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CHAPTER TWO

Critical Memory: On the Balconies of Our Houses in Exile

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in the exile's life, these are no more than efforts to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever.

– Edward W. Said, (2000: 173).

In the previous chapter, I discussed the concept of "nostalgia" in terms of the cultural memory of *al-nakba* as the traumatic loss of the homeland in the past. The most affective aspect of nostalgic memory, as we have seen, is that it retrospectively makes an impact, in the transmission of its effect through "repeated re-enactments", on the subject's identification with the lost homeland.[31] Although my reading of nostalgia acknowledges the omnipresence of nostalgic re-enactments that inform the Palestinian subject's cultural and political identification with Palestine as well as the depth of his or her bereavement in exile, some important questions remain, which I will address in this chapter. A primary question emerges from my reading of postcolonial literature concerned with exile and interconnected issues of displacement and migrancy and the subject's relation to loss of place.

In this literature, the key metaphors are "travel", "movement", and "mobility". In the context of these metaphors, exile is often theorized as a concept-metaphor of deterritorialized travel that signifies a "liminal" condition of being and a romanticized "nomadic consciousness" of displacement in relation to other concepts such as cultural memory and identity. In contemporary critical theory, this metaphoric projection of exile allows it to become generally celebrated as a transgressive condition of travel across

[31] I use the term "repeated re-enactments" here in a performative sense as a process of repeated acts, through which the subject creates his or her identity. For a very useful discussion on performative effects of repeated re-enactments in terms of identity construction, see Butler (1993: 9-32).

borders beyond conventional ways of living, and as a liberating notion of movement and mobility that resists the totalizing personality of cultural thought and the fixation of cultural identity. This generic productive view of exile manifests itself in postmodern critique's emphatic claims about the multiplicity of cultural borders, historical temporalities, and hybrid identities closely aligned with nomadic experience of thought, language and "placelessness": the nomad as a desirable cultural identity, the subversiveness of the different self, the so-called "end of the subject", and fragmentation as the ontological characteristic of the postmodern self.[32] While I shall return and further discuss this metaphoric projection of exile in the next sections, it is important to note at this point that this metaphorization uneasily fits the experience of exile Palestinians live on an every-day basis. The question, then, is: how can Palestinian exile be understood as an actual political-cultural experience more specific than what is implied in generalizing impulses of metaphors of travel, movement, and mobility; namely, as a geopolitical denial of access to one's home in which the subject is not where he or she *ought* to be in the present?

In the spirit of my epigraph to this chapter, from Edward Said's book *Reflections on Exile* (2000), my question pertains, not to the humanistic and philosophically "compelling" flow of thought and the condition of enlightened existence that the exilic state of mind engenders, but to the "terrible" experiential frameworks and the political implications of the mode of travel and movement in Palestinian exile in terms of the concepts of "home" and "homeland". I see these concepts as related but without reducing one to the other. This irreducibility is particularly salient for the specificity of Palestinian loss of place. This loss must be understood not in terms of an idealized lost world, but as an imagining that takes place in the interplay between "memory" and "the everyday of exile" as subjective constructs that are constitutive of a Palestinian cultural identity. This identity manifests itself not only on the level of nostalgic longing and identification with

[32] Often following Deleuze and Guattari (1994), the amount of literature available on these notions in contemporary critical theory is massive. Among innumerable examples, see Braidotti (1994), Bhabha (1990: 291-322, 1991:61-63, 1994 and 1996:53-60), Rushdie (1981), Spivak (1988a, 1996a and 1996b: 198-222), Clifford (1988 and 1997), Aschroft (1995), and Chambers (1990 and 1994). Moreover, the terms "nomadic subject" and "nomadic consciousness" respectively signify a figuration for the kind of subject who relinquished all idea, desire or nostalgia for fixity, and an acute awareness of the nonfixity of boundaries, and the desire to go on trespassing and transgressing. At stake here is a postmodern theoretical approach that privileges "transgression", "subversion", and "nonfixity". For both terms, see Braidotti (1994: 36).

the lost homeland, but also on the level of cultural belonging to what I call "a denied home".

This interplay between memory and the everyday of exile where inter-generational loss of place is at stake constitutes the underlying problematic of my discussion in this chapter: namely, sixty years after *al-nakba*, what does it mean to be a Palestinian refugee, or so-called *stateless* subject, in exile today? I use the word "stateless" here with great hesitation, because this word signifies exclusive negation of subjectivity to the extent that it leaves unexplored the ways in which the subjects in question perceive and politically identify themselves as specifically *Palestinian* subjects. This is, however, the word that is commonly used to refer to Palestinian identity in official travel documents and identity cards issued by various countries around the world when it comes to specifying the political state from which they come. Another common phrase used in this context is "nationality unknown".

With respect to national identity and political citizenship, these are more than just words. As it is well known, he who controls the terms often also determines the debate. Both words, "stateless" and "unknown", reiterate a misleading rhetorical discourse regarding Palestinians. Overtly pronounced in various scholarly, public and institutional forums both in Europe and the US, this discourse is not simply a matter of coincidental terminology at the level of mere citation and description of the political status of the Palestinians today. Rather, implicit within this rhetorical discourse is a political enunciation that reiterates a predetermined perspective of a colonial narrative that enacts the utter negation of the existence of Palestinian people in the present. As Edward Said succinctly puts it in his book *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination, 1969-1994*, these instances of political enunciation are "thoroughly consonant with a Zionist vision since [Theodor] Herzl" (1995a: 24). This vision is represented mostly in Israel's publicly stated policies that have categorically denied, and continue to deny, both the existence of Palestine as a historical-political entity and the reality of a Palestinian people as its inhabitants (or citizens) in the present.[33]

The prominence of this colonial perspective in both European and American intellectual and public discourses, as Norman G. Finkelstein argues in his book *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, is related to what

[33] For further insights on the impact of Zionism on the Palestinian people, see also Said (1992). On the commitment of Western colonial powers (Britain, France and Italy) to Zionism see, for example, Sykes (1973: 5).

he calls "the privileging of the Holocaust narrative and memory". Invocations of the Nazi genocide, Finkelstein continues, are not only often opportunistic, but also "exploitative and used to justify the criminal policies of the Israeli state and the US support for these policies" (2001: 6). For Finkelstein, the "Holocaust industry" induces European and American public memories and political-cultural discourses to sustain the leverage of Israel's founding narrative of itself as an exclusive ethnic "Jewish state", and to silence postcolonial narratives of indigenous people, particularly those of the Palestinians.[34]

In order to avoid the mishaps of this grave negation, and to delineate an alternative vision, in this chapter I propose to explore the Palestinians' sense of themselves as subjectively determined in their experiential narratives and memories of loss of homeland and exile. Starting from the premise that Palestinian demand for recognition and return, self-determination and freedom constitute first and foremost a cultural demand of the right to tell the Palestinian narratives, provide context and understanding, give us rhetorical and moral presence with critical rather than merely negative and stereotypical values, I raise the following questions. For second and third generations of post-*nakba* Palestinians, how does the memory of loss of homeland erupt as a memory of denial of home in exile? And how does this memory affect the Palestinian subject's notions of "home" when he or she is barred from this place? In order to answer these questions, I will focus on contemporary writer Liyana Badr's collection of short stories, *A Balcony Over the Fakihani*, which was originally published in 1983 in Arabic as *Shurfa ala al-Fakahani*.[35]

Forced Departures and Narrative Imagings

A Palestinian exile herself, Badr was born in Jerusalem in 1950. Her family departed for Jordan after the 1967 Israeli military occupation of East Jerusalem, West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and then for Beirut after the massacres of *Black September* in 1970.[36] After the Palestinian exodus from Lebanon in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion in 1982,

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[34] These arguments are further developed in Finkelstein (2005). See also Novick (2001) for his seminal study on the "Holocaust industry".

[35] Unless mentioned otherwise, all quotes and references to the stories are taken from the English version of Badr's collection.

[36] *Black September* refers to the events of September 1970 when Hashemite King Hussein of Jordan moved to quell Palestinian resistance movement (PLO) after accusing them of attempting to overthrow his monarchy. The fighting resulted in heavy civilian Palestinian casualties and subsequently the PLO was expelled to Lebanon. For more information on these events, see, for example: http://www.palestinehistory.com/history/phototime/tl_1970_1.htm.

Badr lived in Damascus, Tunis, and Amman, before she was finally granted permission and allowed to return to Ramallah in the West Bank in 1994.

The three short stories in Badr's collection acquaint their readers with Palestinian exile as a subjective condition in which there are no homecomings, but only a series of forced departures and denials of access to home. Entitled respectively "A Land of Rock and Thyme", "A Balcony Over the Fakihani", and "The Canary and the Sea", the stories interweave the narratives of two women, Yusra and Su'ad, and one man, Abu Hussain, recounting their successive uprooting: 1948 from Palestine, 1970 from Jordan, and 1982 from Lebanon.

Set during the Lebanese civil war (1975-76) and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the three stories poignantly record the brutal reality of war in the daily lives of ordinary people determined to survive overwhelming conditions of loss of homeland and exile. The name "The Fakihani" in the title of Badr's collection symbolizes a predominantly Palestinian suburb in Beirut. This is the name that is used to describe the presence of the Palestinian resistance movement (PLO) in Lebanon and the state of affairs at that time as "a state within a state". In this context, the PLO controlled areas in Lebanon were often referred to in Arabic as *Dawlat al-Fakihani* (the state of Fakihani). Both the civil war and the Israeli invasion pushed Lebanon into a vicious sectarian conflict of Christians against Muslims, and they also inflicted further dispersal on exiled Palestinians who resided there, and still do, as "refugees" after the establishment of Israel in 1948. This war was concluded by the departure of the PLO from Beirut during the Israeli siege of the city in which Palestinians were given a safe passage into the sea to their new exile in Tunisia.[37]

In the first short story, "A Land of Rock and Thyme", the young girl Yusra narrates her repeated flights from one refugee camp to another, and from "crowded museums" (17) taken as temporary shelters, where empty ammunition boxes become doors, to deserted houses that "have no doors, no windows, no floors and no sanitation" (4). In the second story, "A Balcony Over the Fakihani", Su'ad is constantly forced to move – from Amman, to Beirut, to Damascus – before she finally settles in "the Fakihani", soon to discover, however, that this dwelling is as precarious and as transient as all the others. This is precisely what Abu Hussain al-Shuwaiki, the narrator of the third story, "The Canary and the Sea", comes to realize as well at the end of his narrative.

[37] For a thorough historical analysis of these events, see Khalidi (1985 and 2006).

During *al-nakba*, as a child Abu Hussain is forced out of Palestine for Lebanon, only to return back later once as a visitor and once as a prisoner of war. After he is exchanged for an Israeli soldier, and then, compounding the ordeal of exile once back in Lebanon, Abu Hussain is finally expelled to Tunisia.

To give my reader a taste of the experience of displacement as imaged in these stories, let me start with a fragment from Abu Hussain's story in "The Canary and the Sea" that describes both the uprooting that Palestinians undergo in their ongoing exile:

> On the twenty-third day, they brought us blue overalls, boots, socks and underclothes and told us to get dressed. I was sure we were leaving here for prison […] About fifty of us stood in line till the Red Cross bus arrived, when we were called out by name […] they gave us our personal belongings […] I put on my watch, which was marked with my own blood. It had stopped at the very moment I was hit. The bus moved off, and I saw the land and orchards and trees and sky of Palestine, its cotton fields and the grapes in its vineyards – our country which we're forbidden even to approach […] By the sides of the road we saw abandoned Arab houses with the names of their owners still on the doors. I wept, not alone, but with all the prisoners returning with me on the bus. I hadn't wept since I was wounded, but I wept now. There was the country that was beyond my reach, and there was the sea – the sea shimmering and gleaming behind the roofs of Shuwaika, the village which I was even now leaving behind me! It had nothing to say to us, as if it had no understanding of the secret of our tears. We reached Tyre, where I got in touch with my relations. The day I arrived was the very day on which they'd told my wife of my death in the battle; I had already been officially announced, but they'd hidden the news from her because she was a nursing mother and they were afraid of the effects on my baby daughter. Three days later I was on the sea, in the last ship of fighters leaving Beirut. But I didn't talk with the sea. Now I understand the secret of my tears. (124-25)

Abu Hussain's words accentuate the fact that the experience of Palestinian exile implies a forced travel and movement across multiple symbolic and physical spaces. Since he is a Palestinian in exile, Abu Hussain's narrative is framed by an involuntary removal from one place, and time, to another. This constant flux or dispersion is both individual and collective. Accordingly, Abu Hussain does not travel on the bus alone, but with fifty other prisoners; all of who weep with him: "I wept, not alone, but with all the prisoners".

Moreover, for Abu Hussain, exile is both a condition of separation and constant undesired movement so much as of estrangement. In exile, Abu Hussain is estranged not only because he is deported out his country but also because he is denied access to it: "our country which we're forbidden even to approach". This denial of access represents the moment in which Palestine, functioning as a constructed articulation of subjectivity, enters the narrative space and receives its voice as a great loss of direction and of expulsion from what "being at home" means. It is precisely the depth of such a moment

of separation, disorientation and denial that manifests Abu Hussain's effective deportation in exile. This is an exile from himself as he could have been, but is not allowed to be, both in time and space.

For Abu Hussain, being in an Israeli prison under military occupation is not the "real" imprisonment. Instead, being expelled and denied access to return to his home is the moment of entering *the* prison: "I was sure we were leaving here for prison". Thus, to be denied access to home, one's source of security and belonging, becomes an end station where time simply stops. This is given concrete form when he says, "my watch […] stopped […]", a final point that is equal to finding oneself in a prison. For Abu Hussain, the experience of imprisonment and denial (being restricted and confined in exile) brings estrangement, even destruction. This estrangement is figured in the passage through the personified landscape, village and sea. These two places no longer allow for a mutual dialogue and understanding with the exiled subject: "There was the country that was beyond my reach […] It had nothing to say […]". After his expulsion from Palestine, Abu Hussain's only destination is nowhere but an uncompassionate, "shimmering" and "gleaming", sea. Neither the village nor the sea understands the meaning of his tears for what was lost. Nor are they available for dialogue. Again, the story gives concrete form to this experience. The day Abu Hussain is put in the sea of exile is "the very day" he is "officially announced" dead, a moment at which he finally "understands the secret" of his own tears. Hence, this psychic death also offers epistemic insight.

With these words, Abu Hussain narrates his uprooting from his home village in Palestine at the end of Badr's collection of short stories. I started my analysis of the short stories in this chapter with the ending of Abu Hussain's narrative in exile as well as the ending of Badr's collection as a whole, because it is an ending that bears witness to a historical moment of loss of homeland that is etched in a present moment of a denial of home. At stake is a narrative, the narrative of a memory of subjective loss of place through different narrative strategies of displacement, repetition, and re-substitution. The fictional nature of this narrative, however, does not take away from the truth of what is being presented. Instead, it makes concrete experiences, gives them visual shape and form – it "images" these. The narrativity of the stories allows for the literalizations to perform these images. Within the fiction, the watch "really" stops; the death is "really" announced. Hence, the narrative produces these imagings by means of what cannot be dismissed as metaphors (the watch stopping, the death announced). These images are, in fact, the opposite of metaphors; they are literalizations of abstractions. This is the primary

means through which narrative fiction is able to offer epistemic insights otherwise inaccessible.

Narratolgically, these strategies are highly significant. They point out to how the temporality of memorization and narrative in Palestinian exile is anti-linear in its most basic form. The connection of the story's ending in the present and the reader's memory of the pastness of the beginning of that story is inherently a connection between the way the subject reads a certain narrative and the cultural and political environment of which he or she is a part. This is why I began my analysis with the ending of the collection. Badr's collection is a tour de force to give literary and imaginative figuration to the everyday victimization of the Palestinian people and their denial by the state of Israel of their homes in Palestine. The key to this experience is *ghurba* (estrangement).

Ghurba: Beyond Metaphorization of Palestinian Exile

The multiple departures of the main characters in *A Balcony Over the Fakihani* are violent uprootings that imply a state of radical disconnection between the subject and his or her home. The term Palestinians employ to describe such a disconnection is *ghurba*. In Arabic, this word literally means "estrangement" and it is derived from the same verbal roots as the word *ghareeb*: both as a noun: strange, and as an adjective: strange or estranged. And yet in Palestinian cultural discourse, *ghurba* suggests something quite specific.

Significantly, in Palestinian dialect, *ghurba* is synonymous with the word "exile", and as a concept it signifies issues such as dislocation and expulsion from one's home, family and community. A pertinent example of this specific use of *ghurba* can be seen in the ways Palestinian writers and intellectuals frequently deploy this term in order to denote notions of uprooting, cold, winter, and suffering to the desperate situation of Palestinians in exile.[38] *Ghurba*, thus, is a suggestive term for *al-nakba* as an experiential category precisely because it refers to the experience of displacement *of* and *from* home. And it does this not only in terms of a different mode of being, a temporal and an existential circumstance, but also as a spatial geopolitical process of forced removal in which the Palestinian subject, to borrow Edward Said's terminology, is continually put

[38] On this use of the meaning of *ghurba*, see the works of Said (1984, 1986a, 1986b: 29-37 and 1995a), Turki (1974a, 1974b: 3-17 and 1988), and Shehadeh (2002).

"out of place" in the present.[39] This violent condition does not only lead to a loss of the homeland, but also to a breaking up, an undesired detachment that is permanent in some cases, of one's family and community. The geopolitical significations of *ghurba*, then, stress both the experiential and the material dimensions of the condition of estrangement and enclosure of exile, both temporally and spatially yet without subsuming one to the other. This equality of the different elements lies at the heart of Palestinian exile. These elements, I argue below, cannot be covered – in fact, covered up – by the up-beat metaphors of travel.

I have rehearsed the etymological significations of the Palestinian use of *ghurba*, not to assert some form of etymological determinism, but to provide a specific rhetorical and cultural context within which narratives of Palestinian loss of homeland and estrangement of exile can be read both cognitively and discursively. Before I embark on such a reading of Badr's three short stories, let me return and briefly unpack the theoretical parameters of the act of metaphorizing exile in critical theory in terms of travel and displacement as well as the problematics of using this metaphoric projection in the Palestinian context.

In her article, "Comparative Identities: Exile in the Writing of Franz Fanon and W.E.B. Du Bois", Anita Haya Goldman succinctly summarizes the issue at hand:

> In current literary discussion, there has been a rather misleading tendency to use the term metaphorically, so that the experience of exile has come to mean, more broadly, the experience of difference and estrangement in society, and most broadly, an aspect of what is human in all of us. (1995: 180)

Thus, the act of taking exile as a metaphor works to generalize it, such that the experience becomes a trope for the staging of humanity itself. Moreover, the metaphorization of exile, through difference and estrangement, leads to a misleading assumption in which "we all become exiled subjects". Exile, so to speak, becomes *exiled* from its spatio-temporal referentiality: the experience itself comes to represent not a discontinuous state of being displaced from a specific place and time, but as a general condition of displacement in itself.

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[39] I use the term "out of place" here in reference to Said's memoir with the same title. The recurring idea that Said expresses in *Out of Place* is feeling, wherever he was and for much of his life, *not quite right in place*, both because of his being a displaced Palestinian and because of the protean nature of his identity and individual talents that were to exfoliate into the multiplicity of persona he was: the global public intellectual, the (formalist) literary critic, the musician, the ardent political polemicist, the Columbia professor, the humanist, the Arab, the American, and the exiled Palestinian. According to Said, this "cluster of flowing currents" is what makes up his identity and extols its virtues as opposed to the advantages of a rigidly defined self. (1999: 295).

Through the dropping of place as a reference of exile, the exiled subject (or the referent) becomes merely configured as a figure of speech whose travelling lacks both a cultural and historical specificity.

This lack of specificity of the meaning of cultural phenomena perilously contradicts what Edward Said theorized in his essay "Traveling Theory". After all, as Said claimed, "like people and schools of criticism, ideas and theories travel – from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another". But Said also warned only too ominously: "Having said that, however, one should go on to specify the kinds of movement that are possible, in order to ask whether by virtue of having moved from one place and time to another an idea or a theory gains or loses in strength, and whether a theory in one historical period and national culture becomes altogether different for another period or situation" (1983: 226).

Indeed, such a lack of specificity, as Peter Hallward illustrates in his critique of postcolonial theory in *Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing between the Singular and the Specific*, highlights the charge of "insufficient political specificity", which has become the most cutting accusation in the field of postcolonial studies and practices of criticism (2001: 22).[40] According to Hallward, much of postcolonial theory can be read through "the interest postcolonial criticism maintains in locating cultural performance and political agency in terms that emphasize their contingency, ambivalence and displacement" (22). At stake, as Hallward puts it, is a theoretical commitment "to an explicitly *deterritorialising* discourse in something close to the Deleuzian sense – a discourse so fragmented, so hybrid, as to deny its constituent elements any substantial specificity at all" (22).[41]

What is problematic about this deterritorialising (or nomadic) discourse is not only the fact that the specificity of histories of displacement are erased under the signs of difference, estrangement and migrancy, but also the dubious conflation between literal and metaphorical aspects of travel and movement. An insightful critique of this conflation can be found in Carin Kaplan's book *Questions of Travel*. In her

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[40] For more insights on the charge of "insufficient political specificity", see Balibar and Wallerstein (1991), Balibar (1995: 403-12), and Loomba (1998).

[41] Drawing on the philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Alain Badiou, Hallward's study rejects the established terms of engagement of *deterritorialising* discourse; what he dismisses as "postmodern jargon". The crucial argument Hallward puts forward in this context is that the postcolonial, contrary to its usual characterization in terms of plurality, particularity and resistance, is best understood as an ultimately singular or non-relational category: a singularity is something that generates the medium of its own existence, to the eventual exclusion of other existences. See Hallward, (2001: 20-62; also 2006 and 2008).

deconstruction of the subject position of the poststructuralist theorist and cultural critic who uses metaphors of travel, movement and mobility, Kaplan drags out the destructive and imperialist heritage of colonial travel in critical theories that are supposedly emancipatory. For Kaplan, "postmodern [theories] operate through a contradictory, discontinuous, and uneven process of connection with modernity". At the heart of this process, postmodernism metaphorizes travel, through translating the literal into the metaphoric, within "pre-postmodernist" fields of power (1996: 23).

With respect to exile, Kaplan's discussion focuses on the prevalent figure of the author who gains the prerequisite of distance and detachment for cultural production through exile. Her analysis of the exilic aesthetic reveals that it dislocates the historical and the material conditions of Western imperialism and constitutes an imperialist nostalgia through which the aestheticization of exile ends up creating an opposition between the high cultural displacement of exile (art) and the low cultural displacement of tourism (commerce). Whereas tourism and its counterpart, forced displacement and exile, are postmodern phenomena, the figure of the traveler, Kaplan notes, is generally regarded as a typically modern subject: a subject who is nostalgically yearning for the other and relentlessly attempting to locate it in another territory (1996: 47). In this sense, travel, for Kaplan, is an existential activity and discursive formation, but it is also a metaphor for reading postmodernism.[42] What is at issue in these postmodern articulations, as Kaplan argues, is a dangerous "mythologized narrativization of displacement" that does not "question the cultural, political, and economic grounds of […] privileges, means and limitations" (2). Thus, through the conflation between the literal and the metaphorical aspects of travel in nomadic discourses, exile does not refer to material and actual experiences of being displaced from home, but becomes a way of thinking without a home.

[42] Indeed, throughout her book, Kaplan dutifully critiques the teleological and ideological comfort with which postmodernism supposedly supplies us through its famous notions of indeterminacy, polysemy, and the endless play of signifiers. However, Kaplan's discussion more than often seems to sort through terminology rather than focus on the way critical practices of individual theorists are differently produced. For example, she is perfectly right to insist that whereas modernists were certain about what counted as center and margin, postmodernists are aware that the gaze itself (as well as the discursive regimes that produce centers and peripheries) is the product of Western metanarratives. Yet Edward Said, for example, deals very differently with that gaze and its effects than other travelling theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Salman Rushdie; both tend to impose an idealist reduction of the socio-cultural to the semiotics and to exaggerate the heuristic value of the language metaphor. For excellent critiques of Bhabha's and Rushdie's postcolonial thought, see Lazarus (1999), and Parry (1987: 27-58).

Within this mode of thinking, the political-cultural phenomenon of exile has acquired a theoretical quality; something far removed from being a literal travel that contains violence and loss (of place), into travel that descends into metaphysical idealism often unleashed around predominantly nomadic realms and peripatetic institutional fashions. In his seminal critique of "cosmo-theory", Timothy Brennan exposes the mishaps of such a theorization. According to Brennan, cultural theory often bestows a positive inflection on diasporic and migratory experiences, yet without remarking on the coercive aspects of these experiences that resist theorization; especially the fact that people often do not want to be diasporic (2002: 657-89).[43] In this framework, narratives of exile, as Sophia A. McClennen notes in her book *The Dialectics of Exile*, lost their reference to "a painful state of being and were empty of history and an association to material reality" (2004: 1). This neglect of the literal (and violent) aspects of exile is at the core of academic disciplines such as cultural studies, identity and border studies so that "exiles had been appropriated by the theory" and stripped of their tragic and above all political edge (2004: ix).

Following these critiques of the act of metaphorizing exile, I argue that Palestinian exile cannot be treated merely as metaphorical; otherwise one falls into the gullible argument that every intellectual is always already what Edward Said calls a "metaphorical exile" (1994a: 53).[44] Rather, it is the other way around: everyday experience of exile offers a test case to both exile's metaphors and the subject's sense of estrangement. This conceptualization, as I will attempt to show below, is momentous for the understanding of Palestinian exile epistemologically, not as a condition of ultimate travel, movement and mobility, but as a subjective trajectory of *forced* travel that is

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[43] On this argument, see also Brennan (1997).

[44] To be sure, Said uses the notion of "metaphorical exile" as opposed to actual exile to characterize the role of the intellectual as an outsider, the nay-sayer at odds with his or her society who "speaks truth to power": "Exile for the intellectual in this metaphysical sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others" (1994a: 53). One of Said's examples is Theodor Adorno whose exile in the US was actual and who had been in metaphysical exile in his native country Germany. Indeed, Said recognizes the literary potential of "metaphorical exile"; for him, writing becomes one's true home. This is not to say at all, however, that Said was not aware of the pathos of exile and its physical predicament. On the contrary, his is a contrapuntal awareness of the agonies and ecstasies of this mode of existence that many of us in today's world are acquainted with. As he argues, in response to romanticized notions of exile, to think of exile as beneficial, as a spur to humanism or to creativity, is simply to belittle its mutilations, for exiles are cut offs from their roots, their land and their past. (1994a: 47-65). For additional studies that address the literary potential of exile, see Seidel (1986), and Gurr (1981).

always predicated upon immobility, enclosure, and a lack of freedom to move under the threat of either imprisonment or deportation and expulsion.

In order to unpack the implications of the suspension of this trope in Palestinian exile, I will now turn to Badr's collection of short stories as narratives of *ghurba*. I read Palestinian exile as imaged in these narratives as an entangled spatio-temporal condition of displacement that affects the subject in the present. What characterizes such a reading is the attempt to deviate from notions of "the mind-body separation" wherein the (estranged) self is relegated to the so-called purity of the metaphorical world while at the same time the physical world is denigrated.[45] A word-sensitive and image-foregrounding reading, I contend, can transform our understanding of Palestinian exile as well as the subsequent estranged condition from a general individual pathology to include the meaning and conduct of the politics of involuntary exile and displacement as a whole. The desire to promote such an understanding underlines this study and this chapter in particular.

Therefore, in my reading of Badr's stories, I compare the relationship between home and exile (or not-home) in terms of memory in order to show how the subject's memory of Palestinian catastrophe shifts from a "nostalgic memory" of the lost homeland to a "critical memory" of the immediate experience of exile and the denial of home in the present. This shift from nostalgic to critical memory allows us to understand *al-nakba* as an actual political condition, not only of past loss but also of present "denial" of the subject's cultural space. This denial of the cultural space is not a denial of home in the sense of a fixed origin, but of home as a space that constitutes a resource of memories wherein a sense of self can be constructed. At stake is the notion of home as a cultural space – that is personal, filial, and ideological all at once – to which the subject desires to travel, yet to which he or she is constantly denied access. This specific understanding of Palestinian exile brings with it certain affects: not only with respect to concretizing or imaging the subject's identification with the lost homeland, but also in relation to the present denial of home as an affective construct that foregrounds the subject's view of the

[45] On notions of "mind-body separation", see Keller (1986). In her study Keller argues that notions of mind-body separation dominate traditional paradigms of Western psychology about the self. According to Keller, such notions manifest themselves, for example, in the psychological assumption that maturation requires the separation of the individual from his or her mother – a separation that Keller believes to be grounded in the understanding of the "separate self". For Keller, such a paradigm is rooted in the radical separation of mind and body, and it results in all kinds of dualistic perspectives and binary oppositions such as "self and other", "conscious and unconscious", "male and female", "East and West", "us and them". (96-100).

meaning of this (lost) homeland, not vice versa. The *ghurba*-based memory is, therefore, critical, engaging the enforced condition from within. Such a critical memory is also, emphatically, situated in the present. Hence, it is not a memory *of* exile – as something that happened in the past – but a memory *in* exile. The preposition "in", here, means both locally and temporally *within*.

From Nostalgic to Critical Memory of Loss

For every Palestinian who seeks a shelter from his or her memories of loss of homeland, the short stories in Badr's *A Balcony Over the Fakihani* offer a compelling account of the experiences of Palestinian subjects who are uprooted and dispossessed. The three short stories deal with the relationship between memory of loss of place and the everyday of exile. It is from these personal narratives that Badr constructs a collective narrative of Palestinian loss of homeland. Foregrounded in this narrative, the telling of the stories becomes memory's struggle with *al-nakba* in the present.

The three main characters in Badr's stories, Yusra, Su'ad and Abu Hussain, must flee to save their lives after brutal camp massacres and bombing attacks. The most powerful weapon that these characters have in the face of uprooting and dispossession is a tenacious memory. The characters' resorting to memory accordingly shapes the form of their narratives. This has literary consequences. In a violent and ever shifting present of exile, omniscient narration and chronological order cannot be maintained, and give way to fragmented first-person narratives that uncover layer after layer everyday instances of personal memories. Within this fragmented narrativity, nothing becomes too trivial to remember: Yusra's rented wedding dress, Su'ad's wine-colored wrap, and many other daily moments and small happenings are all recalled and arrested – as if the loss of those moments means the subject's certain annihilation in the present. For Yusra, Su'ad and Abu Hussain, remembering, thus, becomes a narrative mode of resistance in exile. At the heart of this mode is the exiled subject's constant attempt to anchor him or herself not in the past loss of homeland, but in the present of this past against uncertain future of forced travel and displacement. Through its anti-linear progression, memory becomes the only reliable, solid and permanent possession of the exiled subject.

This stubborn insistence on remembering can be seen in Yusra's narrative in "A Land of Rock and Thyme". In this story, Yusra tells of her family's flight from the besieged refugee camp of Tal al-Zaatar in Lebanon in 1982. During this flight, Yusra not

only loses her dwelling, but also her family, her father, brother, and husband. In this landscape of loss, storytelling through memory becomes Yusra's self-conscious task in the everyday of exile. Written in fragments out of necessity, "A Land of Rock and Thyme" begins with a fragment significantly entitled "The Picture", which opens on a dream wherein Yusra recalls the memory of Ahmed, her husband who was killed in an Israeli air raid:

> I dreamt tonight we were walking together. He always comes to me in my dreams. We were both walking a long […] the Martyrs' cemetery, but I'd no sooner seen him that he went off. He leapt up, began to move among the graves […] *I don't know where he went then* […] *My mind's full of the picture* […] I'd intended to go and put it on his grave […] But the situation was tense; fighting had broken out again […] I had a long argument with my sister Jamila, who finally took the large size picture from me and locked it away in the cupboard. I was pregnant, she reminded me, the baby was due at the end of the month and it would be difficult to run if there was sudden shelling. What should I do then? Wait? My whole life had been spent waiting and waiting – but I hadn't expected to marry a man who'd love me and want me, wait with me, then leave for ever and never come back. (3-4. Emphasis added)

Yusra's words draw the reader into the world of memory of personal loss and dislocation, a world of "reverie" in which the exiled subject, Yusra, seeks to recover place and space from past and present times. The repetition of Yusra's memory of the loss of Ahmed in the form of a dream "dictation" – ordinarily, this would be called an "interior monologue" – underscores the preoccupation of his loss with the problematics of her mind in present time.

To be sure, Yusra's memory of Ahmed's loss embodies a nostalgic return to a moment from the past when they were still together. "Walking", in combination with "together", suggests a peaceful stroll. Yusra's nostalgia is enforced by her questioning of life without Ahmed in the present: "What should I do then? Wait? […]". This nostalgic memory, however, does not constitute a pure reversion to past times. Instead, what characterizes Yusra's nostalgic memory is a peculiar narrative mix in which her loss of Ahmed is juxtaposed with his presence, forming dual temporalities between past and present. This juxtaposition can be seen in the way Yusra explains her memory of loss through the metaphor of the picture, "my mind is full of the picture", between dreaming and awakening.

The word "picture", like the stopping of the watch and the announced death in Abu Hussain's story, is key here. It is one of those concrete shapes, or imagings, through which the experience is made visible, hence, understandable for others, the story's

readers, in all its concrete horror. Whereas in her dream Yusra loses sight of Ahmed, "I don't know where he went", in her awakening the image of Ahmed is a "large size picture", one that she cannot avoid in terms of her bodily experience. When her sister Jamila finally takes Ahmed's picture and "locks it away in the cupboard", she immediately reminds Yusra that she cannot go to the cemetery because she is pregnant and "it would be difficult to run if there was sudden shelling". It is at this moment of "recognition" of the violence that besets her world that Yusra's nostalgic memory, her mental image of the loss of Ahmed in the dream, shifts in focus to the materiality (the physical image) of her pregnant body as the site at which Ahmed's loss repeats itself in reality.

For Yusra, then, the memory of losing Ahmed hangs around as a picture that not only fills her mind, but that also consumes her daily (bodily) existence. The evidentiary force of this picture attests to Yusra's loss not as a past happening but as a loss repeated in the everyday of exile. Narratologically, Yusra's dream in the story can be read as a "mirror-text", in which the image of loss contains a copy of itself in the present. Both Yusra's pregnant figure and her unborn baby support this reading, signifying that the sequence of loss recurs infinitely.[46]

Yusra's shift of vision of Ahmed's loss from the mental to the material image postulates her memory as a trope that signifies the interconnectedness of mind and body between past and present. At stake here is a mode of remembering in which Yusra uses her imaginative power of the past loss to realize a latent, abiding connection to the present loss in exile. At the heart of this mode is a shift from nostalgic memory to what I call a "critical memory of loss": experiential memories that construct the subject's meaning of loss of place in exile not only as metaphorical (in terms of thinking) but also as literal loss (bodily experienced) in the present. Through critical memory, Yusra in the story is caught in a vision of loss not only against (dream) time, but also across it.[47]

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[46] I use the term "mirror-text" here in the sense of "mise en abyme", not to overstress the totality of an image, but only a certain aspect of the literary text under discussion. For a detailed discussion on the difference and use of both terms in literary narratives, see Bal (1997: 57-58).

[47] My understanding of the notion of "critical memory of loss" is inspired by Leo Spitzer's conceptualization of the term "critical memory" as a present form of memory incorporating the negative and the bitter form the immediate past and thus representing nostalgia's complicating "other side". According to Spitzer, in the case of central European Jews who fled the Nazi genocide to Bolivia, critical memory functions as the overarching framework of their "refugee" collective identity. See Spitzer (1998: 373-96).

Along with this narrative shift to critical memory in exile, the story's inscription of the psychic loss of Ahmed in Yusra's dream relies upon heightened tropes of mistaken Palestinian identity. This troping, in turn, implies an affirmation of this identity in terms of place. It can be observed in the introduction of Ahmed's character at the end of the dream fragment, "The Picture". Having been misled by Ahmed's nickname "the Indian", the name by which people in the refugee camp called him after returning from his studies in India, Yusra thinks he is an Indian: "When I first saw his swarthy features and black eyes, I thought he really was an Indian" (4). When they first meet and she asks him whether he is Indian, Ahmed laughs at Yusra's question, "he laughed and laughed, till he almost fell over", and immediately answers: "Me? I am from the village of Jamaain near Nablus, Yusra" (4).

As I explain below, this encounter between Yusra and Ahmed lays bare a complex register of Palestinian identity on different levels. This implied function of the mistake seeks to repair the violation of identity wreaked upon Palestinians by exile, separation and death. First, narratologically the mistake intimates that Ahmed becomes loss personified. This qualifies him as the link between the lost place and the place of exile. Hence, Yusra's husband, Ahmed, from the West Bank, carries the memories of Palestine that maintain the link between the homeland and exile, between the Zaatar (thyme) of the occupied home in Palestine and the place of exile in Lebanon bearing the name "Tal al-Zaatar".[48]

Second, culturally the episode articulates the issue of identity, and its loss to suggest this loss is itself an identity, in a vertiginous mise-en-abyme. Such an articulation can be seen in the way Ahmed's narrative voice corrects Yusra's (material) sight. In their encounter, while Yusra's vision of Ahmed's "swarthy features and black eyes" enforces her mistaken belief of his identity as an Indian, Ahmed's answer subverts the kind of vision by which specific information about his identity is disclosed. This is a narrative configuration of Palestinian identity, and its loss, not through the constellation of "idea –

[48] The name "Tal al-Zaatar" literary means "the hill of thyme" and it occupies a particular place in the Palestinian imaginary as a symbol of their history of victimization. Located in the predominantly Christian-controlled part of Beirut, Tal al- Zaatar refugee camp represents the complexity of negotiating Palestinian identity as an ethnic minority in diaspora and the tensions that accompany such negotiation. These tensions were exacerbated during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1976). Referred to as the "Stalingrad" of the Palestinian refugees, Tal al-Zaatar was subjected to a brutal one-year siege by the right-wing Christian factions (the Phalangists) during which vital supplies and basic necessities were cut off from the camp. The camp was ultimately destroyed. As a result of this siege, there were 4,000 casualties and some 12,000 Palestinians fled to other places in Lebanon. For more information about the "massacre of Tal al-Zaatar" and other historical details, see Gordan (1983).

sight", but instead "idea – narrative". Within this constellation, the narrativization of Yusra's memory is carried over into the image of Ahmed with a spatialized and localized sense of identity as a "Palestinian". Significantly, in the narrative Ahmed does not identity himself by his name, but by a reference to his lost village (Jamaain) in Palestine.[49]

Hence, a third implication of the mistake merges narrative and cultural meaning. This, in turn, foregrounds the cultural signification of narrative as a mode of shaping cultural identity in exile. This narrative mode captures most adequately the Janus-faced obsession with cultural memory and identity, and its loss in exile. This is so because Yusra's vision in the story enhances the mistake of Palestinian identity in exile, but only to emphasize the condition of Palestinian exile as a mistake that needs to be corrected. Through this troping, Ahmed's articulation of his subjectivity in terms of his lost village can be read, then, as a synecdochical representation of that impossible location, the lost place. This representation achieves both similarity and contiguity at the same time: Ahmed comes from (contiguity) and becomes like (similarity) his village.

Thus, the mistake performs a powerful demonstration of how subjectivity in exile inhabits one place and projects the reality of another. The subject in exile never quite "fits" where he or she is. This double orientation not only generates a temporal conflation that blurs the distinction between the refugee camp in Lebanon and the lost home in Palestine, between then and now. It also spatializes the tension between Yusra's loss in the dream and her actual loss in the everyday. The opening fragment of Yusra's story in "A Land of Rock and Thyme", then, proposes an epistemological mode that gives epistemic access to exile: it juxtaposes dual temporalities that reflect on the relationship between thinking loss in exile and experiencing it.

In continuity with this merging of narrative and cultural meaning, the representation of Yusra's mistake introduces a fourth implication: the mistake also provides insight into her psychological turmoil. This is why the story presents her imaging as a dream. This epistemological mode can be seen in the way Yusra's narrative moves into the here and now of exile's spatial temporality. The character describes her world (of death) as a dream. It is at this point in her narrative that metaphorization

[49] With regard to Ahmed's subjective identification in terms of his lost village, it is a common social practice among Palestinians in exile that they identify themselves in terms of the places from which they were originally expelled. This practice is relevant to issues of cultural affinity in Palestinian exile, and with respect to the "right of return" so as to emphasize Palestinians' attachment to their occupied homes. See Sayigh (1994), and Parmenter (1994).

appears as an inadequate mode, and metaphor as an inadequate trope for constituting exile's loss. Metaphor is insufficient, both because of its retrospective orientation but also, and just as crucially, because the exiled subject's obsession in the story is not only with memory but also with forgetting.

Together, then, these four implications mentioned above suggest a literary, and thereby cultural function of memory that I have called "critical". Along with this intricate notion of a critical memory of loss, the narrative's inscription of the loss of Ahmed in Yusra's dream becomes a transformative space of imaging: a narrative space in which the everyday loss retrospectively takes the past and its losses in a new embrace. This imaging memory space is constructed for collective remembering. Through the concept of critical memory, I can explain how the story outlines a loss that is communal rather than isolated and individualized.

The Everyday of Exile: Murder in the Museum

In "A Land of Rock and Thyme", the transforming power of narrative is underscored by Yusra's storytelling of the following parts of her story. Immediately after the dream fragment, Yusra tells of her exodus from Tal al-Zaatar refuge camp. This episode makes the reader a fellow-exilee: as a consequence, the reader is not only exposed to loss and destruction in the everyday of exile, but to a loss that is contextualized. The world Yusra describes in the rest of her narrative is a world wherein memory of loss of place abounds, a world in which "there is no where else to go" (13). In the context of Yusra's exodus, death and destruction become inescapable events of her everyday life. Consider the following passage:

> Death had become familiar: there was nobody in al-Zaatar who didn't anticipate their own […] Everyone expected death; no one in Tal al-Zaatar thought to live out their natural life. When father died the condolence people offered was the heartfelt wish that we ourselves should survive […] You'd be standing next to someone – and an hour later, you'd hear he was dead! There was one young man, I remember, who said: "When I die, put me in this coffin". They made coffins from cupboard doors and there was a door ready. "I'll measure it against my body," the young man said. A moment later a splinter of shrapnel struck him in the back and killed him on the spot. So they did put him in the coffin he'd measured himself for. I'm amazed I've never been injured myself. It was like a dream. You'd talk to someone and an hour or two later you'd hear they were dead. (11)

The certainty of death is juxtaposed with the uncertainty of living which Palestinian subjects experience in their everyday of exile. Death becomes an integral part of life for

the camp's residents to the extent that survival triggers amazement: "I'm amazed I've never been injured". Yusra's comment, "it was like a dream", is connected with her opening dream, it points out the commonality of death. The dream turns into a reality, a reality so horrific that it can only be likened to a dream.

Death is specifically and brutally linked to Palestinian cultural identity. Later on in the narrative, Yusra tells how, while escaping the camp after the Phalangists' raids, people had to walk along a highway lined with soldiers on either side. She recalls the story of a man walking next to her whom the soldiers grab by the shoulder. When the man begs them and says: "For God's sake", the soldiers reply: "which God?" (14), and shoot him instantly. A similar event of killing happens in the story of Yusra's teenager brother, Jamal. Before Yusra's family goes to visit their aunt who lives in *al-Awaazi*, they all warn each other that in case they are questioned by the soldiers on the road about their nationality, they must not answer that they are Palestinians, but rather "I'm Lebanese" (14). When he is questioned by the soldiers whether he is "Lebanese or Palestinian", Jamal ignores the warning and immediately answers: "Palestinian". As a result, "A bullet to the head, just like that" (14), Yusra remarks. On a narrative level, the story of Jamal's murder presents the reader with another episode of the nightmarish reality of Palestinian life in exile. His story also relates to the notion of the affirmation of Palestinian identity. Just like Ahmed, Jamal identifies himself as a Palestinian regardless of the outcome: his certain death. The affirmation of Palestinian identity in exile as such becomes an act of belonging that resists the denial of this identity in the present.

Later on, the story becomes more tragic as Yusra describes countless scenes of death in the everyday of exile. A particularly disturbing scene occurs when Yusra is separated from her family during the flight, and together with her grandmother goes to look for them in the museum which the people of the camp turned into a makeshift gathering place. It is in the museum that the "final slaughter" takes place:

> I rushed madly into the museum, looking for mother. I searched among the people there […] I said to grandmother: "That's it. My mother and brothers and sisters must be dead." My hands beat helplessly against my cheeks, and I wept no longer knowing anything, except that the Phalangists were detaining people and settling old scores as they chose. Then: murder. The final slaughter happened in the museum. I looked and saw a room with a broad display windows; it was packed with young men imprisoned inside. There were a number of killing stations on the way, the last of these, apart from the final one, being the barracks near the Hotel Dieu. Only those destined for long life left there alive. (17)

Yusra's words evoke loss in exile as the violation of Palestinian subjectivities. The key image in her narrative is the "museum". The most obvious significance of the imaging of the museum is grounded in its "act of exposing".

To expose, however, is not only to publically present, but also to demonstrate, so as to affect subjective understanding. In her book, *Double Exposures: The Subject of Cultural Analysis*, Mieke Bal makes this point and argues that "gestures of exposing" are events which "involve bringing out into the public domain the deepest held views and beliefs of a subject". Moreover, for Bal, "exposition is always also an argument" in which subjects, by publicizing their views, objectify and expose themselves as much as the object. This subjective grounding, in turn, makes exposition "an exposure of the self […] an act of producing meaning, a performance" (1996: 2). Most significantly, according to Bal, gestures of exposing, as performances, connect two main aspects. While the first is the "Look!" aspect that "involves the visual availability of the exposed object", the second aspect is the "That's how it is", which "involves the authority of the person who knows: epistemic authority" (2).[50]

Yusra's narrative of loss in exile, I contend, embodies both aspects of the act of exposing. Through her imaging of the museum, not only Yusra guides us, the readers, into it in which we see the murder of Palestinians, but she also offers a truth value of her act of seeing this murder in the present. In the narrative, this truth value does not emerge from the museum or its cultural dynamics of exposition, but from the character's focalization and narrative position in the story as a witness. This act of witnessing can be seen in the way her storytelling moves from the general overview into a much more detailed description. Yusra's depiction of the spatial arrangement when she says, "I looked and saw a room […]", and "there were a number of killing stations […] near the Hotel Dieu […]", provides the reader not just of a vision of Palestinians' death that takes place inside the museum but equally of their death outside it.

Through Yusra's meticulous attention to spatial details of death both inside and outside, her critical memory not only becomes present-oriented but also emphatically performative. Her memory performs an act which needs to be equally acted upon. This performative aspect of critical memory accordingly triggers a second reading of the imaging of the museum: namely, as a place of Palestinian cultural memory in the present. What is poignant about the imaging of the museum is that it is not a place where cultural

[50] In her book, Bal deconstructs the idea that there is any "truth value" in exposition. (1996: 1-11).

artifacts are presented but rather where human beings are murdered. The "display room", together with the "killing stations on the way", signifies that Palestinians are being killed as people watch, just like the reality Palestinians live in today. Yusra's criticism of Arab's lack of solidarity later on in the story substantiates such a reading. Immediatley after she miraculously escapes death in the museum, Yusra describes how "the Arab Deterrent force […] Saudis and Sudanese" were all around them but offered no help: "'Thank God you're safe', they were saying. I cursed them in my mind. 'God damn you', I thought. They kill people right under your noses, and you just stand there as if nothing's happened" (18). Through this lack of solidarity and failure to act, Palestinian cultural memory is focalized as an ongoing event of murder that has been repeated many times, yet that has not been acted upon. Yusra's critical memory of loss in exile, thus, not only performs an act, but also the lack of it: her memory enacts the need for an act.

This focalization can be seen in the way Yusra's story raises the issue of Palestinian death in terms of generational loss in exile. A key scene in this context is her description of her father's death:

> He was forty-six when he died and he had some kind of premonition of it. I once heard him say to Mother: "My time's coming. I'm going to die." "Of course you're not!" said Mother hotly. "I'll die before you do!" He told her he'd die as his father had, and at the same age; and so it happened, according to his premonition. My grandfather had been killed by a stray bullet during the exodus from Palestine in 1948. He was forty-six years old. (19)

The familial dialectic that shapes the subject's loss in exile generates intensely relational forms of identity among the story's characters. Yusra, mother and father are all linked by a three-generation chain of loss that marks both bonding and violation of Palestinian identity. The multiplicity of narrative voices, mother, father and Yusra, points out the characters' familial bonding. More importantly, it also signifies the interchangeability of their generational positions in terms of death in which their bonding is ultimately violated. As a Palestinian, Yusra's father not only anticipates his death, but he also *dies* – just like his father who was "killed with a stray bullet" during *al-nakba*. Narratologically, Yusra's father, then, takes the narrative position of his own father, Yusra's grandfather. This narrative interchangeability triggers the reader's anticipation of Yusra as a third-generation Palestinian subject awaiting her own death in chain of an ongoing loss of home as much as life.

What sustains this reading is that in Yusra's narrative no voice is given clear narrative authority over the others. This absence of the authoritative voice not only forces us (the readers) to fill in narrative gaps, through critical memory, but it also puts notions of "narrative authority" as well as "narrative gapping" into question so as to move away from the singular to the collective understanding of Palestinians' loss of place. In "A Land of Rock and Thyme", the collectivity of Palestinian exile takes place most dramatically in the three closing fragments of the story. In these fragments, respectively entitled "Ahmed", "And Then", and "Scenes", the mixing of narrative voices broadens Yusra's critical memory as well as her narrativity from a single "picture" to "scenes" of loss in exile.

Fragmented Imagings: Beyond Geography

Immediately after the scene of the death of Yusra's father, the story returns to Ahmed once again as he returns form India after five years of studying there. In the fragment entitled "Ahmed", Ahmed's narrative voice repeatedly alternates with that of Yusra as she remembers what he told her about his stay in India and what that time meant for him.

Significantly, Ahmed's voice is literally quoted, marked in the text as a quote:

> "Five years of India! I won't say five years of crushing loneliness and being away from home because I was a member of the resistance and the Students' Union. But I was convinced that all that had no kind of value while I was abroad. Did you know that, Yusra? I felt isolated, apart from the world. It was as if I was on one of the peaks of great Himalayas. I was ill for a long time […] India? What a place! Indian films are one thing, but the country's another!" (20)

Ahmed's time in India represents an experience of *ghurba*. The only reason why he would not refer directly to this experience as one of "crushing loneliness and being away from home" is because of his social involvement as "a member of the resistance and the Students' Union". For Ahmed, social involvement "while […] abroad" eases the subject's feelings of loneliness and estrangement, and hence it affects his or her rhetorical language: it *lightens up* the description. This affective effect can be seen through Ahmed's use of the "indirect" rather than "direct speech" to describe his experience: "I won't say five years of crushing loneliness". However, while socialization in exile eases the subject's feelings of estrangement – feelings that affect language – it ultimately has "no kind of value". Ahmed is "convinced" of that, and the only thing that prevails is his feelings of being "isolated and apart from the world". For him, the

experience of being "away from home" is like being abandoned in a harsh place where only disease manifests itself.

Indeed, Ahmed's imagings articulate the experience of *ghurba* in exile metaphorically. However, metaphorization is always given narrative specificity in Yusra's story by which the metaphorical configuration becomes both spatialized and specified in terms of Palestinian exile. Just as Ahmed's words problematize the notion of "representation" in terms of "reality" when he says, "Indian films are one thing, but the country's another!", Yusra's critical memory enters the story to problematize both the narrative's metaphorization and the way this metaphorization can be read in terms of the lived experience in exile.

Immediately after the end of Ahmed's quote, Yusra continues the narrative in which she repeats the "mistake" of Ahmed's nickname, "the Indian". In a repetitive scene of their first encounter, Yusra asks Ahmed: "Are you Indian?" (20). Mocking Yusra's question again, "He'd laughed and laughed at my question […]" (20), Ahmed provides a different answer this time. Instead of referring to himself as a Palestinian who comes from the village of Jamaain near Nablus, Ahmed answers with what it means for him to be "away from home" in the present:

> "Yusra, do you know what it means to be away from home, there, in a remote part of the world? It is very real feeling. As real as I am now. Diaries. Look here, at the top of this page […] I saw curving lines that he'd clearly drawn himself. It was a miniature map of Palestine. I read what he'd written by it: 'Remember. This must be turned into a reality'." (21)

For Ahmed, being "away from home" in India is a reality that is equal to his present existence, "As real as I am now", as a Palestinian exile in Lebanon away from his home village in Palestine. The map, together with his injunction "remember", signifies that Ahmed carries his lost home with him. Ahmed not only "draws" home in his diaries, but also engraves it in his mind when he says, "Remember. This must be turned into a reality". With respect to Palestinian cultural memory, Ahmed's answer warns that if Palestinians do not remember, their dreams of the homeland will never become a reality. This is how remembering becomes a mode of resistence to the loss of homeland; a cutural responsibility that Palestinians must uphold in exile to be able keep alive the dream of returning home.

In this part of the story, the "mistake" is given a different connotation. Whereas in the dream fragment the mistake was evoked as part of an ongoing narrative juxtaposition of loss in Yusra's dream with her actual loss in the everyday, in this fragment the mistake is

evoked as a narrative mode of inscribing Palestinian subjectivity in exile *spatially*. Rather than directly articulating his Palestinian identity in terms of the lost homeland, Ahmed asserts his identity in terms of being out of this place in the present. At stake, then, is a narrative repetition of the mistake through which the inscription of Palestinian subjectivity is inextricably linked to the contexts (both inside and outside) of making the self as a knowing subject. Accomplishing recognition in exile, thus, means that the subject is capable of recognizing the narrative repertoire of the memory of "being at home" through the memory of "being away from it". Hence, in order to be recognized as a Palestinian subject, the self needs to cite the contextual (and narratological) conventions of its contemporary condition. Ahmed's inscription of his Palestinian identity in terms of the metaphor of "being away from home" not only specifies his subjectivity – Ahmed becomes a Palestinian subject in exile as opposed to "a refugee" – but also the lost home and the place of exile (or the not-home) are configured temporally and spatially as imagined places of Palestinian identity.

My argument of the lost home and the place of exile as imagined places of Palestinian identity is inspired by Ernst van Alphen's conceptualization of the term "imagined place" in relation to diasporic memory and subjective identification with the homeland. In his article, "Imagined Homelands: Re-mapping Cultural Identity" (2002), Van Alphen outlines the interplay between "imaginative" and "imagined" aspects of place in relation to issues of mapping cultures and identities onto places. According to Van Alphen, in travelling contexts such as diaspora and exile, the effects of migrancy, whether virtual or not, establish a particular relationship between place and culture that is often characterized by "disconnection, displacement and incommensurability" (55).

Moreover, for Van Alphen, this relationship in migratory contexts signifies "the erosion" of natural connections between subject and place. This erosion, however, neither means that the cultural identity of the travelling subject becomes redundant, nor that place becomes an irrelevant category. Instead, for Van Alphen, through both migrancy and memory, the erosion of natural connections between people and places leads to a different articulation of place itself: mainly that we are no longer talking about place in the same sense of the word; not about the geographical (real) place, but about "imagined place". This "imagined place", as Van Alphen explains, is not the same as "imaginary":

> "Imagined" places are not fairytale places, they are not just fantasy […] Imagined places do have a connection with a place that exists geographically. However, the mode in which this geographic place is *experienced* is ontologically different:

> geographic place is experienced not through real interaction, but rather through the imagination […] [A]n imagined place is product of an act of imagination. (56. Emphasis in text)

In contrast to what has been taken for granted in recent discussions of exile in critical theory, Van Alphen's view puts forward a distinctively different conceptual understanding of place with respect to subjective memory and identification with the homeland. His view introduces place in relation to a travelling subject whose identity "was not carried along wholesale from homeland to destination" (56), but rather actively (re-)constructed in the act of identification in the present. Significantly, Van Alphen's understanding of "imagined place" articulates the relationship between the subject's (imagined) identity and place as not only an identificatory relation to an originating place, but also as a relationship that is predicated on time, hence, on history. In other words, the act of imagining homeland identity is not just always framed by the historical dimensions of place and the diaspora that started from that place, but also by those acts of imagining that produce cultural identity in the present (54-58).

For the politically exiled, the understanding of the lost home as well as not-home (exile) as imagined places of Palestinian identity manifests itself in the fact that the narrative of the consciousness of the exiled subject does not begin "at home" but rather with his or her departure from home: "being away from home". The audiovisual details of this configuration between exilic space and Palestinian identity through memorial storytelling will be central to my analysis of Tawfiq Saleh's film *Al-Makhdu'un* (The Dupes, 1972) in the next chapter. Seen in this light, through Yusra's critical memory of loss in exile, Ahmed's metaphorization of the experience of *ghurba* can be read as fragmented imagings of place. These imagings not only deviate from a single possible interpretation and meaning, but they also generate new avenues of meaning of place. Hence, reading the "lost home" as a metaphor of exile becomes a reading of the *otherness* of this metaphor *in* exile: the subject's experience of being not at home. At the heart of this reading is something that is both inside and outside exilic narratives and which affects our conceptions and interpretive practices in the present.

What characterizes Ahmed's articulation of loss of place in exile in this part of "A Land of Rock and Thyme" is that he makes a distinction between the meanings of "home" and "homeland". According to Ahmed, the difference between the two places is that "home" is a home because of its people; it is a place that embodies the subject's familial relations and communal bonding. Ahmed's memories of his lost home in the

West Bank are grounded in his thoughts not on the basis of the geography of the place, but of *the* people who inhibit this geography: his father, mother, brothers and sisters (22). While his memories of the geographical place slip away from his mind – for example, he cannot "remember exactly" which tree he had in his home, "Almond or mulberry" (22) – he exactly remembers his family: "He thought about his [family] constantly and kept coming back to [them] […] He hoped to go back" (22). Thus, for Ahmed, the loss of home in exile is not only a matter of losing geography, but of losing the human relations that flesh out that geography, a reality which he is denied in the present and to which all he wants is to return back.

Ahmed's conceptualization of loss of place in exile through his distinction between home and homeland relates to Yusra's articulation of this loss in the narrative. Whereas in the previous fragments of her "dream" and "exodus from the camp" Yusra evokes the loss in Palestinian exile as a violent murder *beyond* our imagination, Ahmed's answer in this fragment transports this loss back into the realm of the imagination. While Yusra present the reader with horrific episodes of death in the everyday such as in the slaughter in the museum, Ahmed's articulation of familial and communal aspects personalizes this loss. Thus, through Ahmed's answer, the loss of home in exile moves from the impossibility of imagination back into the realm of the possibility of subjective memory.

This understanding situates the subject's loss of home as a loss that encompasses both the metaphorical and literal meanings all at once. Thus, the theoretical concept of the "loss of home" links up with the subject's lived experience of "being away from home" in exile. This theoretical – experiential configuration of the subject's loss of home not only helps us transfigure the abstraction of the metaphorical through and within the political (and its subjective experience), but it also enables us to think loss of place rather than merely representing it to the degree that we actively transcend what is objectified; the subject of this loss in the present. Hence, reading the metaphorization of loss of home in Palestinian exile becomes a way of thinking through as well as a practice: a critical engagement with this exile not only as a subjective condition, but also as an interactive process. At the heart of exile as an interactive process is a particular understanding of its narratives' storytelling in terms of critical memory as a narrative building up through fragmentation. This understanding of "exilic narrativity", a notion I further discuss in the next chapter, not only leads to compassion (and identification) with the story of the past

nakba but it also positions and activates Palestinian memory of loss of homeland in a specific context – the catastrophic present of exile.

Our Mothers Mourn in Black

In "A Land of Rock and Thyme", exile's interactivity is reflected in Yusra's relationship with Ahmed as not only her husband, but also her teacher. This learning relationship can be observed both structurally through repetitions and textual quoting, and in the way Yusra interiorizes Ahmed's loss, memories and words as her own. Immediately after Ahmed's description of what the lost home means to him, Yusra tells how they got married and lived together for a short time, only for "ten days" (23), before he was killed.

In this part of the story, Yusra does what Ahmed taught her: namely, "to remember" (21). A pertinent example of Yusra's mastering of remembering is the way she recalls the precise moment of Ahmed's death:

> Finally, one Thursday, two days before he was due home […] he was killed in an Israeli air raid, from a wound to the head […] This happened during the day on Thursday, January 29, 1981. In the first month of the year. At two o'clock in the afternoon. (24)

Unlike the other incidents of death of which Yusra does not give specific times and dates, Ahmed's death burns itself into her consciousness; from then on, Yusra takes on the responsibility of remembering. In one sense, Yusra's detailed remembering can be read in relation to *al-nakba* and the generational transmission of loss of place. Yusra's role as a remembering subject in the narrative, together with her memory of the precise moment of Ahmed's death, frames his death as her *nakba.* Given that Yusra's character in the story stands out as a Palestinian subject from the third generation of post-*nakba* Palestinians, her catastrophe does not appear as grounded in the events of 1948. Rather, Yusra's catastrophe is constituted in the event of Ahmed's death that takes place "on Thursday, January 29, 1981".

In another sense, Yusra's detailed memory evokes Ahmed's loss as an extreme loss, the memory of which she *refuses* to forget. This refusal appears in the way Yusra mourns Ahmed's loss in the fragment entitled "And Then". In this scene, we see Yusra utterly broken and in tears. She cannot believe that Ahmed is dead: "the martyr's wife […] shaken by fits of weeping so intense that they took away her strength. 'How?' she shouted. 'Why'?" (25) Surrounded by her family, Yusra refuses to eat and drink. When her mother pleads with her that she needs to go on with her life, "It was enough that she, Yusra, had got out of Tal al-Zaatar and was still alive. [She] need[s] to go on with the living of her life" (26), Yusra immediately dismisses her

mother's plea and screams repeatedly: "Don't talk to me about forgetting" (26). However, the moment when her mother reminds her of the unborn child, "Yusra, you're going to have a child. The child! What ha[s] he done wrong?"(25), Yusra "quickly, decisively" reconsiders the matter and accepts food and drink.

Just as in Yusra's imaging in her opening dream, the image of the unborn child is repeated as a moment of bodily recognition of loss. However, unlike in the dream fragment wherein the child's image affects the shift of Yusra's memory in narrative from the nostalgic past to critical memory of loss in the present, his image here emerges as a sign that situates Yusra's memory of loss on a different temporal level: this time between present and future. Yusra's critical memory of loss in the narrative becomes forward looking, a future-oriented memory.

This effect can be seen in the way Yusra articulates the child's image not only as a bodily sign of the repetition of the loss of Ahmed, but also as a sign of hope to overcome this loss in the future, as an affirmation and rebirth of Palestinian identity in exile. For Yusra, even though the child would not be born in Palestine, he or she would still be a Palestinian. Immediately after becoming aware of the presence of the child inside her, Yusra says:

> Three months in the womb. Six more to complete the pregnancy. Another person would be born. It would be a Palestinian, from its first moment in the world. (25)

The shift of Yusra's narrative vision, caused by her recognition of the child, leads to a shift of meaning from what was lost to the ways we mourn that loss in exile. On one level, through Yusra's acceptance of food and drink for the sake of her baby, Ahmed's loss becomes focalized as a part of her: she interiorizes his loss from which the possibility of an impossible bereavement emerges. On another, through proclaiming that the baby would be "a Palestinian from its first moment in the world", Yusra seems to suggest that the only possible way for her to mourn Ahmed's loss is to be unable to do so in the present.

Yusra's imaging of the unborn child is crucial particularly if we read Ahmed's loss in terms of his spatial symbolism: Ahmed as the representative of the link between the lost village in Palestine and the place of exile. Read in these terms, the loss of home in exile becomes almost an aborted interiorization by which the subject's genuine alterity is completely embedded and equally embodied. In other words, through accepting the food and by bringing a new life into the world, Yusra seems to find a way to circumvent Ahmed's loss; she accepts his physical absence in reality. However, by specifying the child

as a Palestinian, Yusra seems to refuse to forget what Ahmed stands for: the memory of the lost home. Thus, by transmitting the memories and hope to a new generation, Yusra is helping to turn around Ahmed's vision of a Palestinian homeland and return home into a reality in the future.

This future vision emerges in the final fragment entitled "Scenes", in which the voices of Yusra and Ahmed merge in the narrative once again. In this section, Yusra's narrative juxtaposes two pictures: one of a dream and another of a reality. While in the dream picture Yusra sees Ahmed and feels "happy and rejoiced" (28), in the other picture of reality, "I woke up, and knew it had all been a dream" (28), she sees herself as a pregnant woman mourning in black: "The woman's pregnant and dressed in black. I am that woman in black" (28). For Yusra, the loss of Ahmed represents an extreme loss because of which she feels that her life ended and "that everything had come to a stop at once and there was nothing left in the world" (28).

At the end of the narrative, however, Yusra expresses hope when she repeats that she will "try to live […] I'll try, but it is not easy at all. But I'll try" (29). While her memory of Ahmed's loss causes her to weep, the moment Yusra opens "the album" (29) and sees his photographs she comes upon the sentence that he has written inside:

> "These pictures make me feel I've become a professional – an expert photographer. I've taken them to embody phases of a life: phases of darkness, and phases of light. There are times of bitterness and there will be times of beauty and tenderness and light. Those times will come." (29)

Ahmed's words evoke hope in the everyday of exile. The certainty expressed in the last sentences not only repeats Ahmed's vision of the affirmation of Palestinian identity in exile, but it also turns Yusra's vision, through her remembering, into a belief: the hope of the possibility of realizing the lost home in the future. The shift from "Picture" to "Scenes" in this closing fragment not only broadens Yusra's narrative vision beyond the singular image, but it also signifies that her act of remembering itself is a narrative act of exposing loss, both inside and outside simultaneously. This narrative act is effective in that it enhances Yusra's imaging of loss of home in exile as an ongoing event constituted in the present, but that ultimately concerns the future.

Moreover, Yusra's shift of vision to scenes of loss is also important in relation to the story's fragmented narrativity. This narrative fragmentation, as I mentioned above, not only takes place at the level of mixing narrative voices and of textual repetitions, but also at

the level of the mixing of the memories of the two characters: at the end of the narrative Ahmed's memories become Yusra's own memories. This mixing of memories in the narrative, I contend, represents a move from voice to body in time, by which the exiled subject's identification with the lost homeland is enacted both bodily and mentally. This enactment can be seen in the fact that Yusra's imaging of Ahmed's loss is grounded in a specific act of looking wherein the "gaze" is not her own. In her act of looking at the pictures, it is not Yusra who gazes at Ahmed, but rather it is Ahmed who gazes at her: "He was gazing at her, smiling out of the photograph […]" (26). This directional movement of the gaze in the narrative can be read in two ways.

In one sense, in order to cast the dead (Ahmed) as longing for us instead of the other way around, Yusra's narrative inscribes a reversal of not only narrative vision but also desire. This desire informs the subject's loss of home in exile on a deep level. Indeed, in imaging Ahmed gazing at Yusra, the narrative reverses the usual direction of mourning in which the living mourns the dead. In another sense, the movement of the gaze from Ahmed to Yusra generates discursive tensions in terms of Yusra's identification with the loss of Ahmed. Subjected to Ahmed's gaze, Yusra's identification with his loss becomes, to borrow Kaja Silverman's term, a "heteropathic identification". This is an identification based on going outside of the self, as opposed to "idiopathic" identification which absorbs and naturalizes the other.[51]

In "A Land of Rock and Thyme", Yusra's heteropathic identification enables her to narrate Ahmed's loss beyond the normative models of separation between body and mind. This is given shape in the final sentence with which Yusra's narrative ends: "All I remember apart from that is his smile" (29). This sentence points out the narrative shifting from Ahmed's voice and memories to that of Yusra. It also shows the way in which Yusra interiorizes, through the personification of his smile, his voice into her own body and mind. Through Yusra's heteropathic identification with Ahmed's loss, her fragmented narrative can be read, both textually and visually, as a mode of "narrative mobility". At the heart of this narrative mode is the notion that the mobility inside the narrative of exile, in voices and imagings, complicates the immobility that is outside it. In other words, narrative mobility, through fragmentation, becomes an eminent tool to put forward the immobility of the Palestinian condition of exile through imagining its subjective loss as a whole composed of multiple imagings of loss. Each of these imagings not only exposes the problematics of the

[51] For a detailed explanation of both terms, "heteropathic" and "idiopathic" identification, see Silverman (1996: 80-90).

subject's being in exile, but at the same time problematizes this whole being itself in the present.

To further sustain the case for narrative fragmentation, I want to turn now to the other two short stories that make up Badr's collection: "A Balcony Over the Fakihani", and "The Canary and the Sea". I will show how the everyday experience of the main characters, Su'ad and Abu Hussain, as Palestinian subjects in exile is determined not so much by movement and mobility but rather by a struggle for mobility against the immobility of exile.

Fragmented Imagings, Fragmented Lives

"A Balcony over the Fakihani" is the story of Su'ad, a Palestinian exile, who narrates her loss of home and displacement across different places. Su'ad's story centers on the struggle she undergoes as a result of being continuously shuffled from one place to another. Similar to Yusra's narrative, Su'ad's imagings of her forced travels portray the experience of Palestinian exile in terms of familial disconnection, estrangement and the impossibility of dwelling in place.

Set in war-torn Beirut, Su'ad's story is told in fragments and a range of voices, Su'ad, her husband Umar, and her friend Jinan, alternate in its telling. Each fragment provides the reader with an insight into the mental repercussions that result from the characters' forced travels in exile. In the first fragment entitled "Su'ad", we see Su'ad leaving her house in Amman for Beirut to marry Umar, who is a member of the Palestinian resistance movement. Later on, together with Umar, Su'ad has to move to Damascus to travel back, finally, to Beirut. The story opens with Su'ad describing a carpet plant growing on the balcony of her apartment in Beirut:

> Why did my heart become troubled when the carpet plant grew so big? It grew. It branched and grew tall till that day dawned. The little cutting my neighbour gave me flourished. Its heart-shaped leaves fanned out over the trellis, and on their green surface were red spots the colour of blood, which spread like the memory of the nightmare I had: white dust and smoke, and stretched out on the ground, a dead man I didn't know, his body gashed and spattered with blood. The plant grew bigger, spreading out in front of me, then, after a while, it turned to the colour of wine. I laughed at my fears, heaved a deep sigh and grew calm. (34)

Su'ad's words set the tone of the whole story, and they demonstrate both her inability to separate beauty from tragedy and the insecurity of her life in exile. Through her reaction to

the plant's rapid growth and colouring, Su'ad shows the effects of life in exile as a distortion of normal interpretations of natural beauty. As such, the carpet plant becomes symbolic of Palestinians in exile as if to indicate that their growing number around the world is troubling to Su'ad.

Importantly, this opening passage also exposes Su'ad's anticipation of death in exile. Her description of the leaves as having a "green surface with red spots the colour of blood", together with her memory of the nightmare, "white dust and smoke […]", evoke a gruesome scene of death. Su'ad's anticipation of death is connected with her husband Umar. This can be seen at the end of the first fragment of the story where we see Su'ad standing on the balcony waving good bye to Umar as he leaves for work. At that moment, she remembers the carpet plant and the dream: "Then he set off […] When I turned to go back inside, my eyes lit on the dark leaves of the carpet plant, which was now the colour of lilac; but my mind went back to the dream" (36). While the change of the natural colouring of the plant catches her eyes, Su'ad's mind nonetheless remains preoccupied with the dream.

Like Yusra in "A Land of Rock and Thyme", Su'ad emphasizes that the Palestinian subject in exile needs to preserve his or her memory of loss of place. However, unlike Yusra, Su'ad has no reservation about remembering her original lost home in Palestine. Instead, the focus of Su'ad's remembering shifts to her other dwellings in exile. For example, together with her friend Jinan, Su'ad would sit on the balcony of her apartment in Beriut and reminisce about Amman, her previous dwelling which she had to flee after the *Black September* massacre:

> The balcony […] was on the corner of the block, right opposite the Rahmeh Building. Jinan and I would sit there […]. We'd remember Amman, losing ourselves in our recollections; we hadn't been back there for many years, since Black September. We recalled my mother, friends, her family and relations, and Hajjeh Salimeh, whose death we learned of only from a brief letter. Umar would join us to drink lightly sweetened coffee, and we would discuss our daily affairs with concealed bitterness and sarcastic comments […]. Acquaintances or neighbours would drop in, and I'd bring chairs out from inside […] when the place had filled up. (34)

Su'ad's memories of her past dwelling in Amman are grounded in the thoughts about her family. Her loss of family and communal relations appears as the defining moment of her loss of home. Moreover, Su'ad's description of the communal setting in her balcony turns this balcony into a symbol for collective existence in exile. Thus, it offers the characters a

sense of familiarity, "as though the place was a piece of home" (47). I shall shortly return and discuss the significations of this symbolism of the balcony.

Having situated her loss of home in exile as a loss of familial relations, in the next fragment Su'ad narrates the daily hardships she experiences in her new dwellings in Lebanon and Syria. For Su'ad, life in exile gradually becomes unbearable. Just as what she had experienced in Jordan, her new life in Beirut begins with a delight and ends with a nightmare. Speaking of her new house there, Su'ad says:

> The first day I was delighted; I've got a home at last, I said, and enthusiastically set about cleaning and tidying and dusting it. But as time went on – the next day, and the day after that, and the day after that – life became a nightmare. (42)

Su'ad's nightmarish life not only manifests itself in poor housing conditions, "The place was like an oven […]" (42), but also in terms of her bodily existence. Besides being constantly harassed by the security services who at night would "burst in and search the place inch by inch" (43), Su'ad experiences a miscarriage: "I do have a vivid memory of coming home with a feeling of defeat […] It wasn't just a matter of losing the baby, it was anemia too, and I was told I needed fresh air." (43)

The most poignant example of the nightmarish reality in exile can be seen in Su'ad's description of life under siege in the Shatila refugee camp. While she is feeding her baby child, Su'ad notices a white hair on the baby's head:

> The Lebanese army tanks came […] and began to shell the camps; the building shook, and the constant din was like the noise of an earthquake […]. Next morning, as I was giving Ruba some milk, I noticed a white hair in the middle of her head. I couldn't believe a baby's hair could turn white. (46)

The simplicity of this image, through inflecting the act of fear on the most basic of human relationships of a "mother-baby", adds charge to its intensity. It reveals that even the youngest of Palestinians cannot escape shock and pain in exile. Moreover, Su'ad's narration highlights her confinement as an exiled subject within a collective trajectory of forced flight, or what can be called "immobility within mobility". Her travels from one place to another are constantly haunted by enclosure and by the threat of imprisonment. Su'ad's narrative dislodges the trope of home in exile by evoking it as a "disrupted home". Her home in exile, supposedly a shelter from danger, is more often a site fraught with violence, pain and insecurity. She is constantly forced on the move in search for the ultimate yet unattainable refuge in exile. While a narrative of relocating to a new place

frames the formation of her Palestinian subjectivity, this narrative does not posit the place of exile as the point of permanent settlement, as, for example, in the case of immigration.

This becomes clear in Su'ad's description of life in the refugee camps, where the Palestinians who lived there for some time refuse to accept the camps' permanence:

> People would greet one another in the morning and evening and would talk without any kind of ceremony or introduction, in a Palestinian accent as authentic as if they'd arrived in Beirut just the day before; and their homes were fitted out in a makeshift way, as if they were going to set off again the next morning. (44)

This description presents the reader with an image of the daily lives of Palestinians in refugee camps. These camps were originally designed to be temporary shelters. For Palestinians, the experience of the camp asserts both varied adaptation and a deep sense of "homelessness" that become significant constructs of what constitutes their exilic identity in the present. In her article "A House Is Not a Home: Permanent Impermanence of Habitat for Palestinian Expellees in Lebanon", Rosemary Sayigh brings up similar notions of Palestinians' experiences of refugee camps in Lebanon. According to Sayigh, Palestinians view the experience of the camp as an "abnormal state" of being to which varied temporary adaptations are formed. Moreover, this experience has often stiffened Palestinians' determination to return to their original homes from which they were displaced in Palestine (2005: 17-39).[52]

Such abnormality of Palestinian exile is exposed immediately after the attack on the camp in Lebanon, as a result of which Su'ad and Umar are forced to move once again, this time to Damascus. In this part, Su'ad describes her life in the Yarmouk refugee camp in similar terms as her life in Beirut:

> Time! I was never aware of time there; it used to repeat itself in the same way everyday, from morning to evening. I was busy looking for the children, except for those few fleeting moments you capture before falling asleep, when I'd think of my mother and father, and of my sister who, I heard, had been married, but whose wedding I couldn't attend because of problems with the Jordanian secret police. (46)

For Su'ad, time in exile is dull as it "repeats itself in the same way everyday". The juxtaposition between her daily life activities and her memories, "those fleeting moments", points out the preoccupation of Su'ad's mind with her family whom she was denied to visit, because of her "problems with the Jordanian secret police". Once more, Su'ad's

[52] Most of these arguments are further developed in Sayigh (2007: 86-105).

understanding of loss of home in exile appears firmly grounded in her being denied access to her familial and communal relations.

Immediately after this scene, Su'ad's husband, Umar, suddenly falls ill. The doctors in Lebanon could not find out what was wrong with him, and so they advised him to go for treatment abroad. At this point, the story shifts from Su'ad's narrative voice to that of Umar, which complements her imagings of the predicament of Palestinian exile. In the fragment entitled "Umar", we see how he had to go abroad, to an unnamed but seemingly European country, for treatment of an unknown illness. Umar's story mirrors the attempts of Palestinian refugees in the camp to deal with their reality of exile and the difficulty of creating a temporary alternate existence away from home. During his stay at the hospital abroad, and after running numerous tests on him, his doctor concludes that she could find nothing wrong with him, except that he has an "unknown infection" that Europeans do not have in their lands: "She told me the results of the test, saying that the type of infection discovered in the laboratory was unknown in their country" (56). Umar sarcastically responds that he was from the Middle East and that should explain his unknown disease: "I was from the Middle East, I told her jokingly, and that explained everything" (56). Umar's unknown disease, together with his sarcasm, hints at the "disease" of Palestinians caused by their forced displacement and victimization in exile. Moreover, the fact that doctors abroad do not recognize his disease illustrates the general public ignorance of the Palestinian plight. This reading of Umar's disease becomes plausible through the following parts of his narrative.

From the beginning of his story, Umar describes his experience at the hospital abroad as an experience of "imprisonment and exile" (54-57). Moreover, while abroad, Umar's mind is constantly preoccupied with memories of his family and friends:

> [M]y mind was full of the memories of my friends, Jamal, Zuhdi, Abu Antun, Hamid, François […] – I could not recall their features in detail, but I saw them at the back of my mind as I tossed and turned in the furnace of my bed. (54)

Umar's description of his experience at the hospital, through his memories, reveals a nostalgia to his family and friends in Beirut: "[A] glow of nostalgia for all the things I longed for" (57). Umar's nostalgia, however, is complicated by another experience which he undergoes while at the hospital. During his stay there, Umar falls in love with his doctor, Louisa. He describes his relationship with Louisa and the time he spent with her as blissfully happy: "It was Louisa as well; it was her, and the warmth of our friendship" (57). As a result of this experience, Umar is

torn between two lives. He is constantly tempted to create a temporary escape from the trouble that awaits him back in Beirut. Soon in the narrative, however, this temptation is dismissed, as it is Louisa herself who helps Umar to overcome the dilemma of the choice between the two worlds:

> A lot of people, she kept saying to me, are revolutionaries to start with, but then they get bored and find they can't keep it up. You're different from them, she said. You've still kept the vision that sees things afresh. The flower hasn't lost it fragrance. (57)

Precisely through realizing his revolutionary "vision that sees things afresh", through Louisa's words, Umar resolves the tension between the new and the old places. In the next scene, we see him returning to Beirut. Once back in Beirut, Umar is jolted into the hard reality of exile as he discovers that his friend Jamal was killed. This event triggers in Umar a determination to continue the struggle against exile. In response to Jamal's killing, Umar asks: "What have we really gained when we give up the struggle and bow our heads?" (62) His questioning of the need for struggle brings about an internal struggle between the story's characters about whether to take action against oppression in exile. This brings both the characters as well as the story to their end.

This can be seen in the final fragment of the narrative entitled "Jinan", in which the story returns to Su'ad's balcony in Beirut. We see Su'ad, Umar, Jinan and their neighbour Salwa sitting on the balcony and discussing the issue of the struggle, which Umar brought up through his questioning of Jamal's death. During their conversation, Salwa expresses her disdain for Palestinians who abandon their struggle and forget their past. Salwa problematizes both the non-action of Palestinians and the lack of Arab solidarity with their cause. She tells Su'ad and Umar about her recent trip to the Gulf, where she met Palestinians and other Arabs living there, whose only concern is with luxuries: "All people seemed to look forward over there […] was a pay raise and their annual leave" (67). Su'ad reacts to this position by stating that, ironically, the Palestinians who complain about the resistance movement "will be the first ones to skip back to Palestine when it's liberated". Immediately after, Umar complements Su'ad's words and says: "We're here, we're still here! The world hasn't come to an end yet!" (70)

This scene on the balcony is key, both culturally and narratively. Culturally, the characters put forward a specific vision of the need for resistance and struggle in Palestinian exile. Narratologically, this scene also recalls my reading of the balcony as a symbol of the place for communal gathering in exile. In "A Balcony Over the Fakihani",

the reader encounters images of the exiled subject's constant search for a (peaceful) shelter. Through the spatial setting of the characters' gathering, the balcony becomes this shelter. However, such a reading collapses at the end of the characters' conversation scene in terms of what happens to this place in reality. This is so because their conversation is suddenly interrupted by a loud bombing through which their balcony is destroyed. We see Su'ad talking to Salwa, asking her about her baby daughter, Jumana. The moment Su'ad finishes her sentence, the following description commences:

> The noise! Something extraordinary.
> Suddenly,
> It shrieks into the sky, whizzes around us.
> Salwa comes running. Her face is pale.
> I calm her. The sound barrier broken perhaps,
> It's happened before.
> Then,
> Boom!
> The Earth shakes as if the building
> Will cave in on us. A cloud of black smoke.
> The Fakihani quarter. Coming from Fakihani.
> A huge mushroom.
> Up it goes, and up.
> Then,
> Boom! Another tearing earthquake.
> Planes.
> The Israeli airforce.
> Rushing footsteps on the staircase of the block,
> Everything confused. People, cries of terror.
> The shelter. Gusts of hot air
> sweep down in a series of tremors.
> I've begun to think. My first thought,
> they're running.
> My knees hurt. An icy shiver
> from my shoulders, down my back.
> They're running […]
> Yes, I saw it,
> blood pouring down faces […]
> I lose the faces I know.
> Is it? No, perhaps no.
> Feeling crushed, desperate, I remember her.
> She and Jumana.
> Then
> All hell is loose,
> A raid, four raids.
> Who can …? (71-72)

This description of the moment of shelling is revealing in different ways. First, it is separated from the rest of the main body of the text by spacing; it almost comes from nowhere. Second, in terms of narrative voice, it is not immediately clear who is speaking, which one of the people on the balcony. The only indication of who is speaking arrives later in the references to Salwa and her daughter Jumana, "Salwa comes running" (71) and "She and Jumana" (72), so that Su'ad emerges as the most likely speaking voice of these lines. This lack of clarity signifies the sudden nature of the attack itself.

Moreover, the simultaneity of the events in the description, marked by short sentences and abrupt one-line phrases, suggest a fragmented narration. This fragmentation, both in words and images, not only corresponds to the speaker's, Su'ad, disconnected pattern of thought at the moment of the attack, but also, I contend, articulates the insecurity that Palestinians experience in their everyday lives in exile. This insecurity manifests itself in the notion that sudden events can forever alter their lives. The story suggests that even when the exiled subject seems to find a communal place in exile, in this case the balcony, this place often becomes a place of death. I shall discuss in detail this utilization of Palestinian exilic space as a "deadly place" in my analysis of Saleh's *Al-Makhdu'un* (The Dupes) in the next chapter. The Palestinian subject in exile appears to be in a state of double refusal: not only is this subject denied his or her lost home in the past, but he or she is also denied a shelter in the present of exile.

As a result of the shelling, not only is Su'ad's balcony destroyed, but she also discovers that Umar has been killed. At the end, Umar is immortalized as a martyr for the Palestinian cause. Only then does his identity change from a "Palestinian refugee" in exile to a Palestinian: only when Umar dies is he allowed to return to his homeland (81). After Umar's death, nothing is left for Su'ad except pain: "there was nothing around us but rubble and hurrying feet and the pain of the ordeal that everyone was trying to keep under control" (78). Su'ad becomes aware of the looming presence of loss in her life in exile so that she finally recognizes the man who appeared in her dream of the carpet plant – this time not in a dream, but in reality: "She was able to recognize Umar from his military shoes. He was lying on his stomach, and when she approached him she saw that other man; the man of the dream. And the white dust of Fakihani" (81).

The Canary and the Sea: Othering in Exile

I am very aware, as I write this, of the degree to which I have so far "visualized" the loss of home in Palestinian exile in my reading of Badr's short stories. This reflects my effort to account for two aspects that underlie my investigation of the cultural memory of *al-nakba* throughout this study. The first, and most obvious, aspect is the public visibility of the urgent reality of Palestinian loss of home and the ways this loss has been experienced by different generations in exile on a daily basis since 1948. The second aspect entails my personal and analytical situatedness. By "situatedness", I mean any emotional or existential relationship on my part, both in aspect as a cultural analyst and in location as a Palestinian in exile, with the narratives of *nakba* and exile as my subject of study. This second aspect will be particularly central to my discussion of audiovisual storytelling and the anti-linear temporality of memorization in Palestinian exile in the third and fourth chapters.

Given these two interrelated aspects, the argument I wish to put forward in the remainder of this chapter is that a visual reading of literary narratives such as Badr's short stories, highlights the implications of the texts for alternative imagings, and thus for epistemic understandings. My contention is that just as much as images of reality "out there" can be read as narratives, so can narratives, their textual troping and metaphorization, be read in visual terms as "cultural imagings". Such a conceptualization of (literary) narratives is extracted from a specific practice of narratology, one that embraces visuality as an important dimension of any narrative. I am referring to what Bal theorizes, in her book *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, as "visual narratology". For Bal, the point of visual narratology is that its practice enriches the analysis of literary narratives, through its attention to visuality, to become a cultural analysis (1997: 160-167).

With respect to *al-nakba*, my reading of the metaphorization of the loss of home in Badr's short stories thus far enforces a certain kind of understanding: exile as a historical experience that is imaged in the lived reality of Palestinians in the present. Most importantly, such a way of reading offers a cultural envisioning that calls on collective memory. In this equation, reading the metaphorization of loss of home in exile, through memory images, becomes not so much a reading of an object, but rather of a subject of knowledge that is specific and, at the same time, *specified* in time and space. As a result, metaphorizations of loss of home in the stories become cultural imagings of how to resist

affectively the destructive forces of life in exile, of how to develop empowered rather than destructive Palestinian subjectivities.

Such cultural imagings of Palestinian subjectivity in exile can be appreciated in the final short story of Badr's collection, Abu Hussain's story, "The Canary and the Sea". In this story, the reader is presented with other aspects of the experience of exile and the denial of home in the present: namely, social injustice, discrimination and political oppression. These experiences lead Abu Hussain to join the resistance movement. This causes him severe repercussions, both physical and mental, to which his experience of the inaccessibility to home is ultimately exposed.

Similarly to Yusra's and Su'ad's narratives, Abu Hussain's narrative is fragmented. His story is divided into two mains parts, each of which is divided into smaller fragments. In the opening fragment, Abu Hussain describes the loss of his village, Shuwaika, in Palestine. Although Abu Hussain was born in Shuwaika, he indicates that he has been there only twice in his life:

> My name is Abu Hussain al- Shuwaiki. I'm a child of Shuwaika, yet I've only been there twice in my life, once in 1963 when it was full of people, and once in 1970 when most of the people had been taken off to prison or gone away in search of work […]. Shuwaika, my home village, is an expanse of green at the end of a mountain range, with lemon and orange groves and silver sunbeams on the olive leaves, and if you stand on the roof of our house you can see the sea and the Natanya district – alas for Natanya, which I can no longer visit, and the sea stretching out to the far horizon! But you may ask, isn't Shuwaika still Shuwaika, even though they took it in 1967? What is there left that they haven't taken? Before 1967 it was a border village, and the trees, which were right on the frontier itself, were each divided into two halves. One half belonged to the people and the Israelis picked the fruit on the other side. (90)

Abu Hussain's words evoke an idealized image of his lost home. This idealization of the lost place, however, is interrupted by the thought of the "Natanya district" that Abu Hussain is forbidden to visit because of the dividing lines which Israel has established.

The motive of the border runs through the entire story. These dividing lines and borders are not cast as imaginary lines. Rather, borders, following Inge Boer's theorization, function as "concrete, physical spaces".[53] In Abu Hussain's description, borders eventually lead to total loss of land. This loss of land can be seen in the comparison of the village's situation before 1967, and after it. While the Israelis before 1967 "picked the fruit on the other side" of the dividing line, after 1967 they took the whole village. Moreover, borders

[53] See Boer (2004a and 2006: 43-46).

not only lead to loss of land, but they also destructively separate familial and communal relations. This can be seen in the next fragments wherein Abu Hussain tells different stories, all of which signify the border's function as a tool of oppression that keeps families apart. For example, Abu Hussain tells of how his uncle was separated for eleven years from his mother, and how she failed to recognize him when they were finally allowed to see each other from the other side of the frontier line (91). Abu Hussain also tells of a similar experience of his grandmother, who died in exile without seeing her son in Palestine (92).

Immediately after this fragment, the narrative shifts from the past loss of home in Palestine to the everyday of exile in Lebanon. Abu Hussain exposes the discrimination which Palestinians experience in exile. He describes how as a boy he was expelled with his family from Palestine to Lebanon in 1948. His life in Lebanon is characterized by both political oppression and social discrimination. As a Palestinian, he is not only constantly harassed by the authorities, but also undergoes social othering as "a foreigner". This can be seen, for example, when Abu Hussain describes his marriage proposal to a Lebanese girl whose family initially turns him down because he is a Palestinian. Later on, however, the family accepts his proposal after they discover a distant relationship with his family (93)

In his comment on the prejudices behind the family's refusal to his proposal, Abu Hussain exposes the larger significance of what being a Palestinian in Lebanon means:

> We lived in Sunaubara in Ras Beirut, and I soon came to feel that the word Palestinian had a different meaning in Lebanon, conjuring up, immediately, the army, authority and the secret police. I had relatives living in temporary tents in the camps, and the police would come and say; 'Move those away from here' […] Prison lay in wait for anyone who dared attach tinplating to the roof of the tent, or hammered nails in the wooden tent poles. And if a woman spilt water outside the tent, she was liable to a fine of 25 Lebanese pounds; for how could a woman, any woman, be permitted to soil the fair, verdant face of Lebanon by spilling filthy washing water on it? (95)

The word "Palestinian" in exile evokes the political apparatus and oppression. Abu Hussain also describes other aspects of social discrimination. For example, he faces harassment and unequal treatment at work. While working in an East Beirut factory, Abu Hussain recalls what his boss used to say to him: "You're refugees, and yet you try and tell us how to do things. This is our country. You shouldn't be here at all" (96). The boss's statement reveals that Palestinians in Lebanon are seen as a nuisance that infringes on his rights in his own country. These examples are illustrative of the current reality which Palestinians experience

in Lebanon where they are not permitted to practice 76 kinds of jobs.[54] Being discriminated against, Abu Hussain feels compelled to fight to defend the existence of the Palestinian people. Justifying his role in the resistance movement against the Lebanese Phalangists and the Israeli army, Abu Hussain says: "For them the clashes sprang from a desire to dominate, for us it spelt defense of our existence" (97). For Abu Hussain, the Palestinian struggle is a just cause, as a struggle against oppression.

In the final part of his narrative, Abu Hussain tells of his experience as a prisoner of war. During the fighting, Abu Hussain is shot once in the head and twice in the hand, and later he is captured by the Israeli army. He has to contend with brutality as a result of his identity as a Palestinian. Describing the moment when he was injured and captured by the Israeli army, Abu Hussain says:

> The pain deepened my exhaustion. The blood wouldn't stop draining away, and I felt my heart pounding violently. I urinated without feeling it, and vomited, then vomited again. Blood flowed out of my mouth, and I lost consciousness; then I came to again, sweating profusely and gripped by an intense cold. I retched, but nothing would come up. I woke to find myself in a military vehicle like a personnel transporter, and asked one of the men on it to put the blanket on my head. He trod on my head with his soldier's boot, insulted my sister and called me a pimp. "Our heads weren't made to be trampled on," I said. (117)

As this encounter with the Israeli soldier, Abu Hussain defiantly responds with this last sentence to the insult of the soldier despite being fatally injured. Abu Hussain's response expresses a commitment not only to fight for the Palestinian cause but also to resist oppression at all costs.

Moreover, Abu Hussain's description portrays Israeli soldiers as brutal and callous. This description is repeated in the interrogation scene at the hospital. While in the hospital, the doctors gather around Abu Hussain and ask him: "Do you like the Jews?" Abu Hussain immediately answers that he does not hate the Jews simply because they are Jewish, but rather he hates the fact that they are occupying his country against his will: "All right then, so you're all from different countries. Palestine's our country. And you're occupying it against our will" (118). Abu Hussain's statement shatters the common mistaken

[54] For a thorough analysis of the social structure, economic development, and political conditions of Palestinians in refugee camps in Lebanon, see Sayigh (1994) and Peteet (1987: 29-63 and 1992).

assumptions that Palestinians harbor an intrinsic hatred toward the Jews.[55] His statement also challenges official stereotyping of Palestinian loss of homeland as a matter of the past: it concretely places the state of Israel in an analogous position to the subject's condition of forced exile. Abu Hussain's relationship to exile as a colonialist institution of forced travel embodies, in a microcosm, a specifically colonial facet of Palestinian cultural memory.[56] This argument is my focal point for reading Mohammed Bakri's film, *1948*, in the fourth chapter of my study. In response to Abu Hussain's statement, one of the doctors gets up and punches him. At the end, after he is released from the hospital, Abu Hussain is taken to Israel for another interrogation, but only to be finally deported with the other prisoners out of Palestine to their collective exile in Lebanon and later on to Tunisia (124-125).

This final exile of the Palestinian subject brings me to my conclusion. My reading of Badr's *A Balcony Over the Fakihani* shows how, through the shift from nostalgic to critical memory, the resistance to loss of homeland itself and the resistance to the denial of home in exile, symbolized by a resistance to the political designation of "refugees", are central cultural imagings of the Palestinian memory of their ongoing exile. In the three short stories, the combination and integration of the subject's resistance with critical memory, a combination I use here as an analytical concept, is a starting point to understand not only the ambivalence of the terminology of "Palestinian refugees", but also to expose the Palestinians' modes of existence in exile. At the heart of this narrative exposition is the notion of Palestinian exile as an emphatically contemporary condition, not only of a past subjective loss of home but crucially of an everyday denial of access. Within this condition, the subject is constantly denied of his or her cultural space of selfhood.

I have argued that this condition of the Palestinian "denial of access to selfhood" manifests itself not only in the ways in which each of the narratives in Badr's collection insists on specific spatial and temporal connections between space and memory, but also in

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[55] Those assumptions regarding Palestinians' hatred of Jews and Israel dominate both European and American political and cultural discourses and they are often employed as a means of gathering more political support for the state of Israel. See Christison (2001).

[56] This point sharply contradicts Glenn Bowman's analysis of the literature of second and third generations of post-*nakba* Palestinians in which he reads the intolerance and harassment Palestinians received in the refugee camps in Arab countries, especially in Lebanon, as follows: "for these younger […] camp Palestinians the enemy eventually ceased to be those [the state of Israel] who had driven their people from Palestine and became, instead, first the 'Arab' in general and then everyone else who exploited them in their exile" (1994: 146). Abu Hussain's answer makes clear that it would be a twisted logic to substitute the state of Israel with the "Arabs" as "the enemy of Palestinians" in this case because Palestinians' exploitation in exile in these countries is precipitated by the original act of their forced uprooting from Palestine.

their fragmented mode of storytelling. This mode, through critical memory in exile, constantly guides the reader, as well as the practice of reading itself, to the understanding that the connections between time and place in the past and contemporary struggle for liberation and the return to Palestine should not swerve our attention from the everyday condition of exile itself; indeed, this condition of physical and real *ghurba* evinces a clear connection between space, memory and Palestinian cultural identity. The condition of Palestinian exile is presented to us, through concrete narrative fragments and imagings, as an affective construct of loss that prompts the subject's meanings of the (lost) homeland, not vice versa. To fully grasp this, the visual dimension of reading is indispensable.

Palestinian exile is a brutal condition of being; this exile is not simply metaphorical but rather physical and actual. In this condition, the metaphoricity of the subjects' storytelling is uttered through mobile and multiple narrative voices. This results in a fragmented narrative discourse. This narrative discourse is invoked by and directed, yet utterly opposed to, forced travel in exile outside the narrative, even where the *exilee* keeps moving. In the prison of exile, the Palestinian subject is constantly denied his or her place. Forced travel and movement represent the pillars that sustain such a condition, denying the Palestinians of their homeland, and, thus, keep them "out of home". The conclusion I draw from Badr's short stories is as simple as it is devastating. Movement is the prison of the exiled; it leads to the intensification and overdetermination of his or her sense of placelessness.

This is also the case in the next chapter where I supplement my reading of Badr's short stories with a different one of a cinematic representation that shows the discursive effects of loss of place and forced travel on the Palestinian subject within the journey of exile: Tawfiq Saleh's film *Al-Makhdu'un* (The Dupes). In my analysis, I discuss the ways in which *Al-Makhdu'un*'s audiovisual storytelling activates and mobilizes Palestinian cultural memory through specific imagings, which expose a geopolitical continuity of exilic place and the subject's everyday. As I will attempt to show, the film helps show loss of homeland and quest for it in a single "anti-linear sound-image".