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The Role of Language in Constructing Palestinian Collective Memory

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The Role of Language in Constructing Palestinian Collective Memory

by

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Abstract

The Role of Language in Constructing Palestinian Collective Memory

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The purpose of this thesis is to discover the ways in which language plays a role in constructing Palestinian collective memory. My research draws mainly upon primary literary sources, including Emile Ḥabībī's *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām as-sittah* and Yaḥyá Yakhlif's "Tilka al-mara'ah al-wardah" and "Nūrmā wa rajul al-thalj," and places these texts within a theoretical framework supported by secondary sources. While most prior research has focused on anthropological or geographic approaches to cultural memory studies, my project takes a linguistic approach to understanding how collective memory is shaped. Through analysis of remarkable linguistic features appearing in these short stories, I seek to demonstrate how linguistic reference, personalization of emotion, narrative strategies and temporalities, and metaphorical language create speech acts that facilitate the processes of transmitting individual remembrance into collective awareness that underlie the formation of collective memory. I will also seek to examine the language used in these literary works for forms of rupture, circularity, lack of reference, or ineffability and the ways in which those features are indicative of experiences of trauma and of attempts to grapple with those experiences of trauma.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis takes a linguistic anthropological approach to memory studies in order to explore the role of language in constructing Palestinian collective memory. My research takes elements of Palestinian literary production as its primary texts for analysis and investigates the linguistic structures present in the narrative dialogue that Palestinian authors ascribe to the characters who recount their personal memories of social and psychological discontinuity in the context of post-1948 Palestinian society. I examine a range of literary works of fictional prose, including short stories from Emile[1] Ḥabībī's *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām as-sittah* and Yaḥyá Yakhlif's "Nūrmā wa rajul al-thalj" and "Tilka al-mara'ah al-wardah," with the ultimate goal of understanding how the language that Palestinians use to communicate these individual memories and link them to a collective Palestinian experience of alienation and loss serves to construct cultural memory, in addition to the ways in which that language unveils traumas engraved into the Palestinian communal consciousness.

My research focuses on the relationship between remembering as an individual process and the narration of one's memories to an audience; together, these processes create a collective performance of mutually reinforced recollection and ritual remembrance. This dynamic is compellingly illustrated in Emile Ḥabībī's short story "Akhīran nawwara al-lawz," in which the narrator's former childhood friend, referred to cryptically as "ustādh M. [Professor M.],"[2] surprises the narrator with an unexpected visit after over 20 years of estrangement. In the course of their interaction, Professor M.

[1] I cite Ḥabībī in my bibliographical sources according to the Library of Congress's specifications regarding the orthography of Arabic in Romanization but include the more commonly used English-language orthography for his first name in the body of the text.

[2] Ḥabībī, Imīl. *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām al-sittah.* p. 26.

eventually reveals his motive for seeking out his childhood friends as an unrelenting need for their help in recalling a love story that deeply moved them in their youth. This character's need for a mutually reinforced recollection of the past echoes Anna Green's premise regarding the relationship between individual remembering and collective memory: "Individuals remember […] through dialogue with others within social groups."[3] Professor M.'s visit with the narrator is one event in a sequence of attempts to create a collective performance of ritual remembrance through which mutually reinforced recollections may emerge.

In selecting my sources, I recognized the importance of performances of remembering and recounting, processes that are observable not only in oral dialogue but also in literary dialogue. Literature is an important source for the study of collective memory, because it "articulates the human experiences of daily life that are normally left implicit and unarticulated,"[4] thus granting deeper access into the human psyche than is generally provided by ordinary conversation. Literature also orders the world "in a way that retains what philosopher Maurice Natanson calls 'thick experience,' the world of our errors and confusions as well as of our victories and insights."[5] The ability to examine texts that capture this "thick experience" is critical to understanding the formation of memory, and traumatic memory in particular, because these "errors and confusions" serve as reminders that the construction of memory is highly contingent upon individuals' processing of past events. In the construction of collective memory, a certain amount of reconciliation of these "errors and confusions" must take place as individually

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[3] Green, Anna. "Individual Remembering and 'Collective Memory': Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates." *Oral History*. Vol. 32, No. 2 (2004). p. 38.
[4] Parmenter, Barbara McKean. *Giving Voices to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. p. 5.
[5] Ibid.

remembered instances and details solidify themselves into a collectively held vision of the past. Traumatic events in particular are highly difficult for people to process even on an individual basis, much less on a collective basis, and the "thick experience" captured in literature is therefore of particular importance because of its potential for retaining traces of an individual's ongoing attempts to assimilate traumatic experiences into a system of understanding and thus convert confusion into insight.

In selecting particular literary works for inclusion in my research, I focused on short stories because their prosaic nature and limited length mirror conversational speech while still fulfilling the two key functions of literature in shedding light on collective memory described above. I also chose to study memory and trauma in relation to Palestinian short stories, rather than full-length novels, because short stories comprise a subset of Palestinian literature that has not yet been studied from this perspective, whereas other scholars, such as Ian Campbell[6] and Hugh Lovatt,[7] have already studied memory and trauma in Palestinian novels.

The authors whose short stories I analyze in this thesis, Emile Ḥabībī and Yaḥyá Yakhlif, both lived through the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the Six-Day War in 1967, seminal historical moments for the contemporary Palestinian community and its diaspora. Ḥabībī was born in 1922 to an Anglican Palestinian family in Haifa during the British Mandate of Palestine. When the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 broke out immediately following the announcement of the independence of the State of Israel, Ḥabībī remained in Haifa, in contrast to the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who were displaced from their hometowns. He was eventually granted Israeli citizenship

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[6] Campbell, Ian. "Blindness to Blindness: Trauma, Vision, and Political Consciousness in Ghassân Kanafânî's *Return to Haifa." Journal of Arabic Literature.* Vol. 32, No. 1 (2001). pp. 53-73.

[7] Lovatt, Hugh. "The Narration of Time and Place in the Modern Palestinian Novel: Exile and Alienation in the Works of Jabrā and Ghassān Kanafānī."

and served in the Knesset from 1951 to 1959 and from 1961 to 1972. He lived in Haifa for his whole life, which was a point of pride for him; upon Ḥabībī's own request, his gravestone reads: "Emile Ḥabībī – Remained in Haifa."

Yaḥyá Yakhlif was born in 1944 in the Samakh, a Palestinian village on the southern shore of Lake Tiberias. Yakhlif and his family were displaced from Samakh along with the remainder of its residents in 1948, and he has thus lived as a refugee for most of his life. In addition to "Nūrmā wa rajul al-thalj [Norma and the Ice Man]" and "Tilka al-mara'ah al-wardah [That Rose of a Woman]," his literary works include "Al-muhrah [The Mare]," "Najrān taḥt al-ṣifr [Najran at Zero Point]," "Tufāḥ al-majānīn [Apples of Lunatics]," "Nashīd al-ḥayāt [Song of Life]," and "Buḥayrah warā' al-rīḥ [A Lake Beyond the Wind]." Yakhlif's short story "Tilka al-mara'ah al-wardah" is based on a real life story.

I chose the short stories I analyze from among Ḥabībī and Yakhlif's works because, as prominent contemporary Palestinian authors who were personally affected by the events of 1948 and their aftermath, their literary production is firmly linked to the context of post-1948 Palestinian society and the challenges associated with the dramatic changes characterized by it—in Ḥabībī's case, the challenge of negotiating his status as a Palestinian citizen of Israel and watching the landscape of his homeland drastically change while remaining in his native Haifa, and in Yakhlif's case, the challenges of life as a Palestinian refugee whose native village of Samakh, depopulated and left in ruins, ceased to exist as he knew it. Their differing experiences in the post-1948 context suggested that Ḥabībī and Yakhlif's works might best be analyzed in complementarity with each other.

Yet more importantly, in my readings of their short stories, I was struck by remarkable word choices and syntactical constructions as well as curious instances of

unusual narrative structure that had the effect of—to borrow Russian Formalist terminology—"deautomatizing everyday language," thus shifting the focus onto "the message for its own sake."[8] This deautomatization of language is a type of literary experiment departing from the hypothesis that form has the potential to convey emotion just as effectively as and sometimes even more so than content. Similarly, Niko Besnier proposes, "Affect may be lexicalized (i.e. communicated through lexical devices whose sole purpose is to communicate affect); but it may also be communicated, less overtly, in the prosodic structure of an utterance (through intonation and stress, for instance), or in its syntactic structure (through the marking of pragmatic salience, for example)."[9] This apparent deautomatization of language in certain Palestinian works of literature called urgently for further exploration in that it was highly reminiscent of the Egyptian writer Salwa Bakr's "project of creating a new language (*lugha jadida*)."[10]

Caroline Seymour-Jorn argues that it is "Bakr's aim to use her *lugha jadida* to disrupt the status quo, to condemn the structure of relations, the concepts, values and norms that prevail in Egyptian society, because it is 'the common, the familiar, the taken for-granted' that she holds responsible for the unhappiness of women."[11] Although Bakr uses her brand of deautomatized language for the specific goal of weaving a feminist critique of Egyptian society into her literature, her recognition of the potential of deautomatized language to disrupt the status quo for the purpose of social commentary is also highly relevant to the Palestinian context, and some parallels may be readily drawn

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[8] Caton, Steven C. "Contributions of Roman Jakobson," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 1987. Vol. 16. pp. 239.
[9] Besnier, Niko. "Reported Speech and Affect in in Nukulaelae Atoll." In Hill, Jane and Judith Irvine. *Responsibility and Evidence in Oral Discourse.* Cambridge: [?], 1993. p. 163.
[10] Seymour-Jorn, Caroline. "A New Language: Salwa Bakr on Depicting Egyptian Women's Worlds." *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, Fall 2002. Vol. 11. No. 2. p. 151.
[11] Ibid. p. 160.

between the purposes of certain structures that Bakr uses and those attested in a number of the Palestinian stories that I examine in this thesis.

For example, in writing *Al-'arabah al-dhahabiyyah [The Golden Chariot],* a story about Egyptian female inmates, Bakr uses a circular form of narration "to portray the way in which a prisoner experiences time: as a series of repeated, mundane acts that have little or no consequence."[12] Since "prisoners exist largely on their memories of their past lives,"[13] the circular form of narration allows Bakr to construct a present for her characters out of their memories of the past while simultaneously highlighting the high degree of alienation experienced by an Egyptian woman in the prison context, who without her usual bonds of attachment to family members "would have to develop a new way of being, inside the walls of the prison."[14]

In Palestinian literature, too, the characters in the short stories that I read existed largely on memories of their past lives, and I thus began to suspect that they were also prisoners in some sense, at once beholden to and alienated from their pasts. Although Seymour-Jorn does not mention the potential role of trauma in shaping the language used to construct memory in Bakr's writings, I became curious to explore deautomatized language not only as a reflection of a struggle to develop new ways of being necessary for survival but also as a potentially trauma-induced construction of memory.

Within the Palestinian works of literature that I selected, I also undertook to explore to what extent a deterioration of linguistic coherence—understood here as a pattern of ruptures apparent in certain linguistic features such as reference and temporality, not as a deficiency of language proficiency—was visible in Palestinian

[12] Ibid. p. 168.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

narratives regarding collective memory and whether that phenomenon was linked to an incomplete ability to express traumatic events. I departed from the premise that, as Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart theorize, when people are exposed to a frightening event outside of ordinary human experience, "the experience cannot be organized on a linguistic level, and this failure to arrange the memory in words and symbols leaves it to be organized on a somatosensory or iconic level" and thus it "cannot be easily translated into the symbolic language necessary for linguistic retrieval."[15] Traumatic experiences, in other words, are unassimilable to linguistic processing at the time of their occurrence and thus circle back in the minds of those who have experienced them, repeatedly seeking the right forms of expression.

I will thus attempt to examine remarkable linguistic features in selected Palestinian short stories as potential markers of traumatic memory. Chapter Two examines linguistic reference, including definiteness and specificity as well as reference to the self as other. Chapter Three focuses on the multiplicity of narrations and temporalities. Chapter Four analyzes the personalization and immediacy of emotion. Chapter Five discusses the language of reality as the language of metaphor.

[15] Van der Kolk, Bessel A. and Onno van der Hart. "The Intrusive Past: the Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma." *Trauma: Explorations in Memory.* ed. Cathy Caruth. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. p. 173.

Chapter 2: Linguistic Reference

A number of the salient linguistic features that emerge repeatedly in Palestinian short stories that are tied to the theme of remembrance of a shared past, including Emile Ḥabībī's *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām as-sittah* and Yaḥyá Yakhlif's "Nūrmā wa rajul al-thalj," involve grammatical structures of reference, such as deixis and narrative point of view. Fillmore defines deixis as "those aspects of language whose interpretation is relative to the occasion of utterance; to the time of utterance, and to times before and after the time of utterance; to the location of the speaker at the time of utterance; and to the identity of the speaker and the intended audience."[16] Deixis includes but is not limited to the traditional categories of grammatical person (i.e. "I," "you"), place (i.e. "here," "there"), and time (i.e. "now," "then"), but it also extends to another, less obvious category, which forms the bulk of my analysis.

Discourse deixis, which denotes the use of expressions within an utterance to refer to parts of the discourse that contains the utterance, is highly prevalent in a great number of the Palestinian short stories that are the primary texts for my research. In discourse deixis, proximal and distal terms such as "this (hādha [m.], hādhihi [f.])" and "that (dhālika [m.], tilka [f.])" are used to refer to either a prior or an upcoming part of the discourse within which an utterance is situated. In a linguistic exchange marked by the frequent use of discourse deixis, the speaker is continually inscribing his or her utterances into a wider discourse, and the listener is thus expected to dot the lines between each particular utterance and that wider discourse in which it is situated. Unlike the related phenomenon anaphora, in which a pronoun refers to the same entity as that to which a prior linguistic expression refers, in discourse deixis a pronoun refers to a

[16] Fillmore, Charles J. 1966. Deictic Categories in the Semantics of Come. *Foundations of Language,* 2: pp. 220.

linguistic expression (or chunk of discourse) itself.[17] Thus, in discourse deixis, a referent is not constrained to refer to something in the immediately prior or forthcoming dialogue; it may refer to a concept that is either explicitly mentioned in dialogue or one that is indexed by the extralinguistic context of an utterance. This distinctive feature of discourse deixis is relevant to cultural memory in that the latter is constructed not from fleeting references but from references that reoccur in and are reinforced by an ongoing discourse that may be formed by both individual utterances and extralinguistic factors present in society. For the Palestinian characters in the short stories I analyze, as well as for most members of Palestinian society as a whole, that ongoing discourse is one of exile, alienation, nostalgia, and loss.

Narrative point of view—another linguistic feature related to reference—is significant in that it is associated with the deixis of person. Narrative points of view include first-person narration (told from "my" perspective), third-person narration (recounted from "his" or "her" perspective), and the more unusual second-person narration (related from "your" perspective). In both Emile Ḥabībī and Yaḥyá Yakhlif's writings, I noticed occurrences of what one would expect to be a first-person narration being instead related either partially or entirely as a third-person narration, thereby creating a repeated phenomenon that invited deeper inquiry.

In this chapter, I therefore explore both the use of discourse deixis and of narrative point of view to gain insight into how discourse both shapes and is shaped by collective memory on the one hand and into the relationship between collective memory and personhood, agency, and identity on the other hand.

[17] Levinson, Stephen C. *Pragmatics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. p. 85.

DEFINITENESS AND SPECIFICITY

The use of demonstrative pronouns in Emile Ḥabībī's *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām as-sittah* displays a strong pattern of using syntax that falls on the high range of the spectrum of the "Givenness Hierarchy" (Gundel et al. 1993), an implicational scale of six related cognitive statuses representing "the assumption that speakers make about the memory and attention state of the addressee at the time of the utterance."[18] These cognitive statuses include (1) "type identifiable," which requires the addressee to access a representation of the object type described in the speaker's utterance; (2) "referential," which requires the addressee retrieve an existing representation of the speaker's referent or construct a new representation; (3) "uniquely identifiable," by which the speaker expects the addressee to identify the referent based on a previous mental representation in his or her memory or to construct a unique representation based on descriptive content encoded in the demonstrative pronoun; (4) "familiar," by which the addressee is expected to identify the intended referent based on a representation of it stored in his or her short-term or long-term memory; (5) "activated," by which the addressee identifies the referent because it has been recently mentioned or is present in the extralinguistic context; and (6) "in focus," by which a referent is in the short-term memory of the interlocutors and also at the current center of attention, so that it can be referred to simply by unstressed pronominals.

For the purpose of illustration, I have numbered the referents in the following passage excerpted from the opening of "Ḥīna sa'ada Mas'ūd bibn 'ammih" according to their placement on the Givenness Hierarchy:

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[18] Khalfaoui, Amel. "A Cognitive Approach to Analyzing Demonstratives in Tunisian Arabic." *Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics XX: Papers from the Twentieth Annual Symposium on Arabic Linguistics, Kalamazoo, Michigan, March 2006.* Mughazy, Mustafa A., ed. p. 170.

> Mā taja‘‘asa *Mas‘ūd (3)* kamā taja‘‘asa fī ṣabāḥ *dhālik al-yawm al-tammūziyy al-qā’idh (5)* ḥīna nazala ilá *al-shāri‘(3)* yu‘lin *bil-dalīl al-ḥissī al-qāti‘ (3)* ’anna lahu, *huwa (6)* ‘aidhan, *’a‘māman (1)* wa *’abnā’ ’a‘mām (1)* [Never had *Mas‘ūd (3)* emptied his bowels with ease as he did on the morning of *that sultry July day (5)* when he went out into *the street (3)* to announce with *the conclusive, tangible proof (3)* that he too had *uncles (1)* and *cousins (1)*].”[19]

The relationship between givenness and memory lies in the capacity of the degree of givenness to indicate mental accessibility, hence revealing both the cognitive status of the narrator as he invokes the referent and his expectations for the hearer (or reader) to similarly structure his or her awareness around that same referent.

In the short story,“Ḥīna sa‘ada Mas‘ūd bibn ‘ammih,” the first in Emile Ḥabībī’s anthology *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām as-sittah,* the narrator frequently employs activated forms to refer to temporality, such as “dhālik al-yawm al-tammūziyy al-qā’idh [that sultry July day].” This type of activated form of temporal reference is unusual because Arabic phrases of temporality are normally type identifiable, not activated. Thus, in the opening of“Ḥīna sa‘ada Mas‘ūd bibn ‘ammih,” one might have expected the type identifiable form “fī ṣabāḥ yawm tammūziyy qā’idh [on the morning of a sultry July day]” instead of the activated form that is actually attested: “fī sabāḥ dhālik al-yawm al-tammūziyy al-qā’idh [on the morning of that sultry July day].” This example also fits into the discussion of deixis in the previous section of this chapter, since the deictic “dhālika [that]” implies that that day is already present in the extralinguistic context and, by extension, within the internal discourse of the narrator. The activated form hints that this day is highly salient in the memory of the narrator and very likely also in the collective memory of his community.

It is also noticeable that whole phrases, including a particular set of descriptive attributes, are often repeated. For instance, in the following lines further down on the

[19] Ḥabībī, p. 13.

same page, the narrator invokes "qiṣṣat dhālik al-ṣabāḥ al-tammūziyy al-qā'idh [the story of that sultry July morning],"[20] as though to reinforce the specificity—and thus the importance and salience within his memory—of that particular morning of that particular day that composed the setting in which the events that he intends to describe subsequently occurred. This grammatical reinforcement of the sultry July morning's specificity does not appear to be a conscious attempt on the part of the narrator to give it this salience; rather, "that sultry July morning" appears to already be salient in his memory, which implies that cultural memory is constructed through subconscious processes that then enter the public consciousness. Together, this repetition and marking of pragmatic salience form a remarkable linguistic feature that hints at an emergent deautomatization of language.

The same type of phenomenon is noticeable in reference to the car that arrives bearing the estranged relatives of the protagonist, Mas'ūd, from the West Bank to briefly and unexpectedly reunite with Mas'ūd and his family, who had been isolated from their extended family for as long as Mas'ūd could recall. The car, first introduced as "sayyārah khuṣūṣiyyah fakhmah, bijināḥayn mithl al-ṭayyārah, gharībah [a splendid private car, with wings like a plane, strange],"[21] is one of the few referents other than Mas'ūd himself to be subsequently treated repeatedly as an "in focus" referent. It is referred to immediately after being introduced as "hadhihi al-sayyārah al-gharībah al-fakhmah [this splendid, strange car],"[22], and then as "hadhihi al-sayyārah al-fakhmah al-gharībah [this strange, splendid car]."[23] It is remarkable, too, that within the repetition there is an addition of the attribute "al-gharībah [strange]." Introducing "sayyārah […] fakhmah [splendid car]" as

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid. p. 14.
[22] Ibid. p. 15.
[23] Ibid.

one irreducible unit to which the attribute "gharībah [strange]" is then appended creates a doubly powerful combination of the "the splendid car," which is signaled to be salient and remarkable both syntactically, through its high level of specificity on Gundel et al.'s Givenness Hierarchy, and semantically, through the lexical meaning of the adjective "gharībah [strange]."

Niko Besnier's theorization of the relationship between reported speech and affect supports the idea that syntactical structure can be just as communicative if not more so than lexical content. Besnier proposes:

> "[…] The primary function of the syntactic structure of a sentence is to communicate referential meaning (which noun-phrase is the agent, which is the patient, etc.). If an affective component is superposed on this referential function, it will be processed by the recipient at the same time as the referential component; affect, thus, will come 'for free.' In contrast, an affective interjection does not have a significant referential function and thus will be perceived solely as an affect-communicating device. In the first instance, the affective component is processed less consciously than in the second instance, and often lies outside the limits of awareness (Silverstein, 1981) of both encoder and decoder."[24]

The doubly marked remarkableness of a referent central to the story "Ḥīna sa'ada Mas'ūd bibn 'ammih" thus reinforces that the event the narrator is recounting is a very emotionally charged one. The reader discovers as the narration of the story progresses that "the splendid, strange car" ushered in a significant paradigm shift for Mas'ūd. It is clear from the immediate shift in respect and status afforded to Mas'ūd and his siblings that coincides with the arrival of their relatives from the West Bank that Mas'ūd must have suffered significantly throughout his childhood in his (and his neighbors') assumption that he was "maqtū' al-aṣl wa al-faṣl [cut off from his lineage]."[25] Indeed, the maintenance of strong kinship ties is a central value in Palestinian and other Arab

[24] Besnier, pp. 162-163.
[25] Ḥabībī, p. 17.

societies, and breaking ties with family or failing to properly foster the ties of kinship is not only detrimental to one's status in society, as is evident in Mas'ūd's experience, but is in fact viewed as morally reprehensible.[26] Although his unexpected reunion with his estranged relatives was a joyful occasion for Mas'ūd that instantly raised him in the esteem of his friends and neighbors, it must have also marked a significant discontinuity in his perception of himself and his family, and it marked a turning point from one loss (lack of extended familial ties) to another (physical separation from his relatives and personalized distress about the Israeli occupation of the West Bank).

In Yaḥyá Yakhlif's "Tilka al-mara'ah al-wardah [That Rose of a Woman]," the grammatically signaled pragmatic salience centers around the woman referred to in the title. The narrator begins his account with the sentence "I waited for her in the morning,"[27] in which the use of the in-focus form of the unstressed pronominal "her" places the title character at the center of the reader's attention. The fact that the pronominal "her" is unstressed suggests that the woman to which it refers maintains a recurring presence in the narrator's internal discourse, such that, in his mind, identifying her by name would be redundant. Although the reader cannot be expected to have this character already uniquely accessible in his or her short-term memory as the narrator does, the use of the in-focus form alerts the reader to the centrality of this character in the narrator's mind and compels the reader to likewise create a central space for the character in his or her mind. The act of grammatically asserting this woman's ongoing presence in

[26] Numerous verses of the Quran stress the importance of doing good to one's kin, and one verse condemns breaking ties with kin: (فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ)(محمد:22)
[Then, is it to be expected of you, if ye were put in authority, that ye will do mischief in the land, and break your ties of kith and kin?(Ali 47:22)].

[27] Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, ed. *Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992. p. 577.

the speaker's internal discourse signals that she lingers in his awareness as he engages in an ongoing attempt to satisfactorily process his memories involving her.

Based on the insights provided by Gundel et al.'s Givenness Hierarchy, it is reasonable to conclude that the narrator's insistent usage of forms falling on the high end of the Givenness Hierarchy in Ḥabībī and Yakhlif's short stories have the effect of the narrator, in his state of individual remembering, summoning forth the detailed scene of an emotionally charged personal experience that he then recreates in the psyche of his audience. The discourse deictics in these works signal the speaker's cognitive state as one in which objects and individuals from the past continue to maintain an ongoing, recurring presence in his mind, and they draw the audience into a communal psychological reenactment of a past experience that is salient in the speaker's memory. By referring to the persons and objects from his memories of the past as uniquely identifiable referents, the narrator connects his interlocutor and his readers to that past in an intimate way that creates a high level of expectation for their identification with him. In this process, the speaker, who is internally re-experiencing his past in a rite of individual remembering, conveys in detail the scene of events and the emotions he associates with them to his interlocutor. The language that the speaker uses signals that he is re-experiencing his past through the frequent use of activated forms that index the cognitive status of the narrator as he recounts his memories and reveal that their referents are at the forefront of his current center of attention; he is not simply recounting a series of events but also truly summoning them forth in his imagination. This repeated intrusion of past events into the speaker's present awareness is indicative of traumatic memory, and drawing the audience into a collective performance of psychological reenactment is the speaker's way of

working through that trauma by giving testimony to it and seeking the empathy of what Anna Green refers to as an "affective community."[28]

As Susan Slyomovics explains in her book *The Object of Memory,* "Deixis and demonstratives encompass the sociohistorical facts of 'what is now' versus 'what was once' so that issues of fragmentation—the here and now of the present—contrast with the wholeness in and of the past."[29] The process of recounting individual memories through language that impels the interlocutors to retrieve an existing representation or construct a new unique representation with the greatest specificity possible of the persons and objects mentioned is a key mechanism in transmitting individual memories of the past into the collective consciousness of a society. This process is rooted in the aforementioned need for an affective community, since it allows for members of an older generation that have personal recollections of the events of 1948 and 1967 to not simply impart their memories but also share their associated emotions with younger generations that have no firsthand experiences to maintain a feeling of connection to the times and the places that embody what preceded the feelings of loss and displacement pervading their awareness and the realities of that loss that many deal with on a daily basis.

Since demonstratives are a type of index—"a sign that identifies an object not because of any similarity or analogy with it, but because of some relationship of contiguity with that object" in the way that a weathervane identifies the direction of the wind or smoke identifies the presence of fire[30]—they thus trigger "memory trace" and a "knowledge base of experience" relevant to the situation by pointing to something

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[28] Green, p. 38.

[29] Slyomovics, Susan. *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998. p. 11.

[30] Duranti, Alessandro. *Linguistic Anthropology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. p. 207-208.

beyond themselves.[31] In the texts, examples include "dhālik al-yawm al-tammūziyy al-qā'idh [that sultry July day],"[32] in which "dhālik [that]" serves as a memory trace for the temporal setting of a significant event in the protagonist Mas'ūd's young life: his unexpected reunion with relatives he had not known existed. In "Tilka al-mar'ah al-wardah," the demonstrative "tilka [that]" marks the eponymous character referred to as "that rose of a woman" as uniquely identifiable and very readily accessible in the narrator's mind, suggesting that she is not just *any* woman but rather one for whom there is a memory trace in the narrator's mind due to her involvement in some significant experience in his life.

However, the memory trace that the speaker points to through deixis and seeks to transmit to his interlocutor is not simply a factual memory trace but rather a deeply emotional one. The affective dimension of these uses of deixis in the texts is revealed by their repetition, which suggests that the speaker is reliving traumatic moments through flashbacks or retrieving them in order to complete the process of successfully assimilating them. As Dori Laub explains, "What ultimately matters in all processes of witnessing, spasmodic and continuous, conscious and unconscious, is not simply the information, the establishment of the facts, but the experience of living through testimony, of giving testimony" so that the speaker is able to reclaim his position as witness and repossess his life story.[33]

For example, in "Tilka al-mara'ah al-wardah," the narrator shows himself to be "living through testimony" by repeatedly invoking the woman featured in his story in the

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[31] Keating, Elizabeth. "Ordinary Language Philosophy." Class discussion. Anthropology 392N: Introduction to Graduate Linguistic Anthropology. The University of Texas at Austin. 27 Jan. 2014.
[32] Ḥabībī, p. 13.
[33] Laub, Dori. "Truth and Testimony: the Process and the Struggle." *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. ed. Cathy Caruth. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. p. 70.

in-focus form, thereby placing her higher on the Givenness Hierarchy than even referring to her by name. He begins with "I waited for her in the morning,"[34] soon reiterates "I waited for her next morning,"[35] and later continues "Next morning I waited for her."[36] The narrator's use of in-focus linguistic reference in a statement that he repeats multiple times in slightly varying forms but that retains identical content suggests that he is indexing a memory trace through these utterances and transmitting it to the readers not simply for the purpose of sharing factual information but rather of imparting deep emotions. If his communication goals had been primarily factual, it would have been more effective for him to first identify the woman to his audience by her name (Intiṣār), or at least by a unique description. He also would have found no need to repeat the aforementioned utterance, since it provides no new factual information. However, its repetition does provide a great deal of insight into his affective state, hinting at his strong but in some way unresolved attachment to this woman and the state of anticipatory anxiety that he experienced in waiting for her to appear. The reader is thus led to deduce that the narrator's repetition of these statements is not a conscious attempt to impart new information but rather an involuntary, perhaps even compulsive, attempt to successfully process and assimilate the emotionally charged events involving Intiṣār by giving them a repeated verbal outlet for expression.

REFERENCE TO THE SELF AS THE OTHER

In his collection of lectures *How to Do Things with Words,* J.L. Austin notes an absence of reference in certain speech acts that creates a new, different reality without clear boundaries—a reality that is difficult to know how to understand or evaluate. This

[34] Yakhlif, Yaḥyá. "That Rose of a Woman." Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, ed. *Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, p. 577.
[35] Ibid. p. 578.
[36] Ibid., p. 580.

type of reality is one that exits from the binary of truth versus falsehood, since "reference is necessary for either truth or falsehood."[37] Austin proposes that one may consider a statement "not as a sentence (or a proposition) but as an act of speech,"[38] and a narrator who refers to himself as another is performing an act of speech that opens a discourse that exits from the binary of truth and falsehood.

Such a speech act is attested in the story "Akhīran nawwara al-lawz," in which the unnamed narrator receives an unexpected visit from an estranged childhood friend, referred to only as "ustādh M. [Professor M.]," who seeks his former friends' help in remembering a love story from their youth, prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. One of the most salient and curious points in this story is Professor M.'s discourse on a "friend" he presents as being separate from himself. He does not admit to remembering that he himself was the protagonist of the love story; he instead asks the narrator, just as he has asked other former childhood friends, whether he recalls that in their early youth "kāna lanā sadīq, 'aḥabba fatāh min al-quds aw min bayt laḥm [we had a friend who loved a young woman from Jerusalem or from Bethlehem]."[39] None of his old friends that he has visited claimed to remember the "friend" he describes, because that "friend" referred to as a third party and not as Professor M. himself, simply does not exist.

It is the narrator who reveals to the readers that this purported "friend" to whom Professor M. refers in the third person is in fact Professor M. himself, for he confides:

"Wa lakinnanī al-ān, wa ba'd 'an zārnī al-ustādh « m », wa ḥaddathnī bi-kul mā ḥaddathnī bihi, fahamtu kull shay'. Fa-'innanī wāthiq bi-'anna al-ustādh « m » ṣādiq fī nisyānihi wa ṣādiq fī lahfatihi 'an yatadhakkar. Fa-bi-iradah bāṭiniyyah gharībah nasiya

[37] Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962. p. 50.
[38] Ibid. p. 20.
[39] Ḥabībī, p. 34.

haqqan a'annahu huwa nafsuhu ṣāḥib qiṣṣat al-ḥubb al-jamīlah, wa al-ibtisāmah illatī nawwarat ṣabānā ["But now, after Professor M. visited me, and told me all that he told me, I understood everything. I am certain that Professor M. was sincere in his forgetfulness and sincere in his yearning to remember. For through some strange inner desire, he truly forgot that he himself was the protagonist of the beautiful love story and the smile that illuminated our youth]."[40]

Hence, the scene in which Professor M. initiates a discourse void of reference by evoking the love story of his youth in the third person, attributing it to a non-existent friend rather than to himself, demonstrates the tendency of performance to create a reality that is neither a question that can be answered nor one that seeks an answer. Professor M.'s referring to himself as another is likely indicative of trauma, because it points to the possibility that he had repressed his memories, or that he had never fully assimilated the experience into his consciousness in the first place; a recollection is triggered through shock, but he nevertheless remains unable to internalize the experience as his own. The narrator attests this possibility in the expression of his certainty that Professor M. was "sincere in his forgetfulness."

The text provides ample evidence that Professor M.'s experience was traumatic, because he sought out former friends with whom he had fallen out of contact over 20 years prior to discuss a matter from his past that did not appear to have any relevance to his daily life or present a pressing concern to anyone but himself. The narrator reveals that Professor M.'s relationship with him had turned cold in their youth as this once intimate friend began to shun him as he would a stranger: "Wa mundhu 'an qāmat isrā'īl, inqaṭa'at ṣillati bihi tamāman. Wa hattá al-marḥabā akhadha yataḥashshāhā hīna naltaqī 'arḍan fī al-ṭarīq [And since Israel came into existence, my link to him was severed completely. And he even began to avoid saying hello when we would meet by chance in

[40] Ibid. pp. 38-39.

the street]."[41] Professor M.'s own remarks suggest that his avoidance of the narrator after the establishment of the state of Israel was not an isolated incident but rather part of a wider pattern of abandoning his childhood friendships in the wake of the events of 1948, for confides in the narrator regarding the childhood friends he visited previously, "Kuntu fil-māḍī tawahhamtu 'annahum nasūnī, wa istaḥaw bī, wa 'annahum qaṭa'ūnā min shajarat ḥayātihim kamā yuqlam al-far' al-jāff li-tanmū al-shajarah wa tūriq [I had in the past deluded myself that they had forgotten me, and were ashamed of me, and that they cut us off from the tree of their life as a dry branch is clipped so that the tree may grow and sprout leaves]."[42] His decision to seek out those former friends from whom he had become alienated and make himself vulnerable to being rebuffed by them could only be viewed as a manifestation of some intense, urgent need to come to terms with past traumas.

Perhaps Professor M. subconsciously frames the discussion of his former self in the third person in order to prevent the narrator from attempting to make a link between the past and the present and instead be compelled to remain in the past timeframe, just as Professor M. finds himself psychologically inhabiting the past. If Professor M. had broached the discussion of his former love in the first person, the narrator might have, for instance, questioned the relevance of discussing an old love story from the past, since Professor M. had long since become married to a different woman. By evoking an absent, non-existent friend and thus suspending truth conditions, Professor M. makes it impossible for the discussion to leap between the past and the present, hinting at a subconscious desire to hedge off any possible responses that might interfere with remembrance for the pure sake of reminiscing and reliving the sweet and tender moments

[41] Ibid. , p. 26.
[42] Ibid., p. 32.

of the past. Professor M.'s unusual use of language in this scene thus reminds us that the present does not invalidate or subsume the past, nor can it serve as a substitute for the past.

Professor M.'s inability to speak of himself as the one in love also indicates that he might be suffering from a form of Freudian melancholia. In melancholy, as contrasted with ordinary mourning, "there is a loss of a more ideal kind."[43] Professor M.'s experience of the loss of a love from his youth is contiguous with the primary example offered by Freud: "The object has not perhaps actually died, but has been lost as an object of love."[44] Melancholic loss is characterized by ambivalence, since the individual experiencing it "knows whom he has lost but not what he has lost" in that person.[45] Freud adds that "melancholia is in some way related to an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing about the loss that is unconscious."[46] For this reason, melancholic loss is an unspeakable loss, one which the subject is unable to properly mourn. As Moneera al-Ghadeer explains, "the subject fails to recognize the loss and continues [his or] her attachment to the absent object."[47]

Professor M.'s continued attachment to his absent object of love is evident in his unrelenting search for her, first in the memories that he hopes his childhood friends will be able and willing to share with him and, after they fail to fulfill that hope of his, in a

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[43] Strachey, J. (1917). Mourning and Melancholia. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works,* p. 244.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Al-Ghadeer, Moneera. *Desert Voices: Bedouin Women's Poetry in Saudi Arabia.* London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2009. p. 44.

real, face-to-face encounter with her, which the narrator later learns of and describes as follows:

> "Wa ba‘d ḥarb ḥazīrān, ḥīna zurtu al-sayyidah al-karīmah, al-wafiyyah, fī al-quds aw fī bayt laḥm, hunāk, fī ḥadd ta‘bīr al-ustādh « m », wa ’aratnī ghuṣn al-lawz al-jāff, illatī la tazāl taḥtafidh bihi, wa yakād yashta‘il bil-aḥmar wa bil-abyaḍ ḥīna tasta‘īd qissatahu, wa akhbaratnī annahu zāraha ma‘a ‘adad min zumalā’ihi al-mu‘allimīn, wa kāna ṭūl al-waqt kathīr al-kalām wa shadīd al-ḥubūr [And after the Six-Day War, when I visited the distinguished, faithful lady, in Jerusalem or in Bethlehem, there, in the exact words of Professor M., and she showed me the dry almond tree branch, which she still keeps with her, and which almost catches fire with red and white when she recalls its story, and she informed me that he visited her with a number of his fellow teachers, and he was the whole time highly talkative and exceedingly joyful]."[48]

The melancholic aspect of Professor M.'s attachment to the lost love of his youth is apparent not only in his ongoing attachment to it but also, very significantly, in the extent to which the details surrounding that loss are withdrawn from his consciousness. For even though Professor M. reencounters "the distinguished, faithful lady" that the narrator implies is the woman who was once the love of Professor M.'s youth, and the reader is given no reason to believe that Professor M. was led to visit her other than through the combination of his own repeatedly expressed desire to remember her and some lingering subconscious memory that allowed him to find her, Professor M. does not consciously remember her as his object of loss. Whereas Professor M. himself had recounted to the narrator his newly resurfaced recollection of the day they and their friends met a young woman at the ascent to Al-Lubban who took one half of an almond tree branch and left the other half with the young man among them who promised to meet her there again the following spring and ask for her hand in marriage (and whom the narrator and reader later understand to be Professor M. himself), Professor M. remains, to the narrator's astonishment, unable to admit to himself the nature of her identity:

[48] Ḥabībī, p. 38.

> "[…] ʻadkhalatʹhum ilá maktabatihā liyaraw majmūʻat al-kutub wa al-tuḥaf illatī jamaʻatʹha, wa […] lāḥadha ghuṣn al-lawz al-jāff, fasaʻalahā mā huwa, faʾakhbaratʹhu ʾanna al-lawz yunawwir fī al-shubbāṭ, fa-intaqala yuḥaddithuhā ʻan al-mishmish wa ʻan al-jumʻah al-mishmishiyyah, dahishtu li-hadha al-amr ashadd dahshah [(…) She brought them into her library to see her collection of books and works of art, and (…) he noticed the dry almond branch. He asked her what it was, and she informed him that the almond tree blossoms in February, and he proceeded to tell her about apricots and the apricot-colored Friday. That fact left me intensely astonished.]"[49]

In Yaḥyá Yakhlif's "Tilka al-maraʾah al-wardah" too, the narrator at times describes his own lived experiences in the third person, referring to himself in a strikingly disembodied way as "the young boy wearing my clothes"[50] as he recalls walking side by side with Intiṣār, "that rose of a woman"[51] whom he evokes in a stream of disparate but interlinked memories that surface in his narrative, which resembles a series of flashbacks in its resistance to adhering to a linear progression of time. He then resumes his narrative, this time from a socioeconomic perspective in which he situates himself within a daily reality characterized by physical and material deficiency:

> "I was that young boy walking from the tin shacks to town every day, while the hot sun penetrated my head. I was the boy who stayed in bed for a long time each year due to malnutrition and anemia. I was that small unripe boy who wore open sandals summer and winter and never went out to the swings on holidays because his clothes were always patched. I was the boy who stood with the bowed head in the line up of poor students, who had to wait his turn to drink a glass of milk during the morning break. I was that child, tearful, unripe, with bowed head, who did not like the cod liver capsules given free at Dr. Dahmash's clinic, who sold newspapers at the Mowahhad Garage or boiled corn cobs at the doors of the cinema."[52]

When the narrator again resumes a narration involving Intisar, he again speaks of himself fully in the third person: "After that luncheon the little boy walked side by side with that

[49] Ibid.
[50] Yakhlif in Jayyusi, p. 578.
[51] Ibid., p. 578.
[52] Yakhlif in Jayyusi, p. 578.

rose of a woman up to the end of the street where the roads crossed. And at night the anemone flowers awakened in his heart and birds sprang out of his chest."[53]

This narration that wavers between first person and third person creates distance between the narrator as he once was and the individual he is now. Even as he repeatedly makes explicit the relationship between himself and the "young boy" he had previously evoked, his very act of equating an unspecified, generalized self that he identifies by use of the first-person pronoun with a former self that must be qualified reinforces the discontinuity between his current and former selves. After all, even if he describes his generalized self and the former self central to his narration as being in relation with one another, his need to make explicit their equivalence by presenting them as distinct elements on opposite sides of an equation is indicative of an underlying assumption of their dissimilarity at first glance.

This splitting of the ego into the "I" and "the other" seems to be an example of the "collapse of witnessing" that inhabits all traumatic experience, i.e. what Cathy Caruth describes as "the inability fully to witness the event as it occurs, or the ability to witness the event fully only at the cost of witnessing oneself."[54] It also hints at a dissociative reaction to a traumatic event, in which trauma survivors are psychologically removed

[53] Ibid., p. 580.
[54] Caruth, Cathy. "Trauma and Experience: Introduction." *Trauma: Explorations in Memory.* ed. Cathy Caruth. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. p. 7.

from the scene and "look at it from a distance or disappear altogether, leaving other parts of their personality to suffer and store the overwhelming experience."[55]

In conclusion, linguistic reference is linked to trauma and collective memory in its ability to provide insights into the cognitive state of the speaker. The grammatical reinforcement of the specificity of events, people, and objects through discourse deixis, which indexes the salience of references present in an ongoing discourse, draws the audience into communal psychological reenactment of a past experience salient in the speaker's memory, and reference to the self as other is suggestive of Freudian melancholy and a traumatic collapse of witnessing.

[55] Van Der Kolk, Bessel A. and Onno Van Der Hart. "The Intrusive Past: the Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma." *Trauma: Explorations in Memory.* ed. Cathy Caruth. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. p. 168.

Chapter 3: Personalization and Immediacy of Emotion

One of the important aspects of the construction of Palestinian collective memory is that it is not simply a communal repository of collectively shared information. Palestinian collective memory, just like other collective memories, rests on a shared remembrance and reenactment of emotional events, not simply factual or historical events. Hence the power of story to transmit narrations of individual experiences into the collective memory, which is perhaps best captured in the words of Walter Benjamin:

> "It is not the object of the story to convey a happening *per se,* which is the purpose of information; rather, it embeds it in the life of the storyteller in order to pass it on as experience to those listening. It thus bears the marks of the storyteller much as the earthen vessel bears the marks of the potter's hand."[56]

One of the means by which emotional remembrance and reenactment take place is through the personalization and immediacy of emotion in language. Catherine Lutz presents a list of syntactic forms characterized by varying degrees of personalization and immediacy that model the "variety of ways emotions, even as they are discussed, can be distanced from the self."[57] Lutz describes four speech patterns that index a speaker's level of personalization, i.e. "a nondistancing discursive strategy," when discussing their emotions.[58] First, the use of the present tense rather than the past or conditional tense is a personalizing strategy since it "can move the emotion experience […] closer to the self or another in time" and can also "generalize or particularize the experience," potentially implying "that the emotion is habitually experienced by the subject."[59] Second, Lutz suggests that "the use of syntactic patterns that more directly portray the speaker as the

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[56] Benjamin, Walter. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire." *Illuminations.* Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968., p. 161.
[57] Lutz, Catherine. *Language and the Politics of Emotion.* p. 83.
[58] Ibid., p. 83.
[59] Ibid., p. 85.

experiencer of the emotion" is another element of a personalizing strategy.[60] Third, Lutz argues that personalizing statements about emotion specify, either implicitly or explicitly, the cause of the emotion through "identification of either the self or, secondarily, another person as the ultimate cause of the emotion," in contrast to "the use of syntactic patterns that obscure or fail to identify the cause."[61] Finally, Lutz identifies "a number of statements about emotion" that "are essentially denials of emotion in the self or the other;"[62] this negation of emotion is logically presumed to be indicative of a distancing discursive strategy.

The short stories of Emile Ḥabībī in *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām as-sittah* frequently employ the second personalizing strategy identified by Lutz. For example, in "Ḥīna sa'ada Mas'ūd bibn 'ammih," the syntactic patterns of the narration almost always directly portray the protagonist (or a secondary character) as the experiencer of the emotion, in roughly equal frequency as either the subject of the emotion or as its object.

Often, the narrator or another character in the story, as the experiencer of the emotion, is the subject of the sentence, and the structure of the sentences conveys his or her experience of that emotion in an obvious and direct way: with the experiencer of the emotion as subject of the sentence. The emotional experience is then expressed in one of several possible ways: (1) as a verb describing entry into an emotional state that is performed by the subject, (2) as an adjective describing the emotional state of the subject, or (3) as an adverb qualifying the emotional state of the subject as he or she performs an action.

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[60] Ibid..
[61] Ibid., p. 86.
[62] Lutz, Catherine. *Language and the Politics of Emotion.* p. 86.

For example, the first method is attested in "Ḥīna sa‘ada Mas‘ūd bibn ‘ammih" in the sentence describing Mas‘ūd's elation upon strolling through town with his cousin for the first time as his peers watch on with surprise and intrigue: "Wa ’aḥassa ’annahu yurīd ’an yuwazzi‘ al-ārtīk ‘alá al-jamī‘, wa law laḥsah laḥsah [And he felt that he wanted to share the popsicle with everyone, even if he had to do so one lick at a time]."[63] In this sentence, the character Mas‘ūd is the subject performing an intransitive verb that describes his entry into an emotional state of desiring to perform another action that is reflective of his joyful excitement, new feeling of belonging within his peer group, and heightened self-confidence. The second method is evidenced later in the story as Mas‘ūd reflects with his sister on the excitement of that day and the possibilities it seems to have opened for them: "Kāna mithlahā mutaḥammisan [He was, like her, enthusiastic]."[64] In this sentence, Mas‘ūd is again the subject and is modified in this instance by the adjective "enthusiastic." The third method is used the sentence describing Mas‘ūd's reaction to noticing the splendid, strange car pulling up to his house that, unbeknownst to him, marks the arrival of his estranged relatives visiting from the West Bank: "Wa lākin Mas‘ūdan ḥīna rāhā taqif ’imām baytihi waqafa mashdūhan [But Mas‘ūd, when he saw it stop in front of his house, stood in bafflement]."[65] In this example, Mas‘ūd is again the subject, performing the act of stopping ("waqafa"), and the adverb "mashdūhan" denotes Mas‘ūd's bafflement as both the state in which Mas‘ūd performed the action of stopping and the reason for which he came to a standstill. In all three of these examples, Mas‘ūd is the subject of the grammatical structure and thus is implied to possess agency.

[63] Ḥabībī, p. 13.
[64] Ḥabībī, p. 21.
[65] Ibid., p. 15.

However, in this story the emotion itself is also frequently the subject, as when Mas‘ūd’s neighbor becomes jealous of the attention the usually insignificant Mas‘ūd receives when his long-lost cousin visits: “Al-ḥasad ’a‘māhu [Envy blinded him].”[66] Here, the emotion of envy [“al-ḥasad”] is the subject performing the action of blinding, and Mas‘ūd’s neighbor is the object. The emotion, rather than the individual experiencing it, is thus portrayed as having agency in this instance.

The statements about emotion in this story also frequently contain the “implicit or explicit etiology”[67] that Lutz mentioned, but rather than presenting a person as the identified cause of the emotion, it is very nearly without exception an event—or sometimes a state of affairs—that is expressed as the cause of the emotions discussed, rather than an individual. In fact, even when an individual (or his or her actions) could have been identified as a legitimate cause of the emotion, the causality in the statement is framed around the event rather than around the individual. The etiological structures inherent in these statements about emotion do not necessarily portray the characters as blameless, but they do diminish their agency in comparison to that of the impersonal forces of history. This perceived lack of human agency may be understood as a key indicator of trauma, since it is the nature of the traumatic experience to render an individual helpless and unable to protect himself or herself from the traumatic stimuli and, in that way, strip that individual of his or her sense of agency.

This method of attributing causality to an event rather than an individual is particularly noticeably attested in Ḥabībī’s short story “Akhīran nawwara al-lawz.” For example, the narrator describes the shock of Professor M.’s suddenly reemerging into his life as follows: “Wa qad fāja’anī bi-ziyyārah layliyyah dahashatnī wa ’athārat shukūkī

[66] Ibid., p. 18.
[67] Lutz, p. 85.

[And he surprised me with an evening visit that alarmed me and stirred up my doubts]."[68] In the sentence, it is the "evening visit" that is doing the alarming and the stirring up of doubts; Professor M.'s implication in doing the same is only obliquely referred to.

The narrator uses the same type of event-causal language to describe how hurt he had been when Professor M. withdrew his once intimate friendship: "Wa kānat hādhihi al-qatī'ah qad ālamatnī fī bidāyatihā [And this rift had greatly afflicted me at first]."[69] The centrality of events is evident in the choice of "hādhihi al-qatī'ah [this rift]"—rather than the character of Professor M.—as the subject to which the verb "ālamatnī [it afflicted me]" refers. He thus presents the event of "this rift" as the cause for his affliction without even invoking Professor M. at all in this sentence.

The focus on the role of events rather than of individuals creates a type of preservation of the events so that they are recorded in collective memory as lasting and fixed rather than fleeting phenomena, as well as a kind of personification that grants agency to events and emotions rather than to individuals.

[68] Ḥabībī, p. 26.
[69] Ibid.

Chapter 4: Multiplicity of Narrations and Temporalities

One of the striking features that I noticed in several of the short stories that I analyzed was the embedding of one story into another, which complicated the chronological sequence and created multiple levels of reality in each literary work. Often, they are without a clear beginning or ending, thus reflecting a temporal experience in which the past seems like the present. This temporal experience, in which the present is constructed by recollections of the past, involves grammatical forms such as tense and certain expressions that become formulaic through their repetition. This non-linear, often circular, temporality is marked by lack of chronological coherence (regardless of whether the story is narrated in chronological order) and lack of temporal clarity.

This non-linear temporality may be attributed to the emergence of what Susan Slyomovics describes as a "specific, political mode of human community emerging from twentieth-century conditions of loss, defeat, and dispersion [that] has generated a narrative mode that differs from the novel, and, for that matter, from history, in its representational practice" in which "the narrative voice that tells the tale […] presupposes that the narrator and listener know the entire story in advance" and thus the narrative "allows for different kinds of chronologies to represent the passage of time."[70] Caroline Seymour-Jorn argues that this type of circular temporality is one technique used to create a new type of narrative language whose goal is to shake up the status quo and criticize the prevailing system of relationships, concepts, and values in society. This circularity represents a specific way of constructing a narrative in that certain linguistic structures point to a multiplicity of narrations and temporalities.

[70] Slyomovics (1998), p. 28.

One of the ways in which linear temporality is disrupted is through the technique of a story inside a story: *mise-en-abîme*. For example, in the short story "Akhīran nawwara al-lawz," Professor M.'s recounting of the story of his quest for his childhood friends' help in collectively remembering a significant love story from their youth is embedded within the narrator's recounting of Professor M.'s surprising visit to him for the very purpose that Professor M. had described. The phenomenon of *mise-en-abîme* also occurs in Emile Ḥabībī's story "Al-kharazah al-zarqā' wa 'awdat Jubaynah [The Blue Charm and the Return of Jubaynah]," in which the narrator describes his experience driving a Palestinian woman to her mother's home for her first visit back to her village of origin after twenty years of living abroad, embedding within that narration a piece of Palestinian folklore about a young village woman named Jubaynah who makes a similarly long-anticipated return to her home village after two years of living in a palace with the prince who fell in love with her and married her. The two short stories – "Akhīran nawwara al-lawz" and "Al-kharazah al-zarqā' wa 'awdat Jubaynah" – differ in that, while both of them are fictional, they are composed of other stories whose realities are conceived differently within that ultimately fictional framework. Both the embedded fabula of the youthful love story and the primary fabula of the surprising visit from Professor M. in "Akhīran nawwara al-lawz" are presumed to have actually taken place from the characters' point of view, while in "Al-kharazah al-zarqā' wa 'awdat Jubaynah," the narrator acknowledges the mythical, folkloric nature of the tale of Jubaynah, which from the reader's perspective is thus a fictional reality within a fiction.

Although, from the reader's point of view, all of these elements are ultimately fictional, their assignment of varying levels of reality informs the way in which temporality is framed around them. In "Akhīran nawwara al-lawz," the embedded fabula of the love story from Professor M.'s youth is described in the preterit tense as an event

that took place in the completed past, although it continues to drive his actions and shape his interactions in the present. Yet in "Al-kharazah al-zarqā' wa 'awdat Jubaynah," parallels are drawn between the return of Jubaynah and the return of the contemporary Palestinian woman on the level of the present. The narrator even refers to his passenger as Jubaynah as she helps direct him to her mother's house: "Suddenly, she astonished me by crying out, 'Beware of the ditch to your left at the beginning of the next alley'; for there was the ditch in the very spot where Jubaynah had anticipated it."[71] "Akhīran nawwara al-lawz" and "Al-kharazah al-zarqā' wa 'awdat Jubaynah" are therefore examples of the two distinct possible relations between primary fabula and embedded fabula identified by Mieke Bal. The former is an example of a story in which the embedded fabula explains and determines the primary fabula, whereas the latter is a story in which the fabulas resemble one another—or in Bal's words, "can be paraphrased in such a way that the summaries have one or more striking elements in common."[72]

Mohammad Shaheen proposes that the story of "Al-kharazah al-zarqā' wa 'awdat Jubaynah" derives its effect from this "interaction between the real and the fictitious, and in the inevitable discrepancy between the two."[73] He notes the presence of a tension that "arises as a result of the conflict between the real and the unreal,"[74] and he perceives the narrator as exiting from that tension by "shifting the time when the action is realized to an indefinite future"[75] in his decision to postpone visiting the dried out village spring to see if it had begun to gush forth once again with the return of the contemporary Jubaynah-like figure, just as the spring of legend did in the folktale about the "original" Jubaynah.

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[71] Shaheen, p. 116.
[72] Bal, Mieke. p. 146.
[73] Shaheen, p. 118.
[74] Shaheen, p. 119.
[75] Shaheen, p. 120.

However, the division that Shaheen posits between "the real" and "the unreal" seems to be too binary and simplistic to be applied to Palestinian short stories as a whole, especially since it seems odd to speak of the "real" versus the "fictitious" when they take place within an ultimately fictional framework, and thus are all rendered to the reader as fiction in the end. Rather, it seems more fruitful to speak of layers of reality and levels of fictionality. After all, in "Al-kharazah al-zarqā' wa 'awdat Jubaynah," the story of Jubaynah is a fiction-within-a-fiction in that it is a fictional folktale embedded within a fictional short story, but it can also be construed as a fiction-within-reality, in that it is a fictional piece of folklore that actually exists within the Palestinian folkloric repertoire independently of Ḥabībī's work, and it can even possibly be construed as reality-within-fiction, in that it is a real element of Palestinian cultural heritage lodged within a piece of fiction. Each of these works thus points to fiction as the only way of conceiving reality, but the interplay of these categories significantly impacts the ways in which temporality is referenced.

It is ironic that the more something seems to be embedded in multiple levels of covert reality, the more it asserts itself into the present. This phenomenon is likely what makes the chronology unclear in some of these stories. Perhaps what is assigned to the category of "overt reality" is most often characterized by linear progression, which is trackable and measurable, and what does not conform to our empirical impulses is relegated to that of "covert reality." However, "overt reality" and "covert reality" are not necessarily in opposition with one another and can in fact be two faces of the same coin that, together, create a meaningful effect of *mise-en-abîme.*

Mieke Bal's discussion of levels of narration in *Narratology* support this idea. Bal argues that when an embedded fabula explains and determines the primary fabula, "a double, or subtly varying focalization is narrated. This, in turn, relates to the events in the

primary fabula, the slow, inevitable encroachment of the past upon the present."[76] Bal also theorizes that in such a case, "it depends on the relationship between the two which fabula will be seen as more important by the reader. It may very well be the embedded one. Often the primary fabula is hardly more than the occasion for a perceptible, character-bound narrator to narrate a story."[77]

Indeed, the "outer" stories would in fact be really quite uninteresting to the reader on their own; imagine with a shudder if we dissected these stories and were left with simply the empty narrative shell of a man driving a woman to her mother's house or another man receiving an odd visit from someone he used to know. We would still read about the bumps in the road along the narrator's drive to the house or the strange appearance of an old acquaintance at the narrator's door, but what would those events mean to us as readers? The "inner" stories provide these "outer" stories with nearly all of their fodder for dialogue and for metaphorical imagery and thus infuse them with all of their affective meaning.

In addition to the embedding of one fabula into another, reiteration and reconsolidation of narration is another feature of Palestinian short stories that results in multiple narrations and temporalities. Yaḥyá Yakhlif's story "Tilka al-maraʿah al-wardah" is incredibly striking in this aspect, and the narrative takes place in such a markedly circular temporality that even a modest attempt to firmly trace the chronology of the story quickly becomes thoroughly dizzying. The story opens as follows: "I waited for her in the morning. I was carrying good news and I sat on a stone in the street waiting anxiously."[78] The title character, who the reader later learns is named Intiṣār, appears,

[76] Bal, Mieke. "Levels of Narration." *Narratology.* p. 144.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Yakhlif in Jayyusi, 577.

greeting the narrator, who then begins to recount his memories working alongside her at the Turkish Delight factory and falling in love with her in the process. After the narrator delves into these recollections of the distant past, alternating between the pluperfect and the preterit tenses, he pulls the reader back into the immediate past, repeating, "I waited for her next morning, I was carrying good news."[79] This repetition has the effect not only of iterating the salience of that moment in which he waited impatiently to share with Intiṣār the news of his relative's impending wedding—thereby delivering an implicit invitation to her to join him there—but also of encircling with words what happened the day before—his and Intiṣār's licking spill powdered sugar off of each other's clothes, which made them "happy as naked children bathing in a pool"[80] —in order to signal its significance. He repeats this strategy once more, recounting in greater detail and expanded context:

> "When someone poured some powdered sugar onto my clothes, Intissar rushed to lick it off. That day Intissar and I licked and played. We felt real joy and we were like naked children swimming in a pool."[81]

He expands upon that story to this time to recount their leaving work that evening "without permission from the guard" and shaking hands for the first time before parting ways on the walk home before repeating, "Next morning I waited for her. I was carrying good news."[82] In contrast to the film *Groundhog Day,* in which the protagonist is caught in a time loop, awaking each morning only to find himself constrained to relive the same day—February 2, or Groundhog Day—over and over again, the narrator of "That Rose of

[79] Ibid., p. 578.
[80] Ibid..
[81] Ibid., p. 580.
[82] Ibid.

a Woman" circles back into the past not to alter his behavior and create new outcomes for the future but rather to reexamine the events of the past and re-narrate them accordingly.

The temporal progression in the story is often hazy. For example, it is unclear whether the narrator invited Intiṣār to the wedding at his home on the day after or the day of the sugar-spilling. There is also a tremendous amount of repetition in this story, throughout which the details in the narrator's recounting of his interaction with Intiṣār that morning change noticeably in each instance. The narrator mentions himself waiting in heightened anticipation for Intiṣār to appear in three discrete iterations. In the first instance, she appears and holds out her hand for him to shake before asking, "Why are you sitting here?" to which he responds "I've been waiting to tell you good news!"[83] Yet in the second two instances, he recounts that she says "What's up?" to which he responds, "There is going to be a wedding at our house."[84] In each reiteration, their dialogue is expanded, and details of their interaction are added. For instance, in the second recounting, the narrator adds that she appeared "munching an apple."[85] In the third recounting, the narrator describes how Intiṣār "overflowed with questions" about the bride and "asked me questions all the way to work."[86] He also describes his blossoming sensations of attraction and arousal multiple times, repeating three times in variable form the metaphor of birds taking flight from his chest:

> At night, anemone flowers awoke in his heart, and wild birds took off from his chest.[87] […] In that same factory overflowing with cruelty, my heart experienced for the first time the delicate flutter of a small dove's wings, opening up for the first flight.[88] […]

[83] Yakhlif in Jayussi, p. 577.
[84] Ibid., p. 579.
[85] Ibid., p. 578.
[86] Ibid., p. 581.
[87] Ibid. p. 578.
[88] Ibid., p. 579.

And at night the anemone flowers awakened in his heart and birds sprang out of his chest.[89]

These repetitions seem to represent "fragmented re-experiences" associated with traumatic memory.[90] The fact that each repetition adds new elements suggests that the narrator is engaging in a process of piecing together fragments of memories to construct a coherent whole, weaving in details that have resurfaced in his consciousness and revising his previous narrations to account for them in the process. One indication that traumatic memory plays a role in this repetition, retrieval of details, and reconstruction of fragmented experiences is that the narrator at first casts the events in a relatively cheerful and rosy light, but by the third recounting a considerable amount of conflict and complexity has crept into the story.

The disparities in the multiple recountings of the same events may be understood as reflecting the narrator's repression of the traumatic aspects of those events. According to Van der Kolk and van der Hart, "repression reflects a vertically layered model of mind: what is repressed is pushed downward, into the unconscious."[91] Perhaps such a model can thus explain the gradual emergence of the traumatic details of the story the narrator relates. Alternatively, Walter Benjamin recalls Sigmund Freud's argument that memory fragments are "often most powerful and most enduring when the incident which left them behind was one that never entered conscious," arguing that "what has not been experienced explicitly and consciously, what has not happened to the subject as an experience, can become a component of the *mémoire involontaire* [involuntary memory]."[92] Thus, the narrator's recounting of his story multiple times may serve as a form of ritual remembrance through which he seeks to transcend the limits of the

[89] Yakhlif in Jayyusi, p. 580.
[90] Van der Kolk and van der Hart. p. 164.
[91] Ibid., p. 168.
[92] Benjamin, Walter. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire." *Illuminations.* pp. 162-163.

mémoire involontaire, allowing nuanced and sensitive details to gradually and increasingly emerge as one memory trace affords him a conscious grasp of another.

In "Akhīran nawwara al-lawz" also, repression of memories seems to feature in the experience of the character of Professor M. Remembrance by shock transports the main character, Professor M., into a temporal experience in which the past seems like the present:

> "Wa sha'artu shu'ūr al-mushāhid li-'ashiā' 'ajībah taqa' imam nādhirayhi. Wa ka'annanī 'aḥyā marrah thāniyyah sinī shabābī al-māḍiyyah, fī marāti' ṣabāī, lā 'arāhā faqaṭ bal 'ahyāhā [And I felt the feelings of an onlooker to strange things falling before his eyes, as though I was living out once again the bygone years of my youth, in the pastures of my boyhood, not just seeing them but actually living them."[93]

This remembrance by shock was triggered by Professor M.'s unexpected passing through a significant place he remembered from his youth – the ascent to Al-Lubban[94] – while driving on the road from Nablus to Ramallah. He was so jolted by the experience of returning to that place that he pulled over at the last curve in the road to step out of the car and visit it at great risk to himself and his accompanying colleagues, since their permits did not allow for them to stop there:

> 'Ashrīn 'āman wa anā aḥlum bi-hādhihi al-muni'aṭifāt al-lawlabiyyah. Hādhihi al-ṭal'ah lam tughib 'an dhākiratī yawman wāḥidan. Innanī atadhakar kull muni'aṭif fīhā […] Innanī astanshiq rā'iḥah rāfiqatnī ṭūl al-'amr. Hādhā al-makān makānī! [For twenty years, I had dreamed of these spiral curves. This ascent was never absent from my memory one single day. I remember every turn in it. […] I inhale an aroma that has accompanied me all my life.[95]

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[93] Ḥabībī, p. 30.

[94] Referred to in the original text as *"tala'at al-lubban,"* I identified this stretch of land leads as the ascent to the Palestinian village of Al-Lubban Al-Sharqiyyah, located south of the city of Nablus. It has also been equated with the biblical Ascent of Lebonah, which could thus be another feasible translation, but I chose to render it in terms more closely associated with the narrating character's experience of his contemporary Palestinian landscape.

[95] Ḥabībī, p. 30.

Professor M.'s attempts to process his shock encounter with the ascent to Al-Lubban embodies Susan Slyomovic's analysis of Nawwāf Abu al-Hayjā's "notion of 'twins' to explain the phenomenon of deterritorializing ruptures in time and place that are precariously reconstructed by Palestinian exiles."[96] During the rest of his return trip, Professor M.'s colleagues try to convince him that the ascent to Al-Lubban only seems familiar to him because he has confused it with a similar landscape near his current town of residence. As Slyomovics explains, "Exiles entwine and twin disparate and separate places, forcing double reterritorializations based on coincidental geographic resemblances brought to the fore by the trauma of Palestinian relocation."[97] The irony in "Akhīran nawwara al-lawz" is that Professor M.'s colleagues are so sensitively aware of this phenomenon of twinning that they cast significant doubt upon the Palestinian exile's ability to objectively perceive reality in light of these deterritorializing ruptures, causing even Professor M. himself to suspect the accuracy of his own memories. Professor M. thus must grapple with two potentially distorting psychological effects of traumatic memory – one of repression and one of twinning – in his quest to understand what is truth and what is illusion, which is very likely why he felt the need to verify the veracity of his memories that were suddenly jarred back to the surface of his awareness with his childhood friends.

Professor M.'s experience of remembrance by shock is better understood in the insights provided by Walter Benjamin's discussion of Marcel Proust's distinction between *mémoire volontaire* [voluntary memory] and *mémoire involontaire* [involuntary memory]. Benjamin presents Proust's argument that the past is "somewhere beyond the reach of the intellect, and unmistakably present in some material object (or in the

[96] Slyomovics (1998), p. 83.
[97] Ibid., p. 83.

sensation which such an object arouses in us), though we have no idea which one it is."[98] For Proust in *A la recherche du temps perdu* [*In Search of Lost Time*], that object was the taste of crumbs of a *madeleine* (a small, shell-shaped sponge cake) soaked in tea that transported him back into the past and revealed a forgotten childhood memory of Sunday mornings spent with his aunt Léonie in the town of Combray. For Professor M., it is the blossoming almond trees during a subsequent trip through the ascent to Al-Lubban with his wife and son that trigger his *mémoire involontaire* and disperse his doubts about the significance of the place to him:

"Wa dhallat zawjatī tuliḥḥ ʻalayya bi-'an 'ūqif al-sayyārah, ḥattá naltaqiṭ aghṣān lawz ʻatīqah aʻtaqid 'annahā kānat mawjūdah aidan fī ayyāmī al-sābiqah. Fa-nazalnā wa qataʻnā arbaʻat aghṣān ibtasimat lanā wa ibtisamnā lahā. Wa ḥina sa'alatnī zawjatī: hal idhā zuriʻa ghuṣn al-lawz fī al-turāb yanmū shajarah, inqabada ṣadrī wa bada'tu atadhakkar [And my wife kept insisting for me to stop the car so that we could collect old almond branches that I think were also there during my earlier years. So we got out and cut off four branches; they smiled at us and we smiled at them. And when my wife asked me, "If an almond branch were planted in the ground, would a tree grow?" my heart skipped a beat and I began to remember].[99]

The rupturing of linear constructions of a temporal framework in these Palestinian literary narratives is indicative of trauma, because circularity and trauma are firmly associated with one another. An individual who has been subjected to trauma continuously circles back psychologically to the traumatic moment. Cathy Caruth attributes this circularity to the fact that the trauma associated with a particular event can be defined neither by the event itself nor by a distortion of the event but "consists, rather, solely in the structure of its experience or reception: the event is not assimilated or fully experienced at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it."[100]

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[98] Benjamin, p. 160.
[99] Ḥabībī, p. 34.
[100] Caruth, p. 4.

The non-linear temporality in these short stories reminds us that memory is not built upon a linear progression of time, and chronology is not what is most important in memory. The narrator of Emile Ḥabībī's short story "Ūm al-rūbābikyā [The Odds-and-Ends Woman]" explicitly aligns himself with this stance in recalling the stories his grandmother used to tell him, which were without a clear beginning or end:

> "Ka'annamā al-'amr al-ma'qūl huwa 'an takūn lil-qiṣṣah bidāyah, wa 'an takūn lahā nihāyah. Wa hal huwa al-'amr al-ma'qūl ḥaqqan? Wa ḥattá law kāna hādhā huwa al-ma'qūl? Fa-hal huwa al-ma'qūl fī bilādnā?[101] [This presupposes, of course, that it's the logical thing for a story to have a beginning and an end. But is that really the rule? And even if it is the logical thing, is it logical in this country of ours?]"[102]

In addition to thereby reinforcing the idea that stories tied to collective memory defy linear temporality, the narrator of "Ūm al-rūbābikyā" also hints that non-linear progression may be a narrative feature particular to contemporary Palestinian society in his remark, "For is that what is reasonable in our lands?"

For the characters of Ḥabībī and Yakhlif's short stories, the past often seems like the present, and it would be implausible, without the memories of the past, to construct a present. However, the circularity of language is not a trap that needs to be escaped from, but rather an attempt to properly complete the process of mourning. A part of bringing the trauma to a conclusion is testimony and recognition, and the testimony is keyed by the repetition, which is part of a reenactment of emotional events necessary for coming to terms with them.

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[101] Ḥabībī, pp. 51-52.
[102] Jayyusi, p. 459.

Chapter 5: Language of Reality as Language of Metaphor

The final scene of Yaḥyá Yakhlif's short story "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj" is rich in metaphorical language, and these metaphors, although beautiful, are also projections of loss onto landscape. In this story, a group of five Palestinian men have banded together as members of the same militant group in the struggle for Palestinian liberation. At the end of the story, each one of the characters looks toward the peak of the hill to gaze upon "ghaymah bayḍā' kabīrah tamruq musri'atan [a big white cloud hurriedly passing by],"[103] and each one in turn voices his perception of the cloud as a metaphorical representation of some object of personal significance to him.

For the young volunteer who, after being unable to find his passion in studying engineering, medicine, or literature, finally has found some great sense of purpose in nursing back to life a frostbitten wild hare that he found while stationed with his fellow militants in the wilderness, the cloud is "ghaymah bayḍā' mithl al-arānib al-barriyyah [a cloud white like the hares]."[104] Yūsuf, whose dreams of traveling to Rome are futile as a Palestinian militant who would be barred from boarding a plane, adds, "Wa 'innahā tusāfir wa lā tatawaqqaf 'an al-safar [and it travels and does not cease traveling]."[105] Abū Arwá, who yearns to travel not for the sake of adventure but out of an urgent longing to see his wife and children, who are living across the closed Syrian border in the Yarmouk refugee camp and have been separated from him for over a year, adds, "wa 'innahā sa-talḥaq fawq samā' al-mukhayyam [and it will be suspended above the sky of the camp]."[106] Finally, Sa'īd Abū Jābir, the legendary "man of snow [rajul al-thalj]" in love

[103] Yakhlif, Yaḥyá. "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj." *Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj*. Dār Ibn Rushd lil-ṭibā'ah wa al-nashr, 1977. p. 23.
[104] Ibid., p. 24.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.

with the tall, slender, freckle-faced Nūrmā, concludes, "ghaymah bayḍā' wa nāṣi'ah, mithl fustān zaffāf li-'imra'ah tawīlah wa naḥīlah, wa dhāt 'aynayn zarqāwayn, wa wijh mamlū' bil-namash [a white and clear cloud, like a wedding dress of a tall and slender woman with blue eyes and a face full of freckles]."[107]

Anne Hamilton, in her review of metaphor theory, proposes that "metaphor use may be intentional, unconscious, or a mixture of both, but in any case metaphors can be shown to play powerful roles in the construction of human reality."[108] This assertion could certainly be made in the case of the characters' use of metaphorical language in "Nūrmā … wa rajul al-thalj." Hamilton's summarization of the function of a metaphor is that "a metaphor utilizes well-understood concepts or attributes from one domain to make points or provide insights about another."[109] Hamilton provides multiple examples that embody this theorization of the metaphor, ranging from the conceptualization of an atom's structure as comparable to that of a solar system to the "conduit" metaphor that governs how people speak about the communication of thoughts and emotions to human-computer interface metaphors like the Macintosh trashcan icon. Hamilton's theorization of the metaphoric rings perfectly logical and comprehensive, and her case studies support her assertion of the nature of the metaphor. Yet the use of metaphor in the story of "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj" differs in significant ways from that described in Hamilton's analysis.

To begin to contrast the nature of the cloud-inspired metaphors that appear in "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj" with the metaphors that Hamilton references, it is necessarily to explore the basic mechanisms of metaphorical language. According to Bipin

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[107] Ibid.
[108] Hamilton, Anne. "Metaphor in Theory and Practice: the Influence of Metaphors on Expectations." *ACM Journal of Computer Documentation.* November 2000/Vol. 24, No. 4. p. 237.
[109] Ibid., p. 238.

Indurkhya's definition of a metaphor, which Hamilton invokes, "the object or event being described is called the target, and the concepts that cannot be applied conventionally are called the source."[110] In "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj," the big white cloud is the target object, and each one of the characters provides a source in his respective portion of dialogue about the cloud. Hamilton proposes that metaphors "embed relationships" between the source and the target that are "at best partial and sometimes even abstruse."[111] This partial embedding of relationships does indeed appear to be at the crux of metaphors, including the cloud-inspired metaphors in "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj," since there is necessarily a mismatch between attributes of the source and those of the target in any metaphor. Thus, "in a metaphor such as 'it is the east and Juliet is the sun,' the figure is usually taken to refer to predicates of the sun such that it is a source of light and a symbol of freshness and new beginnings, rather than to the fact that it is several million kilometers away and extremely hot."[112] Paradoxically, it is this very mismatch that is central to the communicative power of metaphors because, as Hamilton explains, it "alerts the hearer to look for parallels not immediately apparent from a direct comparison."[113] The metaphorical usages in "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj" do adhere to this principle, because the characters each look for original and not immediately apparent parallels between the white cloud and the source objects that they invoke.

The striking way in which these metaphors in "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj" differ from ordinary metaphors, including the ones that Hamilton discusses, lie in the directional emphasis in drawing those parallels. Among George Lakoff's findings on the theory of metaphor is that an essential feature of the metaphor is that it "allows us to

[110] Ibid., p. 239.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.

understand a relatively abstract or inherently unstructured subject matter in terms of a more concrete subject matter."[114] Thus, attributes of the source are ordinarily applied unconventionally onto the target in order to create a more comprehensive understanding of the *target*. Thus, when Romeo of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* proclaims, "It is the east, and Juliet is the sun," the focus of his attention is primarily on Juliet and only tangentially on the sun. Yet in "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj," metaphorical function appears to be running in reverse. The characters apply diverse attributes onto the cloud, yet it would be absurd to argue that they do so in order to better understand the nature of the cloud or its attributes. The source objects they invoke are clearly not mere mediums for the characters' performance of abstract reasoning regarding the nature of the cloud, which itself is, for them, really quite incidental as an object of contemplation. Instead, the cloud serves as a screen upon which to project those objects and individuals who linger in their memory, a medium for constructing a scene of collective testimony, and a sounding board for the collective voicing of their individual longings.

In addition to illustrating a spontaneous ritual collective remembrance and testimony that the characters simultaneously construct and participate in, the abovementioned scene from "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj" is an uncannily faithful illustration of Simon Schama's theorization of the relationship between landscape, memory, and metaphor:

> Landscapes are culture before they are nature; constructs of the imagination projected onto wood and water and rock [...] But it should also be acknowledged that once a certain idea of landscape, a myth, a vision, establishes itself in an actual place, it has a peculiar way of muddling categories, of making metaphors more real that their referents; of becoming, in fact, part of the scenery.[115]

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[114] Lakoff, G. The contemporary theory of metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.), Metaphor and Thought (2nd ed). (pp.202-251). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993., p. 244.
[115] Schama, Simon. *Landscape and Memory.* New York: A.A. Knopf, 1995. p. 61.

In "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj," the characters each project the constructs of their imagination on the "big white cloud," perceiving in a visual and palpable way their vision of the world as a part of the landscape.

However, Barbara Parmenter proposes that this relationship between the language of reality and the language of metaphor is often troublesome in that it reinforces a type of loss and allows it to monopolize and have a reductionist effect on human powers of cognition and expression: "In the act of creating a powerful language of place, we begin to speak and think in symbolic and often simplistic terms which distort essential meanings and experiences."[116] In fact, rational theorists such as Plato have even gone as far as to consider figurative language to be dangerous "because it could stir up the emotions and blind people to the truth."[117]

Parmenter's theorization of symbolism's capacity to alter meanings and experiences is supported by the writings of Raja Shehadeh, a Palestinian lawyer who grew up in a refugee family in the West Bank and describes this phenomenon in terms of his own affective experience:

> Sometimes, when I am walking in the hills […] unselfconsciously enjoying the touch of the hard land under my feet, the smell of thyme and the hills and trees around me, I find myself looking at an olive tree, and as I am looking at it, it transforms itself before my eyes into a symbol […] of our struggle, of our loss. And at that very moment I am robbed of the tree; instead there is a hollow space into which anger and pain flow.[118]

One might similarly claim that the characters in "Nūrmā…wa rajul al-thalj" are robbed of the white cloud, which for them is no longer a simple and pleasant part of the scenery but

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[116] Parmenter, p. 86.
[117] Hamilton, p. 240.
[118] Raja Shehadeh. *The Third Way: A Journal of Life in the West Bank.* pp. 86- 89.

rather an avatar of the longings that pervade their collective struggle as fellow squadron members.

The process of negotiating meaning through figurative language is a two-way process; it is not solely the writer who widens the language of reality into the language of metaphor but also the reader. Mikhail Bakhtin offers insight into this phenomenon through his essay "Discourse in the Novel" in *The Dialogic Imagination,* in which he rejects the assumption of linguistic unity in novelistic prose, instead proposing that "in the novel there is no single language; there are rather languages, linked up with each other in a purely stylistic unity."[119] Bakhtin elaborates, "Authorial language itself still remains a stylistic system of languages: large portions of this speech will take their style (directly, parodically or ironically) from the languages of others, and this stylistic system is sprinkled with others' words."[120] This is to say that speech and discourse are polyphonic—containing multiple voices, styles, references, and assumptions that are not all the speaker/author's own—and characterized by heteroglossia; they contain a mix of expressions and forms of speech appropriated from others. For Bakhtin, linguistic description is not sufficient to uncover artistic meaning in literature; stylistic analysis based in a profound understanding of the dialogue of languages and particularly "of each language's socio-ideological meaning" is the key.[121]

W. John Harker also provides insights into how the encounter of the reader with the text plays a role in creating literary meaning in his article "Reader Response and Cognition: Is There a Mind in This Class?" The reader-response theory rejected the

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[119] Bakhtin, M. M., and Michael Holquist. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981., p. 415.
[120] Ibid., pp. 415-416.
[121] Ibid.., p. 417.

concept that the text is a "static, unified, and complete receptacle of meaning,"[122] instead emphasizing the role of the reader in constructing meaning. According to this theory, "meaning is seen to result from an encounter between the reader and the text, an encounter in which meaning is not so much discovered as it is created," so that "the reader is no longer the receiver of meaning but rather the maker of meaning."[123]

Harker also discusses Louise Rosenblatt's differentiation between two types of reading that characterize the stance a reader can assume with respect to texts: efferent reading, which occurs when the reader derives information from the text in order to subsequently apply it, and aesthetic readings, which "involves the reader in something happening 'at a particular moment' as the reader's attention is focused 'on what is being personally lived through, cognitively and affectively, *during* the reading event."[124] According to Rosenblatt's reader-response theory, "it is this aesthetic reading that characterizes the reading of literature,"[125] and it is also worthy to be recognized that this type of reading is critical in constructing collective memory, because collective memory is not merely a collectively held repository of information about historical facts but rather is shared affective experience.

Susan Slyomovics also provides insight into the relationship between the reader's stance and collective memory in her assertion that much of Palestinian writing perpetuates "a poetics of the unwritten and the assumed, the unfinished, the inconclusive, and the fragmentary, which means that texts can be brought together only by their intended reader, one forever gazing with thwarted desire homeward, toward Palestine."[126]

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[122] Harker, W. John. "Reader Response and Cognition: Is There a Mind in This Class?" *Journal of Aesthetic Education.* Vol. 26, No. 3 (Autumn, 1992). p. 28.
[123] Ibid., p. 29.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Slyomovics (1998), p. 198.

In Slyomovics's view, it is not only the readers that shape the texts by bringing them together and thereby negotiating their meaning; the relationship also runs in reverse. Because it relies on well-known conventions and because its rhetorical strategies are variations on well-known tropes, Slyomovics argues, "much Palestinian writing involves readers with a common cultural identity who have been *created* by a long history of such texts."[127]

[127] Slyomovics (1998), p. 198.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

A diverse set of remarkable linguistic features that are expressive of deep affect and often symptomatic of trauma together create a "new language" in Palestinian short stories involving collective memory. This "new language" may be part of a wider impact of the post-1948 Palestinian experience; according to Susan Slyomovics, Palestinian poet and critic Jabrā Ibrahīm Jabrā "emphasizes that the Palestinian catastrophe has brought cataclysmic changes to all Arabic writing—specifically in the form of recovery of the self, a subjectivity he sees rooted in an individual's consciousness of history."[128] These remarkable linguistic features are also essential in communicating the experience of the narrator in such a way that it affects the experience of the reader, just as Walter Benjamin describes:

> "It is not the object of the story to convey a happening *per se,* which is the purpose of information; rather, it embeds it in the life of the storyteller in order to pass it on as experience to those listening. It thus bears the marks of the storyteller much as the earthen vessel bears the marks of the potter's hand."[129]

Furthermore, Richard Bauman theorizes that "all framing, […] including performance, is accomplished through the employment of culturally conventionalized metacommunication."[130] I argue that the linguistic features that I have analyzed "frame" or "key" ritual remembering. They are the marks of the storyteller embedding his affective memories into a voiced remembrance of a personal experience that, through its embodiment and internalization by the listeners or readers, becomes a collective experience.

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[128] Slyomovics (1998), p. 185.
[129] Benjamin, p. 161.
[130] Bauman, Richard. "Verbal Art as Performance." American Anthropologist. Vol. 77, No. 2 (1975). p. 295.

Within the Palestinian short stories I have analyzed, definiteness and high specificity reveal the cognitive status of the speaker as one that maintains the persons and objects to which he is referring in the center of his attention, implying that the past and all of its affective associations very much still make up the present state of his awareness. Reference to the self as other is reflective of trauma-induced repression of memories and dissociative reactions to traumatic experiences, as attested to varying degrees in "Akhīran nawwara al-lawz" and "Tilka al-mara'ah al-wardah." A multiplicity of narrations and temporalities are linguistic manifestations of attempts to psychologically process overwhelming events that fall outside of ordinary human experience and thus remain at least temporarily and/or partially unassimilable. Language that frames emotions and events rather than the individuals experiencing them as the subject of a clause describing affect reveals instances in which the speaker perceives his agency to be diminished. Metaphorical language retains not its usual purpose of shedding light on an abstract concept by linking it to attributes that it shares with a more concrete concept but rather is the result of the projection of abstractions onto concrete objects.

These linguistic features are not mere statements uttered in isolation but rather acts of speech that work in combination to allow for certain types of interactions to take place. J.L. Austin argues, "Once we realize that what we have to study is not the sentence, but the issuing of an utterance in a speech situation, there can hardly be any longer a possibility of not seeing that stating is performing an act."[131] Although Austin focuses his analysis of speech acts on performatives that accomplish certain societal tasks like making promises, bets, performing a marriage ceremony, christening a boat, etc., there are more subtle acts that can be accomplished through language as well. Elizabeth

[131] Austin, p. 138.

Keating elaborates that speech acts are "key to understanding what people are doing in an interaction,"[132] and I argue that the linguistic features that I have analyzed in Ḥabībī's and Yakhlif's short stories are speech acts that create interactions tantamount to ritual performances of remembrance, which allow for their participants to work toward completing a process of mourning that allows for healing.

For example, the final scene of Yaḥyá Yakhlif's short story "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj" presents the characters engaging in a rite of voicing their loss communally through metaphorical language. Remarkable in the men's public voicing of their thoughts about the cloud in "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj" is that not a single one of them contradicts another's vision of the cloud and its personal symbolism. Rather, each one builds upon his peers' previous remarks, signaling his implicit acceptance of the validity of the others' symbolic identification with the cloud by prefacing his contribution with the construction "wa 'innahā […] [and it is (…)]."[133] This simple linguistic form reveals that the characters do not perceive their visions and aspirations to be mutually exclusive, and it hints at their desire to closely cooperate with one another in working toward disparate but mutually supported goals. Here, the construction "wa 'innahā" may be understood as the marker of a speech act, which is hinted at by the speakers' decision to employ "wa 'innahā" rather than "wa hiyya," a construction equivalent in meaning but not in style or grammatical function. These particular utterances are "not describing what the speaker believes to be true about an independently existing reality" but rather are "an attempt to affect reality, by making it conform to the speaker's wants and expectations."[134]

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[132] Keating, Elizabeth. "Ordinary Language Philosophy." Class discussion. Anthropology 392N: Introduction to Graduate Linguistic Anthropology. The University of Texas at Austin. 27 Jan. 2014.
[133] Yakhlif (1977), p. 23.
[134] Duranti, p. 15.

Also, discourse deixis in "Ḥīna sa'ada Mas'ūd bibn 'ammih" and "Tilka al-mara'ah al-wardah" constructs speech acts that create higher demands on the reader or listener's cognitive attention to the objects, persons, or events to which the narrator refers. The speaker, by using deixis that falls high on the Givenness Hierarchy, recreates an affect-laden personal experience from his past within the psyche of his interlocutors, which is a key mechanism by which not simply factual memory but rather affective memory is transmitted to younger generations.

A significant part of bringing trauma to a conclusion is engaging in testimony and recognition, and in the stories I have analyzed, certain linguistic markers are associated with that testimony. Often, the testimony is sometimes introduced through discourse deixis, such as in the stories of *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām al-sittah* and "Tilka al-mara'ah al-wardah." At other times, it is conveyed through figurative language, such as in "Nūrmā… wa rajul al-thalj." Yet the common feature of the testimony lies in the repetition that occurs, which in combined with these linguistic markers serves to key the testimony.

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Vita

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