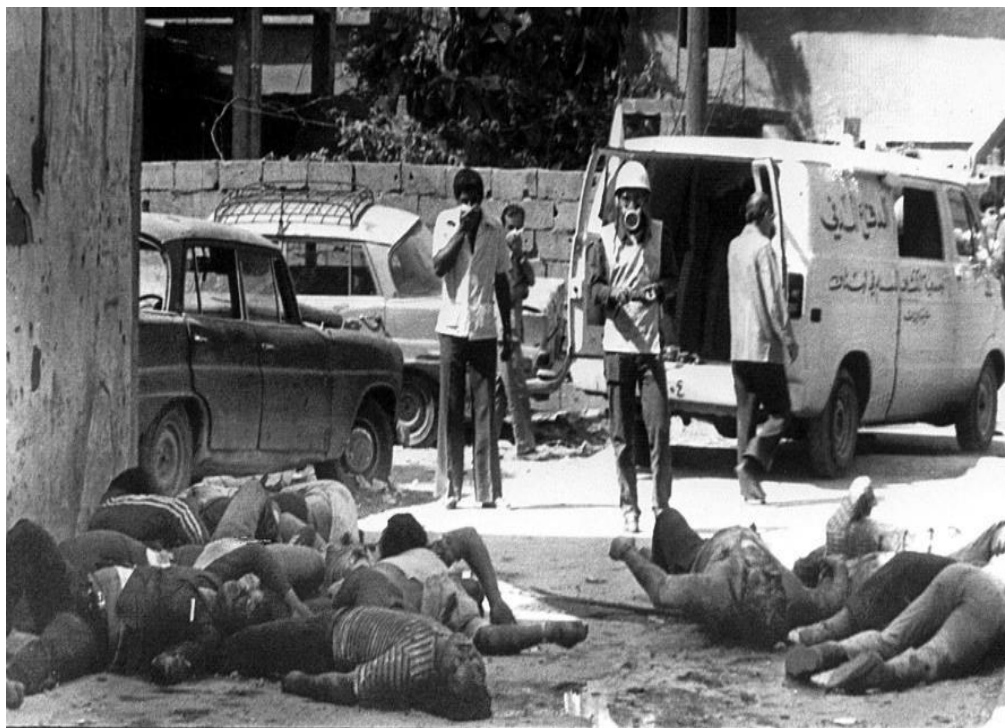


Figure 3: Ethnic Cleansing of Palestinians 1948



**Figure 4: Deir Yassin Massacre 1948**

These pictures are from Zionist massacres committed against unarmed civilian Palestinians. The bloody scenes and slaughtering of Palestinians were not a collateral damage, but rather they were organized atrocities which aimed to have a Zionist state in a Palestine that is ethnically cleansed from its indigenous people. They are the result of an orientalist and topographic efforts. Therefore, orientalist discourse is not merely an epistemic violence; it embodies itself as ethnic cleansing. Expulsion of Palestinians came with a detailed “Arabist” description of the methods to be used to forcibly evict Palestinians: intimidation, bombarding villages, setting fire to houses and demolishing them, planting mines in the rubble to prevent the expelled Palestinians from returning (Pappe 2006).

The pictures reiterate the body of Damians, the Foucauldian condemned body. In his *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault demonstrates the ways bodies were punished in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The “criminal” is publicly tortured and executed so that the audiences witnessing the criminal’s torture learn a lesson. The punishment as a spectacle teaches people that the very same torturing could happen to them if they commit a “crime”. Foucault reassures

that punishment is a political tactic that aims to discipline bodies to reaffirm order after it has been shaken. Foucault's framework of disciplinary power is productive when analyzing colonial violence for two reasons. First, it allows us to consider the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized not as simply reducible to master-slave relationship. Foucault's bottom-up approach to power and resistance allows one to perceive individuals who are struggling as active agents. Second, discipline in Foucauldian lens consists of a concern with control; the control of the individual. The Zionist colonization aims to control the colonized Palestinians through multiple techniques. Whether it's public executions or Panopticon and timetabled prisons; the main goal is control of the Palestinians.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the great spectacle of physical punishment and the tortured body started to disappear, however things were different in Palestine. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Zionist colonization committed horrendous executions of large numbers of Palestinians. The slaughtering scenes were purposefully public and gruesome; Palestinian inhabitants were ordered into the village square where they lined against a wall and murdered (Levin as cited in Kevorkian, Ihmoud and Nashif 2014). An eyewitness recalled that her sister who was nine months pregnant, was shot in the back of her neck; with a butcher's knife her stomach was cut open and the unborn infant was extracted (2014). A Red Cross doctor arrived at a massacred Palestinian village, he said that the mopping up had been done with guns and grenades, then finished off with knives; women's bellies were cut open and their unborn babies were butchered with cold blood (Alhelsi 2010). In other Palestinian villages, Nakba survivors reportedly fled after hearing about the bloody massacres in Deir Yassin; out of fear of similar violence (Wiles 2014).

## **The Palestinian Naksa 1967**

In 1967 The Palestinians and other neighboring Arab countries had to fight another war with the Zionist. The Naksa literally means ‘setback’ and refers to the expulsion of Palestinian from the West Bank, Eastern Jerusalem and Gaza; it also refers to the beginning of Israeli’s illegal military occupation of these territories (Badil 2004). In 6 days, the Zionist forces colonized all of Palestine and other neighboring Arab territories. On one hand, thousands of Palestinians were massacred; injured and dispossessed (the scene of the condemned bodies was repeated again). On the other hand, settlements/colonies were built and populated with Zionist settlers (PSC 2010). The allegedly Zionist “democracy” slaughtered the native Palestinians and forcibly evicted them out of their lands; meanwhile it deported [huge] parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupied and therefore violated the Fourth Geneva Convention (2010, 2).

Many techniques were used to dispossess Palestinians and to oppress anti-colonist movements, one of these techniques was mass imprisonment of Palestinians who fought against colonialism; over eight hundred thousand Palestinians have been arrested and interrogated by Israel (Addameer as cited in Meari 2014). The Zionist government pursued an arbitrary policy following the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967; Prisons, interrogation and detention centers became places of psychological and physical death for Palestinians (Do’ar 2013). Some of these prisons date back to the British Mandate, yet they were turned into Zionist prisons in 1967. Ofer, Ramleh, Ashkelon prisons are some of the examples (Addameer 2014). Israel’s former defense minister ‘Moshe Dayan’ wanted to imprison Palestinians so that they become lifeless creatures devoid of content and a burden to their society (Do’ar 2013).

Palestinian political prisoners often complain that the Zionist prisons are uninhabitable, moist, dirty and sickening.

The body of Damians didn't disappear from the 1967 Palestinian scene; furthermore, Zionist military courts were established, and this establishment justified itself with the words "in the interests of security and public order" (Addameer 2008). Ever since that time, Israel would issue "legal" orders against Palestinians, arrest them and once the interrogation phase is done; detainees are processed for trial before the military court. In the Zionist court, political prisoners are judged by their actions, motives or "instincts".

In Zionist prisons, timetables are scheduled for prisoners. Therefore, not only prisoners are judged, but they are supervised and often tortured discreetly. Inside the prison, political prisoners have to stick to an artificial and imposed timetable where they are awake or asleep in a specific time, inspected and counted in a certain time as well, eat in a certain time and have a specific time for recreation and mingling with other prisoners inside prison. In other words, their time, space and movement are controlled. Using Foucauldian lens, the supervised timetabled prison attempts to discipline bodies through entering the "consciousness". Yet, Foucault argues that even at their most constraining, oppressive measures are in fact productive, giving rise to new forms of behavior rather than censoring certain forms of behavior (as cited in Mills 2003). In other words, Palestinian political prisoners' bodies didn't passively succumb to the tortures inflicted upon them; rather they tried multiple forms of resistance. One of these forms was massive hunger strikes, according to Addameer (2017) Palestinian detainees have resorted to hunger strikes as early as the 1968 as a legitimate protest to the Zionist policies and detention conditions. Hunger strikes are one way of defying the oppressive colonist regime through the strategic use of the body. In addition, bodies subvert their biological needs to make political

statements (Addameer 2016). As a response to the use of hunger strikes, the Zionist authorities practiced force feeding the protesting bodies, several Palestinians prisoners died as a result (Addameer 2017).

## **Peace Talks with the Colonist: “A Conversation between the Sword and the Neck”**

*“I have never seen any talk between a colonialist case and a national liberation movement... Peace talk with the Zionist colonizer is a form of surrendering and capitulation.” - Ghassan Kanafani (1970)*

After Arab’s defeat during the Six Day War of the Naksa, Arab leaders gathered in Khartoum and agreed to the three no’s : “no peace”, “no negotiation” and “no recognition” of Israel (Zieve 2012). Yet, Egypt was the first Arab state to recognize Israel and sign a peace agreement; as part of the treaty, Israel withdrew from Sinai (2012).

The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was established in 1964, it defined itself as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinians. The capitulation Ghassan Kanafani talked about in 1970 was manifested when the PLO (led by Fateh) adopted a plan that included the seeds of compromise with Israel (Arieli 2009). The PLO signed the Oslo Accords in 1993, in which the PLO recognizes the existence of “Israel” on the Palestinian lands of 1948. Thus, the Zionist colonization’s existence became legitimate and the refugees of 1948 were bypassed. In return, the Zionist state recognizes the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Moreover, The PLO adopts peace talk and negotiation as a way to communicate with the colonizer.



Consequently, an “autonomous” Palestinian government was born. To make matters even worse, the Palestinian government and the Zionist forces created security coordination between them; this means that the Palestinian government (led by Fatah) refuses Palestinians’ armed anti-colonialist resistance and deems it as “terrorism”. Palestinians who oppose colonization are at risk of being arrested. Until today, the Palestinian government and the Zionist colonization are both willing to punish and oppress Palestinians who express opposition and hostility towards the Zionist State!

Furthermore, the Palestinian government can only govern certain places; Gaza and Jericho and then some territories in the West Bank and Gaza. Within the Oslo Accords, the West Bank was divided into three areas; each one of those areas falls under different jurisdictions. First, Area A is the space where the PA has political and military control over the residents who are mainly Arabs; but Israeli citizens have the right to enter this area unmolested (Frisch 2016). Area B is under Palestinian civil control, but Israel and the PA share jurisdiction; Area C is populated with Arabs and Jews and is under full Israeli control (2016). The idea was that more responsibilities and power would be transferred to Palestinian authority; yet sadly, the Zionist colonizer became a clean occupation and was freed of its responsibilities towards the colonized in those areas (Kurdi 2013).

Lastly, the other 10 Palestinian political parties were not even included in the secretive peace talks and once things became public, they refused the Oslo Accords.

## Security Coordination and Docile Bodies

Ever since its creation, the Palestinian Authority (PA) arrested those who engage in anti-colonial resistance. Ahmad Saadat is a living proof of it; he was arrested multiple times by the PA. The highlight of these arrests peaked when Saadat was arrested under the accusation that he and his comrades murdered Rehavam Ze'evi in 2001. The PA and the Zionist colonizer reached an agreement to transfer Saadat and his comrades to Jericho's prison under American and British supervision. Four years later, the Zionist forces invaded the prison with the collaboration of the PA, the American and the British; two years later he was sentenced 30 years in Zionist prisons.

The security coordination between the Palestinian authority and the Zionist colonization is a coordinated effort to ensure the security of Israel (Khamis 2016). Coordination is a soft word that doesn't express its hideousness to the Palestinian people and their national cause. Using the security coordination, the Palestinian authority helped the Zionist colonizer to arrest Palestinian "suspects", prosecute them, and often execute them (Al Quds News 2016). The Palestinian authority provides the colonizer with "security" information, thus thousands of Palestinians were arrested. Abu Shammala points out that the security coordination is not only intended to prevent heroic acts of individuals, but to kill the spirit of every revolution in the Palestinian people and to preserve the interests of powerful individuals in the Palestinian authority only (as cited in Al Qassam 2016). The security coordination attempts to discipline revolting Palestinian bodies and to turn them into docile bodies devoid of resistance.

## Peace Accords Accompanied by Neoliberalism

In the *Wretched of the Earth* Fanon (1963) asserts that the nationalist political parties which were established during colonization never insist on the need for confrontation; their aim is not the radical overthrow of the system. The colonist system serves their own individualistic interests to the point where they forget about national liberation. They become hungrier for power, not the power to seek national liberation but to replace the colonist. The result according to Fanon is the creation of a new class of individually liberated *slaves*. These slaves only think about negotiations with the colonist which include improvements, reforms, freedom of press and association.

In the Palestinian scene, the PLO signed peace accords with its colonizer. The Oslo Accords were an instrument designed to deepen the structures of colonization (Hanieh as cited in Tabar and Salamanca 2015). Sadly, a neoliberal development experiment and its depoliticized technocratic framework accompanied Oslo (Tabar and Salamanca 2015). As a result, the political colonist realities on the ground were overshadowed, and most problematically, this has contributed to exacerbating the structures of settler colonialism (2015, 11). Many head scratching questions emerge: how is neoliberalism's policy of free market employed in a country where the land is colonized? How is it possible to engage in the globe's free market while land, infrastructure, borders and natural resources are controlled by the colonist? Neoliberal policies claim that their aim to aid the economy and pave way for independence. Is Palestinian's lack of economic independence the only thing that is hindering its national independence?

In its core, neoliberalism promotes an orientalist discourse. It claims that people in the Third World are pathetic and in need for rescue (Tabar 2013). This way, it reaffirms the

dichotomous split between First World as humanely civilized and capable, while the Third world as helpless and disable. Just like illustrated before, the orientalist discourse and embodied violence are not only interrelated; but they are the same. The orientalist discourse of neoliberalism embodied itself in various ways; an important one of them is humanitarian aids. “Humanitarian” financial aids flooded the Occupied Palestinian Territories; the bulk of this assistance was food aid (2013, 32). These aids come with a catch of course; Palestinians are represented as hungry docile bodies and not as active agents with political aspirations (2013, 33). Hence, the Palestinian scene is represented as one where people’s main problem is the lack of food (2013, 35); where colonization, the illusion of an autonomous Palestinian government and international powers are mutually overlooked.

In addition, neoliberalism promotes competitive individualism; as a matter of fact it’s one of neoliberalism’s core policies (Hadad 2013). Individuals in the society are encouraged to own properties and to think of their own well-being. The purpose is to make Palestinians lose sight of collective goals or aspirations (like gaining independence) and instead have the “poor” focus on survival and getting out of debt, and the rich wanting more properties and investments.

Furthermore, the state is no longer considered as responsible to provide needs and services for the society; rather the individual is responsible for taking care of him/herself. Consequently, the state cuts public expenditure for social service and places it under the ownership of the wealthy; hence the rich get richer and the poor become poorer in the sense that they have to pay for services that were previously for free. In Palestine, this has resulted in fracturing the Palestinian society’s social fabrics and dividing them into poor and rich (Hanieh 2013). In other words, the metaphor of a “unified” Palestinian body was torn.

## **Concluding Remarks**

This chapter contextualized orientalist colonist discourse in its violence framework. Epistemic violence of such discourse shouldn't be separated from real ground material violence because ethnic cleansing is embedded within dogmas of colonist racial exclusiveness. The next chapter demonstrates a similar argument to this chapter; however it covers main events which took place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Chapter 4: Colonist Violence Met with Colonized Subject's Violent Resistance**

### **Introduction**

During 2014-2017, the headlines and literature depicted the Palestinians as irrational terrorists whose savageness is erupting in the form of compulsive knife attacking and car ramming. They are demonized to the point where executing them and punishing them is not only legitimate but also necessary. In fact, the Zionist colonial rule is maintained through violence. The violence stems from the racialized views that the colonized is backward and irrational while the colonizer is progressive and rational. The race of the colonized is degraded to a point where the violence of the colonizer becomes reasonable. This epistemic orientalist violence is embodied in real life executions. Once again, the Palestinians are decontextualized and the individual marks the primary focus of literature and headlines. The events in Palestine between 2014 and 2017 were heavily packed with colonist violence, yet they were mitigated and overshadowed. The Palestinians' violent resistance shouldn't be isolated from the provocative context that gave rise to it.

Peace talks with the Zionist colonizer, the capitulation of Palestinian leaders and the normative discourses led to more suppression of the native Palestinians. The sight of condemned bodies and mass imprisonment has escalated and became familiar in the Palestinian scene. More settlements were erected and more settlers reside on the ruins of the native's home. Countless violations of humanity were committed towards Palestinians. The reality of the Zionist colonialism worsened over the course of the years. However, the Palestinian people weren't silent spectators, they struggled and in these struggles new modes of being were created. Rodrigo

(2015) notes that the ongoing resistance in Palestine between 2014 and 2017 is not new; it is the latest episode in decades full of struggle for recognition. The colonized reckon that they are human beings and what they are living in is not a life. Yet, their “muscular tension” wasn’t directed at fellow natives just like Frantz Fanon would analyze in the first phases of decolonization, it was directed at the colonist. The knife stabbing, stone and Molotov throwing and car ramming are all a “response” to the oppressive colonist regime (Rodrigo 2015).

*“It is not uncommon to see the colonized subject draw his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive look from another colonized subject” Frantz Fanon (1963).*

The young “Oslo” generation took the process of decolonization upon them, because they know that violence needs to be faced with violence and not peace talks or negotiations. Their anger and “muscular tension” wasn’t random but it was directed straightforward at the Zionist settlers or soldiers. The attackers’ effort was directed at confronting who they perceive as settlers and soldiers (Deger 2016). Fanon’s words don’t echo resemblance in this scene because the colonized didn’t employ “mechanisms of avoidance” or “dreams” where their muscular tension is alleviated. The violent response was directed at the colonist power, not other fellow Palestinians.

This generation grew up under checkpoints and apartheid walls, the scene of alien settlers and army is always present...It’s not a way for a human to live (2016) and the colonized is well aware of the colonizer’s oppression. Bodies revolted in ways that were perplexing to the colonist between 2014 and 2017.

*“So one of the ways the colonized subject releases his muscular tension is through the very real collective self-destruction of these internecine feuds. Such behavior represents a death*

*wish in the face of danger, a suicidal conduct which reinforces the colonist's existence and domination and reassures him that such men are not rational "Frantz Fanon (1963).*

Again, Fanon's words fail to capture the Palestinians complex realities. Deger (2016) asserts that the Palestinian youngsters' actions don't stem out of desperateness; they see themselves operating in self-defense against the colonist's violence and brutality. It is neither self-destruction nor a suicidal conduct which reinforces the colonist's existence. On the contrary, it reinforces the colonist inferior complex because the colonists know all too well that this land is not theirs; the colonized reinforce their right to exist on Palestinian land.

In the following sections, the main events that took place in Palestine between 2014 and 2017 will be highlighted and situated in the overall context of violence.

## **Palestinian Authority Keeps Failing Its People**

On one hand, the Palestinian leadership's peace talks with the colonizer once again have failed its people and mocked their sacrifices; in April 2014, Israel refused to abide its commitment to release a group of prisoners as a condition for peace talk. On the other hand, Palestinian political prisoners engaged in embodied resistance using their own bodies as the main vehicle of political change. More than 100 Palestinians in Zionist prisons launched a hunger strike to protest against administrative detention -a detention without trial- (Maan 2014). Back then; this was the longest mass hunger strike among prisoners since 1968 (Addameer as cited in Maan 2014).

Meanwhile, Palestinian politicians have been preoccupied with Al-wefaq government that they paid very small attention to their people's hunger strike (Safadi 2014). Fatah and



Hamas agreed to form a unity government that would be followed by elections later that year (Beaumont and Lewis 2014). As an outcome, Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Mahmoud Abbas of sabotaging the “peace process” by seeking a reconciliation with Hamas which is considered a “terrorist group” (France24 2014). After 49 days of the strike, Mahmoud Abbas made the first move; he sent a letter to UN telling them to do something about the administrative prisoners who are on hunger strike (Safadi 2014). Nevertheless, capitulations of the PA didn’t come to an end; the Palestinian Authority arrested a number of activists who were supporting the administrative prisoners on hunger strike (2014).

## **Condemned Palestinian Bodies and Ethnic Cleansing in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Continues**

On the 15th May 2014 Palestinians commemorate Al-Nakba Day. Two Palestinian boys (Nadeem Nawara and Mohammad Abu Daher) were shot in the chest and martyred while participating in the demonstration to mark Nakba Day and in solidarity with the hunger strike conducted by political prisoners (DCI 2014). According to a video footage, the boys were throwing rocks in the beginning, but at the moment of shooting there was nothing going on and no stone throwing was taking place. Nadeem Nawara (17) sustained a fatal gunshot wound to the chest, while Mohammad Abu Daher (16) sustained a fatal gunshot wound to the back; Neither of them posed an immediate threat to life at the time of their shooting (Kassis as cite in Arab48 2014). The families of the young boys wanted to bring justice to the cold blooded murders and wanted to evict the soldier who committed this execution. Not only the life of the colonized is taken for granted, but the brutal murder goes unpunished because it’s all part of the ethnic

cleansing process. The soldier spent only 2 months in prison before he was set free and back to his normal life (Maan 2016).

## **Palestinian President, Hand in Glove with the Colonizer**

Towards the middle of June 2014, Israel accused Hamas of abducting and killing three Israeli settlers in the West Bank (Euronews 2014). The Zionist authorities seized the chance and launched a brutal campaign of mass arrests against Hamas leaders (Hamadeh 2014).

Nevertheless, what weakened the general Palestinian national position is the Palestinian authority's security cooperation with the Zionist authorities (Hamadeh 2014). Netanyahu accused Abbas of organizing this "terrorist act" with Hamas, but soon enough Abbas promised Netanyahu to put a lot of effort to find who is responsible for abducting the three missing settlers (Sadeq 2014). Once again, we can see that the Palestinian leadership's attitudes does not match with or represent its indigenous people. Fanon (1963) here reminds us that leading political parties do not aim to overthrow colonization but to assimilate with it. Rodrigo (2015) emphasizes that Mahmoud Abbas the Palestinian president has operated hand in glove with the colonizer only to protect a regime which maintains the interests of his political class.

## **More Condemned Palestinian Bodies**

In revenge for the death of the three settlers in June 2014, the Palestinian Mohammad Abu Khdeir was abducted and burned to death by Zionist settlers (Younis 2016). Abu Khdeir was beaten and forced to swallow petrol by the attackers in July 2014 (Dearden 2016). The autopsy results show that Mohammad was burnt alive and that was the main cause of his death

(Shehadeh 2014). Mohammad's burnt body echoes resemblance to Foucault's condemned bodies. The Zionist tried to communicate a message to the Palestinians that the former have rights to full life in Palestinian lands, while the Palestinian has no place here and that the indigenous native doesn't belong (2014).

As a response to Mohammad's brutal murder, events quickly escalated to clashes in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem (Zboun 2015). Few days later, Israel conducted a military operation in Gaza known as "Protective Edge" (Thomas 2015). This operation took place within the context of ground, sea and air closure of Gaza and lasted for 51 days (Alhaq, Almezan, Aldammeer, PCHR 2015 pp.15). During the war on Gaza, Hamas demonstrated a wide range of combat capabilities including new tactics which seriously challenged the Zionist forces. Violence from the Zionist was met with resistance from the colonized. Yet, images of the aftermath on Gaza's war are more than bone chilling; ruins of buildings and corpses scattered around reiterate sights of condemned and tortured bodies. Palestinian Health officials say 2,217 people were martyred in Gaza since Israel launched this operation, 70% of the overall death toll are civilians (2015, pp.30). Kevorkian, Ihmoud and Nashif (2014) stress that the early Zionist leaders wanted to actualize the Zionist myth of a land without people through the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. The war on Gaza was indeed a systematic attempt to ethnically cleanse the indigenous Palestinians.

## **Zionist Settlement Building and Indigenous Ethnic Cleansing**

Ethnic cleansing of the colonized continues, and the indigenous are being replaced by colonist settlers. In October 2014, Jerusalem Municipality Committee had given final approval to

the construction of 2610 units in a new settlement in East Jerusalem (Staton 2015). Settlers moved into houses in a predominantly Palestinian populated district.

## **Colonist Violence met with the Colonized Subject's Violent Resistance**

The colonized subject has muscular tension, and this tension is released once the colonized subject conducts a direct attack of the colonizer. The colonized subject here retells the story of the condemned bodies, but the damned bodies now belong to the colonist who reckons that this is a response and a provocative one as well. The colonized subject doesn't want to reaffirm "order", but instead they want to subvert colonist order and to rebel. The colonized does this to make a political statement: colonist violence is met with violent resistance from the colonized. In October 2014, the Palestinian Mutaz Hijazi attempted to assassinate the Rabbi Yehuda Glick (the mastermind of the Aqsa Mosque invasion) to re-equate the defense of Al Aqsa Mosque in order to prove that any attack on this mosque comes with a price (Al Jazeera 2014). Hijazi was martyred in his house by the Zionist forces in Jerusalem (Palestine Today 2016).

Furthermore, in November 2014 Ghassan and Oday Abu Jamal carried out the Deir Yassin Operation and were killed by Zionist forces (Pflp 2014). The Palestinian cousins entered a Jewish Knesset disguised as police men holding a cleaver knife and two guns and killed 4 rabbis (Hebron Media 2014). The Zionist government says it will step up punitive demolitions to the families of Palestinian "attackers" (Eglash 2016). Violence and resistance is a complex matrix of actions upon actions, violent is met with resistance and resistance is met with more violence and so on. Colonist violence is provocative and is met with resistance, but resistance is not only a response to violence but it also initiates another response from the colonist. This is where

Foucault's theorization of the body matters because he reminds us that after power invests itself in the body, it finds itself exposed to a counter-attack in that same body (Mills 2003). Yet, what happens after the body demonstrates a counter-attack? Does colonist violence end there?

Probably not, it is a vicious cycle that is bound to break eventually. But we have to keep in mind that decolonization is all together a violent process (Fanon 1963). We also have to keep in mind that each act of resistance has the ability to shake the power of the colonizers and their state.

### **Palestinian Political Prisoners' Bodies Speak Back**

In the last day of 2014, Malak Al-Khatib -14 years old- was arrested; which made her back then the youngest Palestinian political prisoner (Arabi 2015). Addameer stated that in 2014 the number of political prisoners in Zionist prisons escalated up to 6000 Palestinian.

Malak Al-Khatib was released after spending 2 months in Zionist prisons (Alalam 2015). In an interview with Malak, she stated that the Zionist enemy does not scare her or any other Palestinian because Palestinians are proud people and they aren't afraid of their enemy (Ashams 2015). Malak was accused of throwing stones and attempting a knife attack; four Zionist soldiers attacked her, pushed her to the ground, physically and verbally harassed her (2015). Malak insisted that she didn't throw stones and doesn't have a knife to kill anyone "They were screaming at me and asking me why you want to kill a Jew? I told them multiple times that this wasn't my intention, I was simply walking...the interrogator told me that I am accused of throwing stones and possessing a knife, I denied their allegations again and affirmed that I was walking" (Ajyal Radio 2015). After she was released, Mahmoud Abbas pointed out that the detention of young girls like Malak contradicts the core principles of "peace" (Raya 2015).

In 2015, the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization has voted to suspend security coordination with Israel given the latter's non-compliance with its obligation under the signed agreements (Beaumont 2015); which never happened of course.

## **More and More Condemned Palestinian Bodies**

In July 2015, Al Dawabsha, A Palestinian Family in the West Bank was burned alive by Jewish settler extremists; the parents and eighteen-month old died and only their four year old boy survived with severe burns (AlMonitor 2017). According to local accounts, the Dawabhsa family had returned home from a visit with relatives at around 1:30 Am (Tarnopolsky 2015). Two masked settlers smashed the windows of the house and threw Molotov cocktails (Hadid and Rudoren 2015). The neighbors accounted that the parents escaped the house enveloped in flames (Tarnopolsky 2015). The Dawabsha's case was released in June 2016 and the investigation was closed (Maan 2015).

## **Colonist Invasion of Al Aqsa Met with Palestinians Violent Resistance**

In September 2015, Al Aqsa Mosque was invaded by settlers amid tight security from Israeli police; they also carried out provocative tours in its courtyards (Imemc 2015). Within the same month, Zionist soldiers and officers stormed into the Aqsa Mosque and started forcing the Palestinians out by using gas bombs and rubber-coated steel bullets (Muslimnews 2015). The constant invasion of the Aqsa enraged the Palestinian people; they knew peace talk from the leadership won't provide fruitful results. A young Palestinian boy named Muhannad Halabi left a comment on his Facebook wall following Mahmoud Abbas's speech in the UN's general assembly; he wrote: "Nice speech Mr. President, but we do not recognize East and West

Jerusalem. We know only that Jerusalem is one, undivided, and that every part of it is holy.

Excuse me, Mr. President, but what is happening to the women of al-Aqsa and to al-Aqsa will not be stopped by peaceful measures. We were not raised to be humiliated” (Miller 2015).

Before he became a martyr, Muhannad posted on his Facebook wall another comment: according to what I see, the Third Intifada has erupted. What is happening to Al Aqsa is what is happening to our holy sites, and what is happening to the women of Al Aqsa is what is happening to our mothers and women. I don't believe that our people will succumb to humiliation. The people will indeed rise up (2015). Muhannad's Facebook posts demonstrate that he (like many among his generation) is highly aware that peace talks are a form of surrendering; moreover his posts reveal that violence must be met with violence. Violence here is not the end, it's a mean.

## **The Palestinian Knife Intifada Officially Begins**

In October 2015, Muhannad Halabi -19 year old law student- stabbed two Zionist settlers to death in Jerusalem's old city; according to many Palestinians he started the Intifada of the Knives (Hassan 2016). The young Palestinian man was shot and martyred by Israeli police during the attack. The Halabi' house was demolished by the Zionist forces as a punitive measurement, yet a Palestinian campaign dedicated itself into raising money to rebuild the Halabi's house (Maan 2016).

Halabi's act was praised by Palestinians and considered as the spark of a new uprising; in fact, his act of resistance inspired others. Halabi's father reports that young Palestinians know that there was no other alternative to the Zionist oppression except for resistance (Aljazeera 2015). The daily acts of collective punishments, the checkpoints and closures, the restless arrests of Palestinians, the injuries and death are a routine in a Palestinian's life (Hassan 2016). The

events of the past two years and the accumulation of the years before drove some of the Palestinian youth to carry out these attacks against the Zionist colonizer (Alsaafin 2017). 72 Palestinians were martyred that month, most of them died in demonstrations or in alleged attacks (Alhaq 2015). The number of political prisoners in Zionist prisoners increased by 1079 person, and the number of Palestinian women political prisoners' doubled (Addameer 2015). Many of these arrests in the West bank were aided by the security coordination between the Palestinian authority and the Zionist forces (Hadid and Nazal 2015). The Israeli government wanted to project an iron fist in an effort to deter further attacks, yet Palestinian activists noted that Zionist officers act aggressively firing at suspects who didn't appear to present mortal danger (Kershner 2015).

The events of the so-called third intifada took on an unorganized individual character by Palestinian youngsters, who used simple weapons like knives and vehicles. Young Palestinian women also carried out a number of these operations. Most of these Palestinians didn't belong to certain Palestinian organizations and the operations were done in a random place and time, that's why the colonist were perplexed (Shaikhibrahim 2017). When Likud MK Anat Berko - criminologist specializing in suicide terrorists- was asked to comment on the profile of Palestinian stabbers she claims "these are not lone wolves". The wave of terror is directed from above and incitement is everywhere (Berko as cited in Weinglass 2015). The Zionist centrist leader Yair Lapid stated that their working model consists of killing someone before that someone kills you..."don't hesitate. Even at the start of an attack, shooting to kill is correct" he added (Avishai 2015). If we put this face to face with one of Muhannad's posts we can see that colonist violence is met with the colonized resistance: "according to the law, you have the full right to defend yourself against he who points a weapon in your face...resistance lies within the



boundaries of the law” (Muhannad as cited Miller 2015). One more time, this takes us to the complex matrix of violence and resistance; we can observe that each action creates another reaction and the reaction provokes another reaction.

### **More Palestinian Authority Capitulations while Administrative Prisoners Endure Hunger Strike**

In November 2015, the death toll of Palestinian rose to reach more than 100 within three months (Alhaq 2015). Under agreements that began with Oslo accords, the Palestinian authority agreed to stop any actions that would inflict harm upon the colonist. The president Abbas considers this coordination as “sacred” (Middle East Monitor 2014). The Palestinian authority proudly says that it has foiled 200 attacks against Israel since October 2015 (Khoury 2016).

Meanwhile, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, Mohammad Al-Qeeq was arrested from his house at dawn. Four days later, Al-Qeeq started his hunger strike in refusal of administrative detention and the brutal treatment that he had to go through while being interrogated (Addameer 2016). Al-Qeeq was one of thousand Palestinians suffering/struggling in colonist prisons. According to Addameer statistics (2015), the number of Palestinian political prisoners in the Zionist prisons reached the high number of 6800, including 60 women. Many of those who were arrested were accused of “online incitement” (Naami 2015).

### **Facebook Incitement and the Clash of Ideational Embodied Resistance**

The Jerusalem Intifada continues and acts of resistance towards the colonizer continue. Since the beginning of 2016, the number of political prisoners escalated to 7000; which scores as

the highest number among the previous years (Addameer 2016). Many Palestinians were arrested because their Facebook posts are full of “incitement” against Israel. 45 Palestinians were arrested ever since the Jerusalem intifada began because of their Facebook posts (Maan 2016). One could ask: what is so scary about a Facebook post? It’s because the Zionist knew that this was a platform for resistance, even though it’s not fully organized but they are aware that someone’s resistance might inspire others to take resistance upon them. Resistance doesn’t have to be organized in a formal and explicit way through organizations [or political parties], sometimes resistance might arise through transnational advocacy network or social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, it’s somehow a counter-culture (Baaz, Lilja, Schutz and Vinhagen 2017). Facebook “incitement” is frightening to the colonist because it resembles the clash of the ideational and the embodied resistance. In other words, the Zionist’s rage about Facebook incitements highlights their understanding that Palestinian bodies are open to being reshaped through the ideational interaction with each other, which would strike more “violent” embodied responses.

Nevertheless, resistance was met with more violence; again, it is a series of actions upon actions. Israeli raids at Al Aqsa Mosque increased by at least 250% in 2016. In the first day of 2016, nearly 150 settlers stormed at Aqsa Mosque under Israeli army protection (Middle East Monitor 2017). This wasn’t the only raid on the Aqsa Mosque; there were dozens more (2017).

## **More and More Zionist Settlements**

The Israeli government pushed forward plans for building nearly 700 settlement units in Occupied Palestine Territory; on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2016 the colonist revealed its decision to move forward with the construction of 250 illegal settlements (Mansour 2016).

## **The Interplay of Zionist Orientalist Hate Speech and Ethnic Cleansing**

In its annual violations report, Addameer (2017) reveals that the Israeli Knesset passed “Combating Terrorism Law” which aims to tighten penalties against those involved in anti-colonial resistance activities. In another discussion held in the Knesset, Anat Berko commented on the “unfortunate” way the Palestinian society solves problems; she referred to the ways Palestinian youngsters choose to die by killing Jews in a terrorist attack. In addition, she gave an example of a 14 year old girl who was wedded to an old man of 60 years; therefore this girl decided that it’s a day to kill a Jew! She concluded that these youngsters lack control because they are integrated in patriarchal families and this would only lead to more subversion (2016). The orientalist speech seems familiar, doesn’t it? It isolates the Palestinians from their colonized context and attributes “terrorism” to abstract cultural aspects. On the other side of the “equation” Berko (2016) emphasizes that Israel is progressive and modern “WE are the island of stability; WE have to keep this country safe”. Once again, an orientalist discourse which seeks to eliminate and cleanse “the island of stability” from the extrovert macho Palestinians, and therefore killing *them* is justified.

## **Political Prisoners’ Embodied Resistance Challenges Dynamics of Power**

Bilal Al Kayed was brought before the military Zionist court to take a six month administrative detention order instead of being released; following this procedure Al Kayed began an open hunger strike (Addameer 2016). Al Kayed was joined by other political prisoners who oppose to administrative detention as well. Palestinians’ hunger strike continues inside Zionist prisons, the list includes: Omar Nazzal, Mahmoud and Mohammad Al Balboul, Malak Al

Qadi, Ayad Herama (Silver 2016). In September, two Palestinian prisoners Anas Shadid and Ahmad Abu Fara join the hunger strike against their imprisonment under administrative detention. Addameer (2016) reveals that the hunger strikes demonstrated the ways in which the bodies were used to challenge the dynamics of power between the colonized (detainee) and the colonizer.

In that year, 112 Palestinians were killed -86 percent of overall deaths- (Maan 2017). Moreover, even after Palestinians are martyred their bodies are withheld by the Zionist forces and punitive collective measures are persecuted against their families (Maan 2016). The Committee for Prisoners' Affairs and freedoms reported that torture against Palestinian detainees have increased significantly in 2016.

### **More, More and More Zionist Settlements**

In February 2017, The Israeli Knesset passed the Regularization Law, which legalizes the building of housing units on private Palestinian Lands (Badil, 2017). The Zionist authorities authorize the construction of 3,000 more illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank (Amnesty 2017).

### **Palestinian Political Prisoners on Hunger Strike Demanding Human Rights**

In April 2017, it had been almost a month since approximately 1800 political prisoners in Zionist jails entered the Battle of Freedom and Dignity; the prisoners were basically against administrative detention (Almayadeen 2017). Although the policy of administrative detention

deprives political prisoners of trials, access to evidence and the chance to defend themselves (Addameer 2017), the hunger strike wasn't just to express refusal of administrative detention; it was for basic human rights. Prisoners sent a statement to supporters, family and friends, the message they sent goes as the following: "Our hunger and our empty stomachs do not only come for our dignity and freedom, for our basic rights denied, for our right to see our loved ones, to educate ourselves, to receive health care and medical treatment, to not be locked up in solitary confinement or without charge or trial" (Samidoun 2017). Through the systematic use of the body, administrative prisoners on hunger strike make political statements. The body becomes the vehicle to accomplish a political change. In addition, the body rises above all of its "biological" needs to resist the violent colonist oppression done upon them in prison. This resistance is met with more colonist violence because these bodies are at risk of being force-fed by the colonizer, or the striking bodies could face medical negligence when one of the organs stops working properly, or after the striking bodies are freed they could be re-imprisoned shortly.

## **Al Aqsa Uprising**

After the killing of two Zionist policemen in 2017, Israel installed electronic inspection gates and inspection cameras at the entrances of Al Aqsa Mosque (Almayadeen 2017). Palestinians resistance was evident in defying the attack on Jerusalem and its holy places, in what has come to be known as the Aqsa uprising (State of Palestine Special Report 2017). Clashes had broken out during protests over this measure, leaving five Palestinians martyred (Alahed 2017).

## **Trump's Declaration: Jerusalem is the Capital of Israel**

The United States' President Donald Trump announced Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the transfer of the US embassy to it (Wedd 2017); this enables us to witness the clash of ideational and material again. As a response to this announcement, Palestinians revolted and protested in anger. Many Palestinian political parties called for the Palestinian authority to fold the Oslo accords, to withdraw the recognition of Israel and to activate all forms of resistance (Almayadeen 2017). According to statistics, 14 Palestinians were martyred and thousands were wounded in confrontation with the Zionist forces since Trump's declaration (Wedd 2017).

## **Concluding Notes**

Until this day, the scene of condemned bodies never came to an end, what changed is that the colonized subject started creating these scenes as well. Furthermore, Zionist orientalist discourse on Palestinians didn't reach an end. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century this discourse attempts to isolate the Palestinians from their colonized context. The Palestinians are highlighted as a group of irrational knife yielding terrorist who commit acts of hate towards the Jews because they are inherently and culturally savage. Resistance from the colonized Palestinian is depoliticized and attributed to Palestinian extrovert masculinity; in other words, even when Palestinians resist they are doing so because of their "nature" not because of their political context. Therefore, the chapter situates the orientalist discourse in its colonist context and demonstrates that resistance has a potential to be productive and fluid (Baaz, Lilja, Schulz and Vinhagen 2017). Using a Fanonian approach, the colonized [Palestinians] free themselves of colonialism through a cathartic experience called violence (Pallas 2016). The violence allows the colonized to reaffirm

their humanity because they know that their lives matter. Violent resistance allows Palestinians to recreate themselves.

Now that the orientalist discourse had been contextualized, the next chapter exposes the ways in which resistance can be productive, malleable and fluid. It goes into details of how Palestinian prisoners deploy their bodies to fight the colonist oppression in Zionist prisons between 2014 and 2017. I choose prison as a context because it's one of the places where the Zionist's ideational epistemic violence and material military violence clearly crash and interplay. Moreover, it is a place where the colonized Palestinians subjects also demonstrate the interplay of the epistemic resistance and the material resistance through an embodied means of resistance called *subversion*.

## **Chapter Five: Analysis and Discussion**

This chapter demonstrates the narratives of the participants. The participants are Palestinian women who were imprisoned in Zionist jails between 2014 and 2017. Not only their narratives subvert the epistemic violence in Western/Orientalist/Zionist discourses, but also subvert the material violence done on their bodies while they were inside colonist prisons. Subversion as an embodied means of anti-colonial resistance allows women to subvert colonial power and discourses, but also allows them to build new political subjectivities. Eventually, subversion challenges old western liberal notions which rest on dichotomous thinking. Subversion mainly distorts the binary opposition of the mind/body and individuality/collectivity and the one dimensional mode of being and one truth.

### **Introduction: Theoretical Approach**

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1975) provides a detailed description of a prisoner's daily routine inside prisons. In this, Foucault shows us the change that has taken place from public execution to confinement, timetables and prison. An artificial timetable is imposed on Palestinian political prisoners. A prisoner's day is divided into several parts. To begin with, prisoners' first count starts at 4:00 am. Each cell is inspected and the "inmates" are counted to make sure no one escaped. The first room inspection takes place at 7:00 am, special trained forces enter the cell and go through the prisoners' stuff as to inspect that there are no prohibited objects. Prisoners can have a time for recreation and interacting with other prisoners inside the same prison; this is called the forah time. The first forah starts from 10:00 am until 12:00 pm. The second forah starts at 3:00 and ends at 5:00 pm. After 5:00 pm prisoners go back into their



cells and are not allowed to go out until the next day; in other words, prisoners are confined inside their cells during nighttime. Furthermore, according to the Israeli Domestic Legislation (1971), there are various articles that conduct what is a prisoner, what can/cannot a prisoner do, what would happen if the prisoner breaks one of the prison's laws and conducts. For example, prisoners are not allowed to contact any person outside the prison unless there is a visit time; specific people can visit, like close family members (who are sometimes banned for "security" reasons). In other words, each and every detail of the prisoner's life is put under the attempt of being controlled and scrutinized by the Zionist colonist.

Discipline consists of a concern with time-keeping and self-control over bodily functions and movements; these elements aim to discipline the self by the self (Mills 2003). However, by just studying the ways power is structured or exercised, we are overemphasizing the role of power (Baaz, Lilja, Schulz and Vinhagen 2017) while overshadowing the resistance that takes place in the same body. Foucault believes that individuals are active subjects and that they don't receive power like passive dupes (as cited in Mills 2003). Using Foucauldian lens, power is met with resistance. Oppressive measures can be productive in giving rise to new forms of behavior (2003, 33). The importance of Foucault's inquiry is that he demonstrates "power, after investing itself in the body, finds itself exposed to a counter attack in the same body" (1980, 56).

According to Shinko, the term 'embodied resistance' shows us the ways bodies speak back to the structures of power that are constantly trying to discipline and oppress them. This term indicates that bodies are simultaneously acted upon and active, therefore bodies are always in the process of responding to the various powers inflicted upon them (Crossley as cited in Shinko). Palestinian women political prisoners suffer during their experience of imprisonment, but as they suffer they simultaneously resist the colonist power that is trying materially and

symbolically to oppress them. To ignore their suffering and the huge amount of sacrifice that these women induce would be cruel, but it would be crueler to ignore the way their bodies speak back to colonist power. Ignoring their resistance would be an attempt of reiterating the massive body of knowledge that seeks to depict them as helpless and agentless victims.

The strength of Butler's performative aspects of gender [and identity] is that she opens a space for analyzing embodied iterations of subversion (Shinko, work in progress). The gendered body is performative, Butler (1990) suggests. It doesn't have an ontological status part from the acts that constitute its reality. The coherent body is a fabrication that is constituted through performative enactments like acts, words and gestures (Butler 1990). However, Butler suggests that the body in its performativity can subvert and mock the illusive model of gender and she demonstrates the drag as an example; Butler thinks that this insight can result in a radical reframing of "original meanings" attached to gender (Tan 2010). In general, what I draw from Butler's theory of subversion is that it cuts open the identity for new formations and possibilities which allows individuals to live as the complexities that they are.

Palestinian women political prisoners' bodies speak back to colonist powers. This embodied speech takes on various forms and different degrees of malleability; yet this research focuses on subversion as a means of embodied resistance. It was noted that these women undo the regulations that are forced on their bodies through subversion. Subversion of bodies is happening in a confined place that is continuously seeking to control, punish and regulate them. The very notion of the body and its materiality is subverted. Subversion becomes an embodied strategy of resistance.

## **Subversion: An Embodied Means of Resistance**

There are various definitions for the word “subversion” in the dictionaries. One of them refers to a process by which the values and principles of a system in place are contradicted or reversed (Oxford Dictionary 2018). It is a systematic attempt to transform the established social order and its structures of power and hierarchies from within (Merriam Webster 2018). Moreover, subversion is an act designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological or political strength (Dictionary of Military 2011). Furthermore, to subvert is to take oppressive forces and then turn them into something that challenges the oppressor (Gunde 2007). Finally, to engage in subversion is to use the “patriarchs” rules against them, making their intended meaning into something completely different (2007).

Subversion as an embodied means of resistance brings into a clearer relief that the ideational representations about Palestinian society and embodied violence shouldn't be easily compartmentalized and it further deconstructs the hegemonic representation about Palestinian women political prisoners which were addressed in a previous chapter. Subversion as an embodied means of resistance has multiple modes that are plural, fluid and productive. The various forms of subversion performed by political prisoners will be explained with details in following sections.

### **Participants Background**

1) Dunia Musleh (21 years old) lives with her family in Dheisha refugee camp in Bethlehem. She is now a senior in Al-Ahlyah University in Bethlehem. She was arrested for Facebook incitement at the age of 19 in 2015. According to Addameer, Dunia was indicted with three

charges related to Facebook posts, these posts according to the Zionist court were praised by many people. Dunia stayed in prison for 10 months. Once she got out of prison, she continued studying in the university and is simultaneously working in a clothing store in Bethlehem.

2) Lina Khattab (22 years old) her family is originally from Qalunya, a village located 6 kilometers west of Jerusalem. She lives with her family in Ramallah and studies in Birzeit University. Lina was arrested at the age of 19 and stayed in Hasharon Prison for 6 months. The list of charges included throwing stones in a demonstration (Addameer 2015). When she went out of prison, she continued studying in Birzeit University.

3) Jureen Qadah (21 years old) lives with her family in Shuqba village in Ramallah. She was arrested when she was 19 and was detained for three months; administrative detention was issued against her. She spent one month and a half in Hasharon prison, and then another month and a half in Damon Prison. Right now, she is a senior studying media and journalism in Birzeit University.

4) Khitam Khatib (54 years old) is from Betunia-Ramallah, she lives with her husband and daughter. Khitam has been the president of the Palestinian Women Union Committee since 2010 and a member of the Regional Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders in Middle East and North Africa (Addameer 2017). Khitam was arrested in 2017 for 3 months and was placed under administrative detention.

5) Abeer (pseudonym) doesn't want her real name to be mentioned for security reasons. She is originally from Ramallah. Abeer was imprisoned a couple of times and she spent many years in Zionist prisons. Her last imprisonment was in 2014. She spent most of her imprisonment time in

HaSharon Prison. She was charged for a couple of years under the accusation of belonging to a “terrorist” political group.

6) Aisha (pseudonyms) doesn't want her real name to be mentioned for security reasons as well. She is from Hebron. Aisha spent an amount of 5 years in colonist prisons on charges of membership in a “terrorist” political group. Her last imprisonment was in 2014. She was imprisoned in HaSharon and Damon Prisons.

7) Samah Dweik (27 years old) is from East Jerusalem; she lives with her family there. Samah is a journalist who was found guilty of alleged Facebook incitement. She spent a couple of weeks in the Ramleh prison before she was transferred to HaSharon prison. She spent 6 months inside colonist prisons. Right now, she is still working in journalism and she strives to obtain a higher education degree.

8) Alia Abbasi ‘Um Mousa’ (56 years old) is from East Jerusalem. She is a mother of six children and has grandchildren; one of her children is a political prisoner as well. Um Mousa was detained first in 2012 on allegations of attempting to stab a Zionist soldier. She was sentenced to spend 40 months in jail as a house prisoner. After spending some time as a house political prisoner, her original sentence was reduced to 26 months of actual imprisonment after an appeal was made to the Zionist court. She spent most of her time in HaSharon Prison.

9) Mariam Arafat (23 years old) is from Tubas, Nablus. She was held a captive in Zionist jails since 2015. The Zionist soldiers detained Mariam at Al-Hamra checkpoint in Jericho on accusation of “a stab attempt”. Mariam spent a total of 2 years in colonist prisons. She spent some time in the Ramleh Prison, then in HaSharon and Damon prisons. While she was in prison

Mariam obtained her Tawjihi degree and right now she is striving to continue her college education.

## Forms of Subversion

### Strategic subversive bodily acts:

In her first interrogation, Jureen's body was surrounded by 7 soldiers who repeatedly and hysterically mocked her Facebook's profile picture. In the picture, Jureen is showing the dimple on her cheek. "*Show me the dimple*" one of them insisted. As she was crying, she refused to show them "the dimple" because she knew that they were trying to insult her. "*My hands were cuffed; I couldn't even wipe my tears*". As a result her headscarf was painfully removed; the interrogators continued verbally harassing her and commenting on her long hair: "*Your hair looks so nice, come on let's get you married to one of our guys*". At that time, Jureen did nothing but cry because she felt so humiliated that she hated herself. In her third trial before the Zionist military court, Jureen's hands and feet were shackled but it didn't keep her from feeling powerful. That power stems from the fact that Jureen knew all she had was her body. She remarks: *I knew smiling in court was provocative to them, I knew smiling in the face of your warden is provocative, so I smiled... they want to see the dimple don't they?* The same harassment that was used against her during the interrogation, Jureen has subverted strategically to provoke them.

In a similar conversation I had with Dunia, she narrated to me the following about her first trial:

During my first trial, I was handcuffed and sitting inside a cage. I haven't seen my parents in a month, so I cried when I saw them in the court. The lawyer gave me

some time to converse with my mom, I reached out my cuffed hands towards her and said “yamma” (mom). The Zionist who was in the cage with me started screaming at me, so I screamed back at him. I was still screaming when the judge walked in, he wondered why is there screaming in his court? My lawyer rushed to me and hushed me so I sat down. I noticed that the judge was still angry...his voice was loud but I couldn't care any less, all I thought about was that I had 10 minutes to chat with my mom. My lawyer rushed to me again and remarked that the judge is screaming because I should stand up in his presence, I looked up and down at the judge and I stood but I gave him my back. Dunia mocked an entire juridical system with her body *“he was furious, but guess what I don't care!”*

Dunia was sitting in her cell when she noticed that one of the female guards was walking back and forth near her. Dunia smirked at her, *“I liked teasing her just because!”* which made the guard very angry that she started yelling and cursing Dunia. Dunia spit on the guard's face, the latter got so angry that she threatened to report what happened to the warden. When the warden questioned Dunia about what happened, she didn't deny it; in fact she was proud of what she did. Consequently, it was agreed that Dunia and the guard shouldn't talk to each other. Yet, Dunia kept smirking each time she saw the guard to provoke her intentionally. *“Our bodies are intimidating, a guard has different kinds of weapons, yet they feared our bodies, they feared the name Palestine and especially Palestinian women”*. Dunia was constantly called a “mekhabelet” which in Hebrew means a woman who sabotages. The word in Hebrew can be translated into a terrorist or a demon, but it made Dunia happy. She knew it was an attempt of an offense, yet she was thrilled because according to her; she was able to shake the security of “Israel” through the strategic use of her body. In other words, smiles, body movements and secretions like turning

one's back and saliva were strategically used to make a political statement; in Dunia's case, she wanted to mock the judge and provoke the authority of the guard.

While Dunia was in her third interrogation, the Zionist interrogator got really mad because she wouldn't say anything. He started yelling and cussing. Eventually he stomped his hand on the table and threatened to blow her head up... she didn't react although she revealed in our conversation that she was scared. *"I'm going to demolish your house right now, your parents are going to hate you forever and your mother is going to cry"*...while he was shouting at her, she thought of a response that is going to be provocative. He threatened again *"I'm going to destroy your house now"*, she told him: *"let's go together, yalla (an Arabic expression that means: let's get going)"* and she moved her chair initiating approval of his quest. He was shocked by her answer that he didn't say anything and left the room. The speech act "yalla" and Dunia's brief movement speak loud to the Zionist interrogator; she tried to embody the message that she doesn't care about his threat. In fact, her speech act and movement subvert the interrogator's threat and turns it against him.

Um Mousa narrated to me her last-court hearing experience:

The prosecutor assaulted me and told me I am garbage. I cussed him and started a huge problem. My imprisoned son warned me before and told me that one day the Zionist will be very provocative and they will try to insult me until I fall apart. Yet, when the prosecutor did this, I told the judge: you are garbage, you are worse than him (referring to the prosecutor) because you accept that this trash assaults me, you are not the law, and you are not a judge! You are not fitted to be a judge! Police forces rushed inside... I don't know what happened to me, they were cussing and



yelling and wanted to arrest me. Out of the blue, I took a weapon from one of them; I held it high and started to aim it around! I didn't pull the trigger, but I told them: I can shoot you, you and you! The judge and the prosecutor were shocked and fled the scene. Eventually, I told them take your piece of shit (referring to the gun) you need it... we don't! We need only God. This was the result of too much pressure from being a house prisoner for three years; I didn't feel my body... I wasn't awake!

Um Mousa mocked the Zionist judicial system using her mouth at first as she was cursing the prosecutor and the judge (who are both figures of law enforcement). She didn't plead guilty or accept the cursing aimed at her. On the contrary, she reiterates the opposite of Foucault's Damniens whose mouth didn't release a word of blasphemy as he was executed and pleaded the lord for forgiveness. In addition, she mocked the Zionist judicial system with her entire body by showing that she too is able to snatch the gun and shoot. As a result, Um Mousa subverted power relations when she used the colonist's guns against them and subverted the established order in the court. The very principles of the Zionist court were contradicted and subverted.

In another narrative, Um Mousa stated "because of Israa's condition, I had to be with her whenever she is getting strip-inspection; I would help her to take off her clothes."

Israa Jaabis is accused of attempting to detonate a bomb in order to harm Zionist soldiers in front of a checkpoint in Maali Adumim. Jaabis and her family have reported that she was in the process of moving house when a faulty cylinder of cooking gas burst into flames 500 meters from the checkpoint (Masarwa and Akkad 2018). In this incident over than half of Israa Jaabis's body was burned (2018). After she was arrested, she was taken to a medical center where eight of her fingers were amputated (2018). Um Mousa continues:

One time they didn't let me in with her, she was on her own. Israa would usually place her hands (what's left of them) in her pockets. However, when the suharet (woman guard) wanted to strip search Israa, the latter let her hands out in a surprising sudden movement. The suharet was immediately frightened and told Israa to go away. Israa had meant to scare her because she was angry at the Zionists for throwing away my medication and because they wanted to strip search her while she was alone. The Suharet was yelling: monster monster get out!

Israa was well aware that her "deformed" burnt hands weren't a "pleasing" sight. In other words, she used this "deformity" strategically to protect her body and Um Mousa's body from further humiliation.

Aisha stated to me that one of the Zionist guards was really mean, arrogant and that she expressed her superiority over Palestinian women political prisoners. Aisha remarks:

I decided to provoke her... I knew in advance her wedding was coming up in two weeks or so. Therefore, I made up my mind to give her a congratulation present (she said this and laughed). She was standing in the hallway, all of a sudden I came and kicked her with my feet; she stumbled and fell. I was really nervous and scared as I did this, but I hushed the fear inside of me and went for it. After she fell, I wanted to continue beating her up, but in the blink of an eye, Zionist forces rushed to me. I entered solitary confinement and she ended up in the hospital because she was "traumatized".

Aisha was well aware that the guard's superiority was racist at heart and politically focused. Audre Lorde (1981) emphasizes that racism is the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over the others, and therefore has the right to dominate and control. Lorde continues that women respond to racism; their response is anger. Yet, Lorde stresses that anger is loaded with information and energy, and that it should be translated into actions in the service of our visions. Consequently, Aisha made up her mind to act on her anger, her anger towards exclusion and of racial distortion. Aisha shows the Zionist guard that she shouldn't act too superior because she might fall and hit the ground metaphorically and physically. She subverted power relationships between them, because the guard was literally lying down and Aisha was right above her. Aisha knew that there will be consequences but she was willing to go through them because she had a political statement and vision that she needed to physically embody. Resistance could be understood as a response to "power" from below; it is the subaltern's practice that could challenge the power of the superaltern (Baaz, Lilja, Schulz and Vinhagen 2017). Aisha's practice was an embodied resistance that was also politically intentional and deliberate, because it was an angry response to the Zionist guard who explicitly considered herself as the superaltern and expressed this attitude towards the prisoners' subalternism. Resistance is done by the subaltern who desires to subvert the authority of a hegemonic power (2017).

Samah Dweik and I had a conversation about her first interrogation experience; Samah explained to me the following:

I was smiling throughout the interrogation; the interrogator told me "*your smile is going to turn into tears*". I told him we will see who is going to cry eventually. I wanted to provoke him so my smile turned into laughter...I was laughing in a way

that really teased him. He said to me “*I feel sad, we feel sad that we arrest girls, I know you are sad too because you are in prison*”. I laughed and replied “who told you I was sad? “ *I know you are*” he continued... “*I can tell you are sad*”. This is when I provoked him the most “On the contrary! I am happy...very very happy, can’t you see me laugh?”

Laughter is an embodied reaction in human beings, it is a response to a stimuli usually associated with positive emotional states of being. The Zionist interrogator thought it was odd for a prisoner to be all smiles and giggles; for prison is allegedly a place of misery. Samah used her mouth to affirm to the interrogator the opposite. Not only this subverts the meanings attached to imprisonment, but Samah subverted the power relationship between the interrogator and the interrogated when she started questioning him as she said “can’t you see me laugh, who told you I was sad...” Samah then turned to me and said:

I was genuinely happy, not to be in jail but because I’m provoking him and its working! I told him that I’m happy because being in prison isn’t the end of the world; in fact I’m not prisoned! He was immediately perplexed “*what do you mean?*” You are imprisoned; didn’t you leave your life behind to come interrogate me? He remained silent! I affirmed again: WHO IS THE PRISONER?

Here one can notice the shift in power relationships between the interrogator and interrogated. As an interrogator he is the one who is “supposed” to ask questions; but towards the end of the interrogation Samah was the one interrogating the interrogator. Samah continues:

You are imprisoned not me... I told him this in standard Arabic instead of informal Arabic. He didn’t understand “*what are you saying*” I repeated the sentence again and

told him to look it up online. “*Are you mocking me with your philosophy*”? He exclaimed in anger. I told him that philosophy is bigger than him and that he has a small brain. He left the room furious. Even in courts I used to smile.... This is a picture of me in the court, see my smile? The military guard who was with me was really angry and kept telling me not to laugh. I told her I am going to keep smiling whether you like it or not. I kept my smile because I am very convinced that I have done nothing wrong, we are defending our Palestinian cause with everything we have; whether it is a word, letter or a line. My beliefs are strong and I feel really peaceful with myself... yes imprisonment isn't easy but it isn't difficult either; it depends on you as a person and how you deal with imprisonment, and how much you believe in what you are doing.

Samah's smile was her way of showing the colonizer that she has a case which she deeply believes in. Her constant smiles subverted the very notions of imprisonment and the various negative meanings associated with it. The laughter of Samah bears resemblance to Helene Cixous's Medusa. Medusa was depicted as a monster, if people look her in the eyes then they would turn into stone. But Medusa laughs, which can be both joyful and subversive because it defies constrictions and conventions and enables agency. Samah and other Palestinian women political prisoners were depicted as monsters, yet they used their laughter to subvert colonial authority and to defy constrictions and conventions in Zionist contexts like interrogation and court rooms. Laughter connotes agency and the attempt to undermine the colonist authority; “In order to smash everything, to shatter the framework of institutions, to blow up the law, to break up the truth with laughter” (Cixous 1976, 16). What can be drawn from Cixous is not her essentialist framework of women, but the way she politicizes the personal (body). She calls for

the subalterned to engage with their own bodies and write about the experiences which come with them “she physically materializes what she’s thinking; she signifies it with her body” (1976, 9). Samah’s laughter -which is physically evident- signifies her attempt to underestimate and provoke the Zionist colonist authority.

### **Bodies that Subvert Boundaries of One’s Own Corporeality and Collide with Other Bodies**

Not only bodies respond to their surroundings and contexts, but they also respond to other bodies (Shinko, work in progress). Such an approach to the body draws together what bodies do, feel and think, and therefore it offers a way to think of the mind/body dichotomous split in more of relational terms. The questions of ethics and relationships between one body and other bodies arise. There is a sense of ethical responsibility to other bodies (Shapiro as cited in Shinko). Our bodies are open to being shaped and reshaped through our physical and emotional interactions with each other.

The clear cut mind/body binary opposition is blurred and subverted. Prisoners in Zionist contexts are exposed to raw colonist powers, isolated from their community and lives; yet as one body suffers, this body mutually thinks about, feels with other bodies. Prisoners expressed frequently that they forgo their corporeal pain when they see someone else in need. They also expressed that it is their responsibility to help one another. In other words, this sense of ethical responsibility to other bodies is embodied when one body forgoes its own “comfort” and helps another body. Thus, sense and action and the dualism of mind/body is distorted and subverted.

As prisoners feel with and think of other prisoners, they embody these sensations and thoughts into actions that demonstrate collectivity between individuals.

Um Mousa reported that Israa at first couldn't eat, drink on her own and she couldn't hear or speak properly. Furthermore, she couldn't walk easily or use the bathroom. "I was her hands...I used to carry her, feed her and help her use the bathroom, if she sighs, I would ask her: what's wrong my soul?"

Not only did Um Mousa collide with Israa's body, but she metaphorically and factually gave Israa her own hands. "Whenever Israa wanted to eat nuts she would point her hand. I would grab the nuts, chew them in my mouth and put them in hers. I often told Israa: this has my saliva! She would tell me it's delicious and swallow it. One Friday, we were having nescafe with the rest of the girls during the forah; the girls were looking at me as I held a biscuit and dipped it in Israa's nescafe. I never put anything in my mouth before feeding Israa first, the girls noted: *Um Mousa you are hands for Israa*".

After Um Mousa left prison, Israa sent her a written letter and informed her: I ate nuts without your saliva this time. While narrating this event Um Mousa was crying and continued talking through the tears "Israa kept telling me: *you are my soul and my body*".

On one hand, Um Mousa and the rest of the girls reveal that the former was Israa's hands. On the other hand, Israa believes that Um Mousa wasn't just her hands; she was her entire body. Um Mousa felt an ethical responsibility towards Israa Jaabis, although the former has multiple chronic diseases that go untreated in prison, she forgoes all of her pain just to help Israa. In other words, Um Mousa subverts her own corporeality and collides with Israa's body and therefore creates notions of collectivity. This means that the needs of Um Mousa's own body are

relinquished; the physicality of her body becomes blurred as she collides with another body in need. Um Mousa shared with me the following experience:

One day, Israa and I were being transferred to the court. Once we reached it we stayed there for so many hours with no food, no bathroom...plus they took away all of my medications! I asked them for a bathroom access, they kept telling me no! One of the women soldiers told me *we don't have a bathroom for you here, your bathroom is in Maali Adumim!* It's the place where Israa was accused of detonating a bomb. I felt the fluids coming out of my eyes, I found it hard to breathe and I started suffocating. I really felt that I was about to die! Israa told me: *don't insult yourself for them khalti, pee on yourself.* I didn't listen to her at first but then she started yelling at me "*don't die like this, khalti are you disgusted with your own body please let it go*", Israa held me and I started weeping because the water inside my body wanted an outlet... I let go of myself and I peed. Afterwards, I felt extremely exhausted and drained out because a lot of water oozed out of my body. Simultaneously, Israa started menstruating heavily because of the stressful situation. Blood was streaming down her body and she didn't have access to sanitary pads. I was already feeling tranquilized, Israa was too...both of us took our shoes and put them under our heads as we lay on the ground with my pee and her blood. Israa for the first time held me and I leaned on her the entire time. Can you imagine? Ever since I've known Israa I was the one helping her, but this time she helped me! A bosta came late that night and we went back to prison.

One can notice here the ways Israa's and Um Mousa's relationship shifted. Israa became the body which aided Um Mousa's body. Despite the fact that Israa had her eight fingers



amputated; she was able to hold Um Mousa who is a relatively huge woman. Israa tells Um Mousa that the latter suffered a mini stroke on their way back to prison and that this gave Israa the strength to aid her “*you have children and grandchildren who need you, I am not letting go of you*” Israa told Um Mousa. Not only Israa realized that Um Mousa needed her but she also acknowledges that other bodies need Um Mousa’s body and these are her children and grandchildren. Israa subverted her own corporeal body and collided with Um Mousa’s body. Here I use the word ‘subvert’ with ‘corporeal’, because corporeal describes something that has a physical form, and according to the dictionary it means the opposite of spiritual or emotional (Vocabulary 2018). I am not approaching the body only from its physical “reality”; rather I am trying to blur the line between what is physical and emotional. Because in Um Mousa and Israa’s case they didn’t treat the body as corporeal or material, but their emotions and ethical responsibility to each other was embodied physically.

In another conversation I had with Mariam, she described to me her relationship with other prisoners:

I didn’t tell you about the stroke! After the Zionist took me from the cells, they forcefully relocated me to the Damon Prison. The Zionist wanted to open another prison, but the prisoners refused because they didn’t want to be divided! It’s a colonist strategy... you understand? They wanted to study the mindset of Palestinian women strugglers. After living in the cell, having my marriage fall apart and going to the Damon Prison, I suffered from a stroke. They took me to Haifa, Rambam hospital... I woke up and I saw myself tied to the bed! Zionists were around me and giving me a gaze...I didn’t want to die like this, not this kind of filthy death! The stroke affected the left part of my body and my heart beat, I am still recovering until

this day! They placed me in Rambam hospital and told me I have to stay in the emergency room, I told them that I didn't want to stay! Not even for one day. I would rather die next to the girls in the Damon than stay here. They took me back to the Damon where Shireen Isawi and Suad Rziqat (other political prisoners) helped me to get through this. Suad... was always there for me the most, she is my closest friend and she helped me get back on my feet. Imagine being a human in prison, unable to move, unable to eat, you need your sister or your mom; you need help going to the bathroom. Thankfully, Suad and Shireen were there for me, Suad helped me a lot. I felt that Suad is my mother and my sisters! All of them are Suad.

First, Mariam refused to stay in the hospital isolated from her fellow strugglers. In other words, she preferred death near her people rather than to recover and live under the Zionist gaze. In addition, Suad was Mariam's crutches because she helped her get back on her feet after suffering a stroke; Suad aided Mariam's body by using her own. Third, Suad was able to embody Mariam's mother and sisters all in her body. Thus, Suad subverted the ideational boundaries around her singular body and collided with other bodies which resemble Mariam's sisters and mother.

After that, Mariam and I had a conversation about her home made remedies. Some of the women that I interviewed mentioned that Mariam's remedies were very useful to them in colonist prisons. Mariam explained:

There was a lot of medical negligence in prison, the Zionist only give you pain killers. I didn't have a lot of experience but I tried to make use of my grandmother's home remedies; my grandma had plenty of knowledge and wisdom in alternative

medicine. I often used turmeric paste for Israa Jabis's skin. Her skin's condition was awfully bad and she would always have high fever. We bought one of the facial creams from the prison's canteen; it was insanely expensive. However, I read the ingredients label and I wanted to see the ways I can create something similar for Israa. I invented this turmeric paste and I applied generous amounts on her skin. Her skin immediately improved and the results were obvious. When Lina Jarboni (another prisoner) saw Israa's face she told her that she is glowing! Um Mousa told everyone that this is Mariam's own accomplishments and insisted that everyone should try it. This is one of the ways that I helped my fellow prisoners. Another prisoner needed my help. She was severely depressed, yet I didn't tell her that I am going to give you a therapy! I befriended her...I became her close friend and I tried to understand the way she thinks. I know a lot about psychology, I spent lots of time reading books in prison! Can you imagine? Treasure in prison? Treasures of literature! I told her...you are a human being and that people tend to feel down sometimes but it doesn't mean that they should end their lives. I am telling you she was suicidal, I told her if you commit suicide what would happen after that? We hung out for a while, at first she gave me a rough time, and then I saw her getting better day by day. One time she came to me and said she feels better. Back then, it had been a year since she has gotten her period, so I thought I can help her with that too. After reading extensively I figured that she hadn't gotten her period because she was too depressed. I invented another remedy for her that had high concentrations of cinnamon. The following day, she got her period. She came to me and gave me a big hug...she squeezed me! I told

her playfully: what do you want, I don't have money! She laughed and told me cheerfully that she got her period thanks to me.

Not only Mariam befriended her fellow prisoner and helped her find a silver-lining, but Mariam also aided her body to regulate itself through creating a remedy. Mariam continues speaking about her relationship with other prisoners:

Two young girls (political prisoners) and I were headed to court. We got inside the Bosta at 6:00 in the morning...nobody was in court yet! It was really cold and the cells were freezing. I finished my court session and they wanted to take me back to the prison. I told them we were three...how come we are now two? I am not leaving without the third girl; the court session lasts only 10 minutes, we've been here for 6 hours WHERE IS SHE? I AM NOT GOING ANYWHERE WITHOUT HER! When I said this, the Zionist guard told me: "*then stay here*". I saw the lawyer and I asked him where is she? He said *she must be in interrogation because no court session lasts this long*. Therefore, the other girl and I decided to protest by refusing the meals; we refused breakfast and lunch. When dinner time came, the Zionist didn't give us the dinner meal because we were going to refuse it. In their dictionary this is rebellion! They took the other remaining girl who was with me to an interrogation, so I stayed on my own. I told the guard if anything happens to the girls I will do something really bad; I am staying here until both of them are back! "*Stay sleep here*" he told me. I don't care, I replied... bring me a mattress. One hour later, the first girl came back and I told her that we skipped meals. We agreed that we shall stay here until the third one is back... hunger and thirst just go away in moments like this! All you think

about is the safety of others. Finally, both of the girls were with me... they interrogated them both separately, but at least we went back to prison together.

In this brief narrative, one can conclude that bodies are willing to refuse food and to give up on their own comfort for the sake of other bodies. These are the various ways Palestinian women political prisoners expressed and embodied an ethical responsibility towards other fellow prisoners. Mariam could have gone back to prison on her own, she could've eaten meals but she chose not to, because according to her these physical needs tend to go away when you have in mind the safety of someone else. Khetam expressed similar embodied sentiments as well:

The girls (referring to political Palestinian prisoners) heard on the news that Khalida Jarrar and I were arrested and therefore coming to Hasharon- they know that mostly prisoners are situated inside Hasharon- so they started preparing for our coming. We reached Hasharon Prison at 6:00 pm, the girls had prepared the cell room, they were already 4 girls and each one of them had her own bed. When I entered my cell I saw a mattress on the floor, they told me that I get to have one of the beds. They were very thoughtful and kept in mind that I'm 54 years old and therefore a bed would be more suitable for me. "*We will manage*" they told me and emphasized that I shouldn't worry about them taking shifts on sleeping on the mattress. Moreover, they told me that they prepared clothes for me and if I wanted to take a shower everything is ready... they also prepared food for me, I don't remember if I ate or not! I just didn't want to upset these girls because these are somebody's daughters; they were very nice to me. It was a challenge having 5 prisoners in one small cell and I am the kind of person who wakes up very early. So whenever I woke up, they would be sleeping... I would tiptoe around the cell, make myself a coffee and start reading.

Not only the girls were considerate of Khetam's needs as an older woman, but also Khetam wanted them to be comfortable as well. Of course she appreciates the girls' nice gestures, but she also cares deeply about them. In other words, the girls didn't mind taking shifts when it came to sleeping on a rock solid mattress because it was for the sake of another body who needed better sleeping conditions.

Similarly, Dunia explained that in prison, prisoners are exhausted mentally and physically, yet prisoners have the responsibility to lift someone else up while being down. Dunia turned to me and asked:

Can you imagine being exhausted but still feel the need to help others? Back then, Shorouq Dwayyat was recently injured and shot in the chest, her body was still in recovery and she was in deep pain. We weren't in the same cell, but during the forah I would massage Shorouq's shoulder as it was glued to her armpit. You have to help her; you would want to help her. Time after time she got better, we lightened up her mood! When I went out of prison she was doing much better.

Dunia subverted the dichotomous split between mind and body in this small narrative. Dunia not only acknowledges the ethical responsibility that she and other prisoners have towards Shorouq; but she also embodies this acknowledgement by massaging Shorouq frequently and entertaining her. In addition, Dunia also acknowledges that she herself felt exhausted repeatedly but that didn't stop her from aiding other bodies who were also hurting. In other words, she subverted her own pain to help another body's pain.

In addition, Lina recalls the time when she was being transferred to the court in the bosta; another woman Palestinian prisoner was with her. The latter was injured as she took 7 bullets in

her body before being imprisoned. She used crutches to walk, but even the crutches didn't help her because during their transfer in the Bosta, the cold air condition was on (knowing its January) so her injuries got worse. Lina says:

“My hands and legs were cuffed but I had to help her, she was screaming in agony as if she was dying out of pain, she was begging me to help her...they didn't want me to help her, the woman soldier was roughing the injured girl up with a stick and the girl was screaming really loud! Can you imagine pain, cold air and bruises combined together? They tried to push me away from her and she was begging me not to let go of her. I pushed them as they tried to push me away from her...you start to feel helpless here because your hands and feet are shackled, but the feeling of helplessness doesn't persist...yes I felt weak but I always tried to put myself together especially when I felt tired”

Although Lina was in pain from the bosta transfer, had her hands and feet shackled and was pushed roughly as she was trying to help another body, it didn't stop her from giving a helping hand to the girl in need. Lina got over feelings of helplessness and pain in order to help the body that was asking for her assistance. We can see here the ways Lina subverts those feelings for the sake of another body.

Moreover, when Lina was in solitary confinement, she spent her time thinking about other prisoners who lived in the same exact cell which she exists in now. She thought of their struggles and resistance. She thought of her mom and the warmth of her embrace “*this is what kept me going*”. Yet she had moments when she thought that this could be a place for collaborators, *is this room for asafeer (collaborators in disguise)?* Her doubts were eased when they brought in

Lina Al-jarboni (a political prisoner); this was the moment when she reckoned that she was in colonist prison.

Lina's body existed in a certain time and space which attempted to isolate her body from other bodies, yet that didn't prevent Lina from summoning the figurative body of her mother and other Palestinian strugglers who have been through this and resisted. In addition, Lina's lost sense of space faded as she saw another political prisoner; this demonstrates the ways bodies are affected and relieved in the presence of other strugglers' bodies.

Similarly, after spending three months in prison and taking an extra semester off the university, Jureen lost sense of place. Quite often, she found her body detached from the university and she couldn't tell whether she is in prison or in the university. When asked about what grounded her feet back to reality, she answered:

I gaze into the students' faces; I see their smiles...you start to question yourself "are you a normal person" I don't know I would convince myself that I see no violence no torture no gun shooting no screaming around campus, I walk into the classroom and the lecturer calls my name...then everything makes sense. I am back to being the old Jureen, thank god... well not the old Jureen I will never be the same. I am very strong today, I now know what does it mean to be a prisoner, what is a prison and what is Palestine.

Jureen demonstrates that her experience in prison gave new iterations of subjectivity to arise. Moreover, she reveals the ways bodies are affected by other bodies, and in this case other familiar bodies helped Jureen to stay grounded and to feel her body, especially when teachers called on her name asking for her physical material bodily presence. In other words, it is in this



space the relationship between one's body and other bodies inevitably arise. Khetam reveals more on the relationship between prisoners' bodies:

We often conducted classes to help with the younger girls' education. I taught them math, economics and science. These girls are polite, respectful, I loved teaching them it gave me a lot of pleasure because it gave them hope. I loved these little girls as if they were my own, I still think of them you know, they are polite and smart and they studied hard and had lots of questions. When I first left prison, I wasn't completely happy...you see I was thinking about the girls inside; I felt like I left them behind... girls who are as young as roses! These girls are supposed to be in their universities or the comfort of their own houses with their loved ones. Even after prison, I would usually turn on the television and watch Palestine Live channel, I would imagine the girls sitting inside (prison) and watching television... watching the news and having a discussion... I can really see them.

Ethical responsibility towards the young political prisoners is evident in Khetam's narrative. At a certain point in her life, Khetam was a bright teacher. She invested her excellent teaching skills to help with the younger political prisoners' education. After spending some time in colonist prison she grew attached to these young girls and expressed her compassion to them. She couldn't completely enjoy her moment of "freedom" because she thought of the other bodies that are still in prison. Until this day and in the smallest details she conjures the presence of these young girls. In fact, many prisoners expressed the same sentiment towards one another and emphasized that their embodied moment of freedom was lacking because other fellow prisoners are still in colonist jails. Their narratives are similar to Audre Lorde's *Uses of Anger*; Lorde states that she is not free while any woman is un-free (1981).

Dunia's house was raided by the soldiers after midnight, as the soldiers handcuffed her and walked towards the military Jeep, a guy from Al-Dheisheh refugee camp screamed and beat on his chest: you will not take her not over my dead body. *"You know you are dragged out of your house at 3:00 AM with your colonizer...you see people sacrificing their lives for you ....because I'm the girl of a refugee camp (bint mukkaiyam).* Dunia reported that he was shot on the chest and was injured severely. She was surprised to see how this guy (whom she doesn't know) put his body on line for her.

In her study of the relationship between women's embodiment and political resistance in Argentina, Barbara Sutton (2007) noticed the strugglers' emphasis on this phrase "poner el cuerpo". It means "to put the body" and to "give the body"; poner el cuerpo does not only mean to talk or think but to put the whole embodied being into action, to be committed to a social [political] cause, and to undertake the bodily risks. The phrase indicates the importance of corporeal bodies in the renovation of social relations. The young man who put his body on line for Dunia shows us the ethical responsibility that was embodied for the sake of Dunia.

### **Bodies that Subvert and Undo Gender Stereotypes**

Um Mousa told me about the first time she met Israa:

Once I reached the Ramleh Prison to help Israa, I saw her covered in sheets and sitting on a wheel chair. My hands and feet were still shackled, the officer asked me are you Alia Abbasi? I affirmed. He replied: yalla (translated here as: move) take her (referring to Israa). Other Palestinian men political prisoners witnessed this and they were like Ahlan khalti (greetings) keefek khalti (how are you), how are the girls in the Sharon Prison, how is X and Y... even one of them asked about his wife who is also a prisoner, I was so

happy to see them. The military officer became infuriated and kept saying “hush hush” and he noted again: *take her* (referring to Israa). I looked at him and asked: how am I supposed to do so while I am still shackled? So we got into a fight where he would yell and I would yell back at him. The men told me: khalti don’t listen to him, do not accept. I told him one last time: I can’t control the chair when I’m shackled, understood? I am not dragging the chair take me back to the Sharon. He succumbed and unshackled me finally.

Many things can be drawn from this paragraph. First, Um Mousa as a woman is happy to see younger Palestinian men. In the various literatures, not only these men are depicted as violent patriarchs, but women are expected to obey older and younger men. Yet, this wasn’t the case here because all of the young men rushed to Um Mousa and started respectfully saluting her. In addition, Palestinian men in this context supported Um Mousa’s refusal of dragging the wheel chair while she was cuffed and persuaded her not to give up. Most importantly, Um Mousa’s fight with the officer demonstrates her lack of fear of the military “man” officer and therefore subverts power relationship between colonized and colonizer and subverts the hegemonic stereotypical images of weak fragile Palestinian women. In the same way, Samah narrated to me:

One time while I was being transferred in the Bosta, they stopped the vehicle and told us that they wanted to take our finger prints. I entered the place where the chief of interrogators was situated. He told me to stand straight, and that I am standing like a model. I asked him to repeat his words again, and he did! Excuse you I said, and you are? “*The big boss*” he replied. I placed my hands on my hips and asked him: what big boss, whose boss? Big boss on yourself, I have no big boss because according to your law you can’t talk to me, only she can (referring to a woman military officer)...I yelled at him YOU ARE NOBODY’S BOSS! There was another Palestinian girl with me and an

interrogator, the interrogator was laughing discreetly. “The big boss” on the other hand was furious. In another occasion, he saw me in the Mascobiyah Center and told me: *oh you are still here!* I said “big boss and you are still in the same position, are they not giving you a higher rank? He didn’t say anything back.

Shinko (work in progress) notes that embodied resistance operates as a response and a provocation simultaneously. Therefore, embodied resistance is a series of responses and provocations where the space for maneuverability is fluid. Um Mousa and Samah in these narratives are not completely powerless, because as they responded to their colonist they were also provocative of male authority figures. On one hand, Um Mousa demanded to be unshackled and got into a verbal fight with the officer. The fact that he got into the fight with her and succumbed to her demands subverted and blurred the clear dichotomous split of powerful male officer and powerless Palestinian woman political prisoner. On the other hand, Samah kept responding, mocking and provoking the chief of interrogators. These are examples of a response from “below” (Baaz, Lilja, Schulz and Vinhagen 2017); a subaltern practice that had the possibility to negotiate and undermine power. Nevertheless, I am not trying to dichotomize resisters and dominators, because this would simply ignore the multiple systems of hierarchy and the fact that individuals can be simultaneously powerful and powerless (2017).

In this research, chapter two discussed the representations that exist around Palestinian society and its alleged “unified frame of patriarchy. Palestinian men are demonized, especially Palestinian fathers. They are depicted as violent, distant, angry, absent, abusive, neglectful and controlling (Berko and Erez 2007; Erez and Berko 2007; Berko, Erez and Globokar 2010). The Zionist literature affirmed that women who engage in terrorism come from weak families which lack a good father figure and that these women often find themselves lying to their fathers as

they venture out to participate in terrorism (Berko and Erez 2007). In the following few narratives, Palestinian women political prisoners deconstruct and subvert these ideational injuries. Moreover, they demonstrate that Palestinian relationships between fathers and daughters are much more complicated than what is generalized. Mariam talked about her father with a smile on her face, she mentioned that they are very close. Mariam states:

I saw my parents for the first time after 6 months of imprisonment. They were banned for “security” reasons. After 6 months I saw my dad, when I saw him I felt like crying, especially when I saw tears running down his cheeks. I put myself together and I started to make jokes to lighten things up... I didn’t want to cry too. I told him yabba don’t be sad, nothing happened... aren’t we strong yabba? I was the one providing my father comfort and patience. I was surprised when he told me that my husband filed for divorce because I am absent. I told my father that God will help us, he replied that it will be okay, God will send you the best yabba. I told him that life for me isn’t men.

Jureen also communicated a similar narrative. When she was in administrative detention; her parents didn’t know the exact moment that she will leave, neither did she. Therefore, when she left prison and was put near a checkpoint, she saw a guy that she doesn’t know. Nevertheless, she asked him if she can make a phone call, he was really nice as she remarks and gave her the phone. She called her dad, *“As I dialed my dad’s number I was shaking because what kind of a father-daughter moment is this... as I told him “yabba” he burst in tears, I went back with this guy until my parents reached me and I slept at his family’s house”*.

Mariam and Jureen expressed having a close relationship with their fathers. A Palestinian man can be kind, and fathers can be there for their children. Their fathers cried, because even though

they are “men” they have sentiments towards their daughters and having a daughter in a prison isn’t exactly a cherry on a pie for any father or mother alike. These fathers are not crying because their daughters are not under their “patriarchal” gaze, but because their children are in an unusual colonist context and imprisoned.

In addition, Jureen didn’t hesitate asking this stranger man for a phone call and she felt comfortable enough sleeping at his place. Again, this deconstructs the image of Palestinian men being feared by Palestinian women and it deconstructs the image of Palestinian women who are presented as conservative prudes who wouldn’t go anywhere near a Palestinian “patriarch”.

When Dunia was arrested, the soldiers placed her father in the living room and guns were aimed at his head. She reported that she broke in tears and cried heavily when she saw her father like that. As she was headed outside the house, her uncle shouted and told her “*Dunia do not cry and to stay strong*”. “While I was into the Jeep and during the interrogation I remembered my uncle’s words, he was truly supportive of me” Dunia Reported. The idea that Palestinian men do not support Palestinian women’s acts of political resistance shouldn’t be generalized because in this case Dunia’s uncle was her backbone. Dunia continues:

While I was in Ofer waiting for my trial, I was waiting in room #1 which is a room for the living dead. It is known that girls who are waiting for their trial wait in room #1, boys know that... a guy I know called Hisham started speaking at the top of his lung telling me: Dunia take care of yourself! It was really nice, I felt so comfortable knowing that he was there. Even if these young men don’t know you and you don’t know them, they ache knowing there is a girl in room number 1. It’s truly the best feeling ever!

Lina articulated a similar narrative:

We were in Ofer when a girl told the guys (Palestinian men prisoners) that the soldiers beat her up, the boys were so angry that they started screaming and shaking the bosta until it almost fell. When you go to court you feel safe somehow, although it's a sad disgusting place but you feel safe because you know that there are other men [Palestinian men political prisoners] who feel with you.

And so did Jureen:

When you see a girl inside (referring to prison) with no parents, she is on her own surrounded by monsters who have everything but humanity, only then you know what is a woman, what does it mean to be a woman...it's like all you have is your body, you have to adapt and stand up in front of all of them, guards, wardens and interrogators.

### **Bodies that Subvert Basic Human Needs to Achieve Political Aspirations: "Protean in Motion"**

Protean is an adjective that means ever-changing, unsteady, flexible and adaptable. In Don Johnson's book *The Protean Body*, he challenges the notion of the body as a fixed material object and suggests that the biology of the body changes due to the practices of everyday life. Palestinian prisoners go through four stages, from the moment they are arrested, interrogated, transferred and detained. Through many of these stages, the political prisoner barely has an access to proper toilets, and in other stages one doesn't have an access at all. The prisoner is left for so many hours, sometimes days without food, water and rest (especially during interrogation and bosta transfers to the court). Moreover, the prisoner is exposed to the use of graphic

emphatic language and continuous spate of verbal/physical/sexual harassments. When they are imprisoned, Palestinian women subvert their basic human needs like thirst, hunger, hygiene and proper life. They endure long hours of interrogation and bosta transfers to the court. In addition, they tolerate the brutal beating and the continuous harassing. In my conversations with these women, I noticed the ways they subverted these needs and referred to them as weakness because they had bigger causes to fight for. In a conversation I had with Um Mousa, I noticed the ways she alleviates her physical pain in order to achieve a political goal:

While I was in Hasharon Prison, we got news that a Palestinian woman political prisoner called Israa Jaabis is severely burnt and they need a volunteer to go to the Ramleh prison to help Israa. We received information that a “suhair” (male guard) bathes Israa because she is not able to bathe alone. When I heard this I started crying and I didn’t stop for two days... I didn’t sleep, eat or go out of my cell I just wanted to go and help her. They informed me that they needed a younger woman considering I was too old and sick to take care of someone like Israa. When they finally agreed, I packed all of my stuff and got into the bosta. In the bosta my hands and feet were shackled, I was positioned in a suffocating way that hinders my body from breathing properly, yet I fell in deep heavenly sleep. I fell in peaceful sleep not because I was tired, it’s because I was going to help Israa. The bosta turned into a feather bed, once we reached the Ramleh I woke up.

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Um Mousa suffers from asthma and other chronic diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure and osteoporosis. Yet, that didn’t stop her from feeling the urge to help another body in need. To embody this urge, Um Mousa’s body alleviated above and beyond its corporeal pain because she



had a political aspiration that was bigger than this pain. Not only that, but she also subverted the meanings attached to the bosta which is known for being highly uncomfortable, and eventually turned it into a bed of feathers. Um Mousa continues:

One day I was being transferred to court, according to “their” law we as prisoners are allowed to take a bottle of water, toilet paper and medication if needed. Often they would dispose my items, although I have chronic diseases like asthma...I would become so infuriated, but my spirits remain positive. I would never show them that I am weak or weep in front of them; I used to tell them God is bigger than you.

In a conversation that I had simultaneously with Abeer and Aisha, they expressed that Palestinians often rise above biological needs in order to accomplish a political goal that is situated within a nationalistic aspiration, Abeer stated the following:

Unlike Aisha, I don't have lots of experiences when it comes to solitary confinement or hunger strikes, but I went through them. I am Bint Al Qadiyah (could be translated to a girl who believes in the Palestinian cause). When I see a filthy Zionist reaching his hand and attempting to beat a Palestinian girl in prison, do you expect me to shut up? Of course not! In my life I never thought that I would experience solitary confinement or hunger strike. But I often think to myself, if I remained silent that day and watched him beat this girl, how would I feel? I would have regretted it so bad. We went through solitary confinement as a punishment, but so what? After all why am I in colonist prison? Because I have a cause! Ana Bint Al Qadiyah

Aisha: when I started the hunger strike my body felt really light. I was fatigued and I suffered a headache, then I started to vomit.

Abeer: when I heard her voice as she was vomiting I feared that the same thing is going to happen to me soon. The guards kept pacing back and forth outside our solitary confinement cells because they wanted to make sure we were not dead.

Aisha: we refused all of our meals whether eating or drinking.

Abeer: if we are going to die, so be it...it's only one death...once we told them this and demonstrated our persistence they tried to negotiate with us. They told us "*but you created problems!*"

Aisha: Trust me they wanted to negotiate with us because they become so afraid once they see our persistence!

Abeer nodded as she emphasized the following point:

When Palestinians start a hunger strike, they don't care about any other consequences until they reach their goal. They came to us again and offered a compromise, so we told them that we are willing to end the hunger strike only if they bring us back to solitary confinement in our section, not this new section. They kept refusing until we affirmed that its only one death and we could end up becoming martyrs. Eventually they succumbed and brought us back to our section.

Aisha: I am an average person, but in situations like this you have to find power within you to resist. When someone is provoking you, when a ZIONIST provokes you... you should stand up for yourself! Their purpose is to control you!

Abeer: yes very true ....power stems from within you.

Both of these women emphasized that they are normal human beings and implied that their bodies have biological needs which they can't escape. Yet both of them also expressed that they are rebels with a national cause and because of this, their bodies grow powerful from within. In other words, not only these "biological" needs are subverted but they are strategically employed in frightening the colonizer into succumbing to their political demands. In addition, these women recognize that the colonist's purpose is to control and discipline their bodies. This recognition is embodied as these women escalate events into a hunger strike to get what they want. Each of them was called a mekhabelet (a woman who sabotages) because they showed their colonist that they reckon their oppressing intentions.

Many Palestinian women political prisoners underwent hunger strike to accomplish a political demand, Samah demonstrated this as she said to me:

When I started my hunger strike, my body started to weaken and to feel cold easily... but you survive this! This survival mode comes with you because as you see in every picture I am smiling? Do you understand me? I am a strong woman and honestly I became even stronger after prison! I fear nothing because nothing is more important than freedom.

Rising above and beyond the biological needs of the body also helped these women to create and produce active political subjectivities and to grow stronger. Mariam narrated:

For 15 days I remained in solitary confinement. I barely ate, drank or went to the bathroom. There was no door for the bathroom and there were cameras. I would wait until I know for sure the cameras are off, I would call on the suhairret, if no one replies I would guarantee that everybody left. Once everybody is gone and the cameras are off I use the bathroom. I ate very little to accommodate myself to the new situation, I ate only

to keep my body going; I lost 10 kilograms in 15 days. In my solitary confinement I spent my time praying and thinking about why did this happen to me, how are my parents doing? What is going to happen in my next interrogation, what happened in my previous ones?

Some political prisoners expressed that they viewed biological needs or human sentiments as weakness in such a context. Therefore, they had to subvert these needs and alleviate themselves up and above them to prove a valid point; Lina states:

They arrested me in December, it was really cold, my clothes were torn from the beating up in the jeep, I was hungry I didn't eat that day in the university, I planned to eat once I got home, "thinking I would get home" I stayed in the Jeep for long hours and spent all the time getting beat around by three soldiers, I slapped one of them in the face, but they outnumbered me , so I covered the back of neck and head because I didn't want any permanent damage to happen. One of them asked me "*Aren't you going to cry?*" I said no. the beating worsened. I didn't shed a tear, I was in pain and I wanted to cry but I knew that I shouldn't make them sense weakness, that they wouldn't break me, eventually I discovered a power in my body that I've never seen before, power just overwhelmed me. Although I was starving and I needed to go to the bathroom, especially each time we would go through a road bump, I really needed to go to the bathroom but I found myself in a challenge, I was all for it. One time while I was being transferred in the bosta I was on my period, during the long journey I was in so much pain that I didn't feel the lower part of my body, the pain wouldn't go away, but I wouldn't take medicine from them. In normal circumstances, I would take medicine because I have a chronic

migraine...but I wouldn't take it from them and when I entered the first cell, it was nasty, moist and small... it smelled too.

When I asked Lina on how she coped with the room; she replied that she thought of what's beyond the room. Lina made sense of the tiny space that was forced upon her by thinking beyond the materiality of the room and the materiality of her body. She was thinking about the prison cells that she read about in similar novels. She envisioned another space and dimension for her body, one that is beyond the space her literal material body is in. In other words, Lina subverted the materiality of the cell -that is inhabitable for human beings to stay inside- because she had resistance set in mind. Similarly, I asked Dunia on how she coped with her feelings of hunger; she narrated to me the following:

I am the type of person who is always hungry, for 9 hours I stayed in the jeep with no food, water or bathroom. But I didn't make them sense my hunger, I would never ever show them my weakness, in my dictionary these are weaknesses, because if you ask for food it's like you break and I don't break at least not in front of them. During interrogation, after the third one came he asked me if I wanted to eat anything. I refused although I was starving. He had his plate full of food in front of him, it smelled so good... my lips were cracked with blood and my throat was dead dry, I still refused to eat because hunger is weakness in this case.

Khetam was explaining to me the way she walked while her legs were cuffed, it wasn't easy because each time she stumbled she tried to gain back her balance. Khetam explained in details:

Before you get inside the Bosta, they shackle your hands and your legs. When they first put the cuffs, they are somewhat loose on your feet...then towards the end of the day

your feet expand and the cuffs become too tight. You are surrounded by other Palestinian political prisoners and with Israeli civilian criminals; the latter usually curse and verbally harass us. You start thinking that this is not your world, yet you have to believe that this pain is only temporary. You have to resist it, because eventually it is going to go away. I felt suffocated being in prison and all; I didn't surrender myself to that feeling. I created my own space, a space that opens things up for me, through reading and interacting with the girls. Palestinians adjust and adapt, and you study don't you? Through this experience you face some hardships that you didn't see coming, but you overcome them because you can! We also practice sumud, still it's not their right to do this to us".

My conversation with Mariam echoed a similar resemblance:

Power grows in our bodies and it's the work of God, then it's the work of logic and then those who are righteous are sultans! We have rights khaiti (my sister), our history is honorable. We would die for Palestine because it's our own land; it is our honor to be martyrs. When I had a stroke I thought I was weak, my body was growing weak and I lost so many things including sensation in the left half of my body. As I am speaking to you now my body is in pain, I am tired in my 23 year old body. You can't see my pain because I choose not to show it. The most important thing is our nationalistic consciousness in a world that is trying to take it away from us and to oppress us.

### **Subversion as a Theatrical Choreography**

One of the main aspects of embodied resistance practices is their emphasis on visibility, drawing strategies and technologies of power out into the open (Shinko, work in progress). Strugglers often feel the need to make political statements in response to the oppressive forces that are

constantly trying to discipline and control them. These acts could take on the appearance of a theatre because of their staged elements and coordinated movements (Shinko, 20). Their impact ensures political stability and operates to disempower the oppressive forces (Calzadillo as cited in Shinko).

During the “forah”, Lina liked to exercise and to dance. She would usually put on some music, sing and perform Dabka which is a Palestinian folk dance usually done in joyful occasions. Time after time, other Palestinian women prisoners started to join her, she started teaching them. “*You should have seen the look on their faces while we were dancing... they were shocked*” Lina expressed happily. In the small space of Zionist prisons, Lina chose to dance as if she wasn’t in a colonist prison and was able to strategically and theatrically embody freedom of movement in the very same place that confines it.

Lina recalls a time where Um Mousa was forcefully strip-searched. “*Um Mousa was a really fat woman, yet as she was taking off her clothes, she started joyfully dancing and shaking every ounce of her body...the two female soldiers were so angry!*” Lina explained.

The way Um Mousa theatrically takes off her clothes as if she is putting on a show is provocative to the Zionist colonizer. The strip dance mocks the authority of the colonizer and subverts the various negative meanings that are attached to strip and search.

Um Mousa: Israa asked me if she can borrow my bright orange shirt on her hearing court session. I exclaimed ORANGE? “*because I want to shine and provoke them*”... she was walking proudly with her head held up high like she doesn’t care because God is bigger; Um Mousa affirmed “Israa’s spirits were high”.

Although seemingly trivial, the deployment of a bright orange color made Israa's body shine. She brought more attention to her "deformed" burnt body and reflected it as powerful. She theatrically paraded to subvert the connotations around her body as helpless, deformed and burnt" and used it to subvert military's court power.

Abeer: do you remember when we created the Palestinian flag (addressing Aisha)? It wasn't our own plan yet we participated with the rest of the girls. We collected plenty of shirts, we even ran out of white shirts (she said this as she laughed).

Aisha: once the Palestinian flag was created we marched inside the prison's yard and held the flag up high, we sang and chanted. Zionist forces raided the place yet we sang and sang until they closed our section for four days and sent us to solitary confinement for one week and we were deprived of family visits.

The flag is literally an extension of their bodies, as it is made from their wardrobes (which are now lacking). In other words, the flag is a form of strategic embodiment. The embodiment turned into resistance because mentioning the name Palestine or drawing Palestine's map is considered a crime in Zionist jails. Nevertheless, these young women wanted to commemorate the Nakba Day by using theatrical elements like raising the Palestinian flag and chanting Palestinian nationalists' songs. This method of embodied resistance strategically and theatrically subverts and makes fun of the colonist's attempts of repressing the colonized and their nationalist consciousness. Hence, this was a deliberate effort to draw subaltern bodies into closer proximity with one another.



## **Subverting the Oppressive Nature of Prison/ Re-appropriating Space**

The older prisoners that I interviewed expressed a similar idea, that they must create an alternative community inside the prison for young girls. Um Mousa expressed:

During my imprisonment, I used to sing and dance for the girls. A girl's brother got engaged, so we decided to throw a party! We used to bring cakes, sweets and chocolates and sing, chant and dance. If we (older women prisoners) don't do this, the girls would be devastated, we (older women prisoners) are not allowed to cry; our spirits are always high. When the young girls passed Tawjihi in prison, we created gifts for them, we ate pastries and cake! While I was in prison, I would always wear a perfume; it was men's perfume but I bought it from the prison's canteen because it smelled so good. Soon it became my scent; the girls would smell it and say "*Ah Um Mousa*". Being in a rotten place our bodies used to sweat a lot, I always tell girls to stay neat and clean. As she was recalling this Um Mousa smiled, she turned to me and said joyfully: Didn't I tell you? I am a hair dresser! During our celebrations in prison, I would fix and cut the girls' hair, I would give them wax and facial sessions and put make up; we must shine!

Khetam articulated a similar statement:

It is completely normal for people sometimes to feel down. If someone (a political prisoner) heard that something bad happened to her family she would feel depressed, if she sees that her classmates graduated from high school while she is in prison she would also feel depressed. Therefore, older prisoners created an academic program which educates these young girls, if a girl's birthday is coming up we would plan celebrations, in each holiday we also celebrate...you have to create joy inside for young prisoners...we

encourage them to read, to conduct discussions and to do activities....all of this helps, but the circumstances inside are tough; after all you are in prison! You are not in a park.

Celebrating and studying in prison are forms of subversion, because the meanings attached around imprisonment are altered and the space of the prison is re-appropriated. Re-appropriate means to reclaim/recover something for one's own use (Oxford 2018). They know they are being oppressed by their colonist yet they demonstrate this as a strategic means of embodied resistance. They teach the younger women prisoners that life doesn't stop in colonist jails, joy can prevail even in oppressive contexts. In other words, creating a sense of a joyful life for themselves and the younger girls inside prison sheds light on the interplay between women's political agency and subverts colonist power structures.

### **Subverting the Sexuality of the Body**

Um Mousa: When Israa and I were in the Ramleh Prison, Israa would constantly ask me "how do I look khalti" I would always tell her "you are amazing my eyes (it's a phrase of endearment)" I would only kiss her through the mouth and hug her.

Here, Israa and Um Mousa weren't exchanging passionate kisses; it wasn't a sexual peck on the lips. It was merely a person comforting another one and a way of showing compassion and acceptance. Um Mousa was communicating to Israa that she is beautiful no matter what she looked like; burnt or not. As a matter of fact, Um Mousa usually dressed, undressed and bathed Israa because she couldn't do it on her own at first. Um Mousa continues:

I used to peel off her burnt skin each and every day; I would peel off the burnt skin on her breast, hands, armpits and face day by day then put a special lotion on her body... I would dress her in something convenient for her skin.

When I asked Um Mousa how she felt about that, she replied:

Nothing! “She was the one in pain, not me. I would kiss the blood oozing out of her body and because she was super strong and patient with her wounds; it made me toughen up although I’m the kind of a person who scares easily.

Such Kissing didn’t include sexual innuendo; in fact Um Mousa described it as a way to express caring. Using her body to create deep and meaningful connections, Um Mousa subverts the hetero-normative assumption that close body contact should be encapsulated as sexual.

### **Subverting the Notion of Deformed Bodies and Concepts of Beauty**

In my conversations with these women, it appears that they valued life more than they value “beauty”. Um Mousa revealed:

Before we reached Hasharon Prison, Israa and I stayed in Ramleh Prison. There was a time when I felt extremely tired and decided to take a nap. I opened my eyes to see Israa trying to catch a glimpse of herself in my hand-watch’s reflection. My watch was stainless steel, so from its back you can see a bit of yourself. When I saw her like this I was terrified, I was terrified because I didn’t want her heart to break after seeing herself for the first time all burnt. She turned to me and asked me “*is this how I look? I look scary*”. I kissed her cheeks, wounds and burnt pieces of her skin and told her that God

had given her another life... you didn't die be patient. I saw that she relaxed after I told her this.

Um Mousa subverted the notion of the deformed body and the beauty concepts by placing a high value on life not on the body's exterior figure. Um Mousa continues:

On our way to Hasharon Prison, I told Israa not to be sad because there are little girls who might be scared from seeing your burnt skin... you have to resist. She told me that she understands. Once we reached there, we stayed in our cell for a couple of days. Lina Jarboni told the girls that Israa and Um Mousa will be joining the rest of the girls during Friday's forah, therefore if one of the girls feels uncomfortable seeing burnt skin, she should stay in her room in order not to hurt Israa. So on that day, I put some make up on Israa face, lipstick and eyeliner. I dressed her nicely and once we came out of the cell all of the girls started clapping their hands, greeting Israa and kissing her. That moment I started crying... I know I shouldn't have, it was a happy moment to see all of the girls genuinely express how beautiful Israa looks.

### **Subverting the One Dimensional Mode of Being**

Lina explained that people shouldn't see only one side of prisoners, they are victims and they are heroines at the same time, "*why not cancel the rigid categorization and see the political prisoner as the persons they truly are*"? Khetam expressed a similar opinion "*Palestinians are no victims, we are faced with a political project and we are fighting it...it is very important to know this, we know that our awareness and will power should be strong whether inside prison or outside*". Samah felt the same way:

When I went out of prison, people gave me a huge welcome back... I don't like this; I am not just a former prisoner. People know me because I am a reporter and a social activist. I always go to public lectures and seminars... I have so many things going on for me. I am more than this, As Samah I am not one thing. The prisoner is a human before he/she is anything else. Human beings have moments where they feel powerful and others when they feel weak, some moments you can experience weakness and power all together. Whenever I felt weak, I would smile!

## Conclusion

Trinh Minh-ha affirms the value of story-telling as a means of expressing the experience of women of color in non-oppressive ways. Women's own narratives offer them the chance to affirm their identities in ways that are open to the complexities and sensitive to the particulars (1989). Palestinian women political prisoners' narratives are vivid with a hybridity of pain and resistance. In their narratives, they have demonstrated the various creative ways to embody resistance, and the highlight of them was subversion. Subversion doesn't deny or minimize the restrictions and oppressions placed on Palestinian women political prisoners; and it doesn't cancel the imbalance of power relations between the colonizer and the colonized. However, it enables us to see that prisoners' bodies do speak back and challenge colonial powers. Subversion as an embodied means of anticolonial resistance also subverts and overthrows the liberal/western notions of thinking which are built on binary oppositions such as the mind/body dichotomy. In addition, subversion isn't just about destroying, challenging, overthrowing oppressive powers, but it is also a process where women build/re-build subjectivities and expand their bodies into other bodies.

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