

Written from Exile
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Abstract

The paper examines the rendering of Sabra and Shatila massacre through a comparative reading of Genet's essay "Four hours In Shatila" (1982), Fisk's "Terrorists" (1982) and Chomsky's *Fateful Triangle* (1983) using the tools presented by Edward Said concerning the issues of representation and the role of the intellectual. It will shed light on the role of these intellectuals with respect to challenging received ideas and telling missing narratives, and the extent to which each of them succeeded in this role. The study will, furthermore, point out the aspects of similarity and difference between the three texts as well as the reasons behind this. In addition, it will try to detect whether certain aspects about the massacre were overshadowed and whether the cause behind this is an ideological/political stance on the part of the writer or a mere constraint imposed by the mode and circumstances of writing. This paper will also attempt at discovering if the topic discussed necessitates recourse to certain techniques and if this is common to the three writers. Finally, it will explore whether a compassionate representation necessarily entails a comprehensive representation, or in other words: to what extent is the Sabra and Shatila massacre capturable?

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ملخص

يقدم هذا البحث تحليلاً لتصوير مذبحه صبرا وشاتيلا في ثلاثة نصوص كتبها الفرنسي جان جونييه، والبريطاني روبرت فيسك، والأمريكي نعوم تشومسكي وهي على التوالي: "أربع ساعات في شاتيلا"، و"إرهابيون"، و"فصل في التاريخ الفلسطيني"، مبينا كيف أن هذا النصوص تمثل نموذجا للكتابة الأمنية عن "الأخر" إذ استطاع الكتاب الثلاثة تجاوز المسلمات السائدة في مجتمعهم بشأن القضية الفلسطينية وصورة الفلسطيني بل والاشتباك معها وزلزلتها ضاربين بهذا مثلا على وفاء المتقف بالتزامه تجاه حكايات المهمشين وتجاه الوعي المجتمعي. ويستعين البحث في هذا بالأدوات التي طرحها إدوارد سعيد في كتاباته عن قضيتي التمثيل والاستشراق مركزا على ما ذكره من عوامل تؤدي للتحامل على الآخر مبيهاً كيف تتجاوزها هذه النصوص. ويتناول البحث تقنيات الكتابة محلا كيف انعكست طبيعة الموضوع الذي يتناوله الكتاب على تقنيات السرد، وكيف أثر وعي الكتاب بمثالب الثقافة السائدة في مجتمعاتهم على اختياراتهم عند الكتابة، ويحلل البحث أوجه الشبه والاختلاف بين النصوص الثلاثة وما وراء هذا من أسباب. ويجيب عن التساؤل التالي: هل تقديم نص أمين عن المذبحة يعني بالضرورة كتابة نص شامل عن كل جوانبها؟ وهل أسقط الكتاب بعض فصول الحكاية؟ وهل سبب هذا أيديولوجي أو سياسي؟ وهل "صبرا وشاتيلا" حكاية يمكن استيعابها في كلمات؟

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Talking about his book *Orientalism* (1978), Said expresses his wish for scholars and writers to regard the book as a point of departure for other explorations of the interactions between the social, the historical and the cultural. He urges them to build upon his work adding “perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a non-repressive and non-manipulative, perspective [emphasis added]” (24). Perhaps Said himself provides the answer of “how” through his explorations of the role of intellectuals, his elaborations on the obstacles that hinder the fulfillment of this role, and his thorough examination of the process of misrepresentation and the factors leading to it. This paper explores an alternative to Orientalism: the representation of the Sabra and Shatila massacre in the works of French dramatist Jean Genet, British journalist Robert Fisk, and the American scholar Noam Chomsky.

A comparative reading of Genet's essay "Four hours In Shatila" (1982), Fisk's "Terrorists" (1982) - later included in a chapter of his book *Pity the Nation, Lebanon at War* (2001) - and Chomsky's "A Chapter of Palestinian History" in his *Fateful Triangle* (1983) will help us highlight a number of points. It will shed light on the role of these intellectuals with respect to challenging received ideas and telling missing narratives, and the extent to which each of them succeeded in this role. The study will, furthermore, point out the aspects of similarity and difference between the three texts as well as the reasons behind this. In addition, it will try to detect whether certain aspects about the massacre were overshadowed and whether the cause behind this is an ideological/political stance on the part of the writer or a mere constraint imposed by the mode and circumstances of writing. This paper also aims at discovering if the topic discussed necessitates recourse to certain techniques and if this is common to the three writers. Finally, it will explore whether a compassionate representation necessarily entails a comprehensive representation, or in other words: to what extent is the Sabra and Shatila massacre capturable?

I

What is the intellectual's role in society? A question explored in many of Edward Said's writings, mainly in his *Representations of*

the Intellectual. Said principally stands against the prevailing association between the words intellectual on the one hand and "ivory tower" and "a sneer" on the other, seeing this train of thought as "depressing" (*Representations*, x). An intellectual for Said is a citizen of engaged participation in world affairs. "There can be no escape into the realms of pure art and thought or, for the matter, into the realm of disinterested objectivity or transcendental theory. Intellectuals are *of their time*" (*Representations*, 21). According to Said, this participation should be governed by two imperatives— exile and amateurism – and should fulfill two main roles: disturbing the status quo and telling the missing narrative, or representing truth. The state of exile, for Said, does not correspond to geographic dislocation, rather it refers to a conscious state of being or mental mode that forces a rift between the intellectual and all types of orthodoxy in his society.

Exile is never the state of being satisfied, placid, or secure. Exile, in the words of Wallace Stevens, is "a mind of winter" in which the pathos of summer and autumn as much as the potential of spring are nearby but unobtainable. Perhaps this is another way of saying that a life of exile moves according to a different calendar, and is less seasonable and settled than life at home. Exile is life led outside habitual order. It is nomadic, decentred, contrapuntal; but no sooner does one get accustomed to it than its unsettling force erupts anew (Said, "The Mind of Winter", 148:149).

An exilic intellectual then is a person in a state of constant homelessness, captured by "the audacity of daring" (*Representations*, 64). It is striking that Said admits that exile sometimes entails personal suffering. Exile is described as a "condition of terminal loss" whose "essential sadness can never be surmounted" ("The Mind of Winter", 137). Still, exile is praised for providing the intellectual with two main advantages: distance and universality. The "unsettling force" of exile drives the intellectual to risk and go "beyond the easy certainties provided us by our background, language, nationality, which so often shield us from the reality of others" (*Representations*, x-xiv). In exile, the intellectual remains "outside the mainstream, unaccommodated, uncoopted, resistant" (Said, "Intellectual Exile", 116). As such, the intellectual is an unpredictable figure in the sense that his/her performance can neither be foretold "nor compelled into some slogan, orthodox party

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line, or fixed dogma” (*Representations*, xii). Exile therefore provides the intellectual with the distance necessary for developing a critical consciousness without being confined by the roots of established dogmas and received ideas and the prejudices they entail. The core of this critical consciousness is “constant alertness” and unwillingness “to accept easy formulas, or ready-made clichés, or the smooth, ever-so-accommodating confirmations of what the powerful or conventional have to say, and what they do” (*Representations*, 23). This unwillingness should not be passive; it should be accompanied with active willingness to speak up in public (*Representations*, 23). Without this critical consciousness intellectual endeavors are nonsensical: “For in its essence the intellectual life... is about the freedom to be critical: criticism is intellectual life” (Said, “Identity, Authority”, 11). If the intellectual fails to be critical, then he is, according to Said, a traitor who suffers “complete moral bankruptcy” (“The Treason of the intellectuals”, 4).

Exile, in addition, allows the intellectual the privilege of universality. Universality entails “hold[ing] to a universal and single standard” of “truth about human misery and oppression... despite the individual intellectual’s party affiliation, national background, and primeval loyalties” (*Representations*, xii:xiii). In this case, he/she can elevate appreciative sympathy with humans regardless of their national or ideological affiliations. It also entails commitment to integral judgment:

It [universality] also means looking for and trying to uphold a single standard for human behavior when it comes to such matters as foreign and social policy. Thus if we condemn an unprovoked act of aggression by an enemy we should also be able to do the same when our government invades a weaker party. There are no rules by which intellectuals can know what to say or do; nor for the true secular intellectual are there any gods to be worshiped and looked to for unwavering guidance (*Representations*, xiv).

Universality, furthermore, enables the intellectual to develop an appreciation for the “diversity and particularity” of the human experience. He/she becomes committed to “the freedom that accompanies knowledge” rather than “to the exclusions and reactions of prejudice” (“The Mind of Winter”, 148).

Amateurism is the second imperative that governs the intellectual's involvement in his/her society. It means that the intellectual should approach his career as a mission, not a money-begetting job. If we are to define the term by negation, then the amateur intellectual is not one of the "insiders, experts, coteries, professionals who...mold public opinion, make it conformist, encourage a reliance on a superior little band of all-knowing men in power" (*Representations*, xiii). Whereas the latter group stands up for special interests, the former adheres to the common good and universal principles. Unlike a professional, an amateur is "moved not by profit or reward but by love for and unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections across lines and barriers, in refusing to be tied down to a specialty, in caring for ideas and values despite the restrictions of a profession" (*Representations*, 76). Amateurism then has to do with both the intellectual's motives and his views about his role in the world. Professionalism, on the other hand, is undermining, for a professional does his intellectual work "with one eye on the clock, and another cocked at what is considered to be proper, professional behavior...making yourself marketable and above all presentable, hence uncontroversial and unpolitical and "objective"" (*Representations*, 74). Unlike the amateur, the professional falls prey to the routine and sacrifices his own discretion for the workplace policies and market needs. In her "Forms of Representation in the Works of Edward Said", Doaa Embabi explores four other disastrous concepts associated with professionalism:

The first is "specialization" that blunts one's "historical sense" and "kills [one's] sense of excitement and discovery." It is so because, on the one hand, one would tend to deal with art and knowledge in general not as decisions and experiences but only "in terms of impersonal theories or methodologies" (77); and on the other hand, one would "end up doing what others tell [him/her], because that is [his/her] specialty after all" (*Representations*, 77). In other words, blind adherence to one's specialty bars the ability to investigate and deal with knowledge with a fresh eye, hence it impedes all possibilities of creation. The second pressure is that of "expertise", and it is negative because it "has rather little...to do with knowledge" (79), it has to do with "political correctness" (77) and conformity. Giving an example from his American context, Said

maintains that if one is not “a political scientist trained in the American university system with a healthy respect for development theory and national security, you were not listened to, ...but challenged on the basis of your nonexperience” (79). Said is pointing out that when the intellectual acts as an expert for the state, s/he only then becomes a consensus-builder, and a promoter of the status quo, something which defies a primary element in the intellectual’s image, namely, criticism and opposition. “The third pressure of professionalism is the inevitable drift towards power and authority in its adherents, towards the requirements and prerogatives of power, and towards being directly employed by it” (80). The final one is not only being allied with political power and authority, but also being a cog in the machinery of “industry or special interest lobbies” and “large foundations” (81). The threat of these is that the intellectual would act as an expert serving “commercial and political agendas.” This is problematic because eventually everything would be “acceptable according to the standards of competition and market response that govern behavior under advanced capitalism in a liberal and democratic society” (118:119).

The states of exile and amateurism are indispensable for the intellectual to achieve his mission as a disturber of the status quo. In any society the power discourse justifies the established norms and disguises their workings in ways that manipulate the public opinion and protect the power’s interests. This discourse crushes dissent and creates consent and tacit approval. Therefore, “the intellectual’s role generally is to uncover and elucidate the contest, to challenge and defeat both an imposed silence and the normalized quiet of unseen power, wherever and whenever possible” (Said, “The public role of writers and intellectuals”, 5). Hence, the intellectual never gives in to the tyranny of the norm, for his spirit is a spirit “in opposition” not a spirit “in accommodation”. This should not entail however, that intellectuals must be all-time oppositionals or that they indiscreetly adopt oppositional attitudes. “But it does mean asking questions, making distinctions, restoring to memory all those things that tend to be overlooked or walked past in the rush to collective judgment and action” (*Representations*, 33). These questions and distinctions must touch upon all issues related to: nationalism, corporate thinking,

class, race, and gender (*Representations*, xiii). Overall, the oppositional process involves both “disputing the images, official narratives, justifications of power” and providing “unmaskings or alternative versions” (*Representations*, 22). Indeed, it is this oppositional spirit that captures the magic of intellectual life “because the romance, the interest, the challenge of intellectual life is to be found in dissent against the status quo at a time when the struggle on behalf of underrepresented and disadvantaged groups seems so unfairly weighted against them” (*Representations*, xvii).

II

To better understand the attitudes of Genet, Fisk and Chomsky towards the dominant culture, it is necessary first to give glimpses about the received ideas governing their societies regarding Otherness in general and the Arab/Israeli conflict in particular. Otherness can be broadly defined as the placement of a person, group or institution “outside the system of normality or CONVENTION to which one belongs oneself. Such processes of exclusion by categorization are thus central to certain IDEOLOGICAL mechanisms” (Hawthorn, 165). In other words, it is “the **binary** separation of the colonizer and colonized” in a way that asserts “the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view” (Ashcroft *et al.*, 169). Related to this concept is the term “othering” which is coined by Gayatri Spivak to refer to “the process by which imperial discourse creates its ‘others’” (Ashcroft *et al.*, 171). The three writers belong to countries with a heavy heritage of aggressiveness towards “the Other” whether in the political/military form of occupation or in the – more critical - cultural form of misrepresentation. Since the paper is not primarily concerned with the imperialist politics and social attitudes of France, Britain and America, I will narrow myself to a somewhat brief discussion of Otherness on the cultural level.

When it comes to the Middle East, Otherness is culturally institutionalized in the form of “Orientalism”. Orientalism, according to Said is a means of dealing with the Orient, “dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it”. This approach is based on “an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident”. Thus, a basic distinction between East and West became “the starting point for

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elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, “mind”, destiny, and so on”. It also became a means of defining the West “as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (*Orientalism*, 1:3). What is striking about Orientalism is that it is a mere “European invention” (1). Ashcroft *et al.* clarify this saying “as a mode of *knowing* the other it [i.e. Orientalism] was a supreme example of the *construction* of the other, a form of authority”. This construction depends on “the naturalizing of a wide range of Orientalist assumptions and stereotypes” (168). Orientalism is far from being an individual attitude or a fruit of individual effort; it gradually became part and parcel of the Western civilization and culture. It is “a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles” (*Orientalism*, 2). The French and British have a particularly long tradition of Orientalism, yet this does not entail that America’s orthodoxies are less influenced by oriental attitudes, for after all

modern empires replicate one another despite their disclaimers about being different...in general the United States after World War Two considered itself responsible for many parts of the Third World which the British and French had evacuated...and because of an exceptional history based on the legitimacy of an anti-colonial revolution, largely exempt from the charge that in its own way it began to resemble Britain and France. Doctrines of cultural exceptionalism are altogether too abundant (Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 241:242).

These Western oriental attitudes and the imperial culture in large shaped Zionism on the one hand, and on the other, such trends were exploited by Israel to gain the West’s blind support for its policies.

Indeed, exploring some of the aspects of affinity between the Western culture and Zionism will greatly help understand the West’s stance towards Israel. Zionism is a production of nineteenth-century colonialism taken to an extreme (El-Messiri, *My Intellectual Journey*, 564). As El-Messiri points out, Zionism approaches the Palestinians with the European imperialist cognitive framework which is, as pointed above, based on Othering, on the belief in the burden of the superior occupier and the marginality of the native who is reduced to a tool judged according to its utility. In addition,

Zionism was influenced by Europe's racial and Darwinian philosophies (614:615). Palestinians "came to represent nothing more than an obstacle to Israeli existence" (*Dispossession*, 64).

The Western idea of Othering not only informed Zionist attitudes to Palestinians, but also – naturally enough – shaped the Western public opinion on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Western views regarding the Other helped Zionism get "international legitimization for its own accomplishments, thereby making the Palestinian cost of these accomplishments seem to be irrelevant" (*The Question of Palestine*, 71). After all, why would the world bother if the cultural, military and political achievements of Israel are made to the detriment of Arabs – essentially "inferior, marginal, and irrelevant"? "Most important, Israel is a subject about which, on the whole, one can feel positive with less reservations than the ones experienced in thinking about the Arabs, who are outlandish, strange, hostile Orientals after all; surely that is an obvious fact to anyone living in the West" (72).

Another powerful current in the Western culture to which Israel attached itself is the attitude towards the natives' land. It was believed that the non-Western world was there to be taken over and redeemed by the West. The natives are thought to be incapable of improving the land through cultivation and agriculture and hence Europeans have the right to expropriate it and turn it to something useful, something that is a manifestation of civilization. Associated with this claim on property is the idea of enclosure "the defining, or bounding, of a place that signals the perceived settling, or cultivation, of that place. Indeed it is the figure of enclosure that marks the **frontier** between the **savage** and the civilized" (Ashcroft *et al.*, 180). An interesting example that sheds light on both the imperialist attitude to the natives' land and how Israel is fitted into this frame is Eliot's last novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876). In the novel, the land of Palestine is portrayed in two separate ways. "On the one hand, it is associated with debauched and paupered conquerors, an arena lent by the Turk to fighting beasts, a part of the despotic East; on the other, with "the brightness of Western freedom', with nations like England and America, with the idea of neutrality (Belgium). In short, with a degraded and unworthy East and a noble, enlightened West." Here, Zionism emerges as the "bridge between those warring representatives of East and West" (*The Question of Palestine*, 64). In short, Eliot hails Zionism as "a method for transforming the East into

the West” (65).

In short, the West enjoys a two-way relation with Israel. On the one hand, Western culture, “in which Zionism institutionally lived” – as Said puts it in *The Question of Palestine* (72) - helped crystallize the major Zionist attitudes. On the other, the West identifies with Israel and supports it as an extension of its civilizational mission in the Eastern lands of darkness. “Israel has appeared as a bastion of Western civilization hewed (with much approbation and self-congratulation) out of the Islamic darkness”. This is particularly true in the case of America for it essentially “tend(s) to identify with foreign societies or cultures projecting a pioneering spirit (e.g., Israel), with those who are wresting the land from ill-use or from savages. On the other side, Americans often mistrust or do not have much interest in traditional cultures, even those in the throes of revolutionary renewal” (*Dispossession*, 57). In addition, for the West “Israel’s security has become automatically interchangeable with fending off Islam, perpetuating Western hegemony, and demonstrating the virtues of modernization” (*Dispossession*, 61). This greatly affected the discourse on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Generally speaking, the attitude of Western intelligentsia towards the Arab/Israeli conflict ranges between adoption of double standard stances and silence.

Bias is a word that can well describe the mainstream western attitude to Israel. This attitude is based on an ideology of difference that judges the Zionist state to be essentially special; its horrendous practices separated from any similar practices, and its achievements - no matter how disastrous to the Palestinians - hailed as triumphs of civilization. “On behalf of Israel, anomalous norms, exceptional arguments, eccentric claims were (and still are) made, all of them carrying the force that Israel does not entirely belong to the world of normal politics” (Said, *Dispossession*, 78). For men of culture and policy makers “it was de rigueur to be “for Israel,” as if that automatically means being for civilization, against the Holocaust” (*Dispossession*, 66). Therefore, “the very most has been made out of Jewish suffering [whereas] the very least has been made out of Palestinian-Arab suffering” (*Dispossession*, 10). This would be manifest when contrasting the attitude to the Holocaust, for example, with the attitude towards Palestinian suffering. As will be noted in

details afterwards, the West's attitude to the Holocaust is manipulated, turning the Holocaust into an "ideological weapon" for furthering Israeli political and economic interests, (Finkelstein, 9). On the other hand, Israeli atrocities against Palestinians are hardly recognized. This is one of the manifestations of what Chomsky calls the Orwellian syndrome, according to which Israel supporters allowed the information they knew about the consequences of Israeli policies on non-Jews "either to be ignored or casually to coexist with their continually positive views of Israeli society" (*Dispossession*,89).

In addition, silence has been a main characteristic of the mainstream attitude "fair" members of the Western intelligentsia adopted towards the Palestinian cause. Many ex-politicians and intellectuals privately express their shock at Israel's military policy and their disapproval of its political arrogance. However, they "say little or nothing in public, where their words might have some effect" (*The Question of Palestine*, xxii) Said cynically adds "as if the Palestinians were a figure of speech to be avoided in polite company" (194). In addition, fighters for freedoms from all over the globe are celebrated by the West, yet, not a word of acknowledgment is uttered for Palestinians who have been fighting the same battle (*The Question of Palestine*, xxii).

Any dissent from these main attitudes faces numerous difficulties. First of all, there is the lack of a context, a tradition in which the Palestinian story could be set. Analyzing a Barbara Walters interview with Arafat, Said points out one reason behind the discrepancy between the questions directed at the Palestinian President and those directed at Begin saying " She did not know—and, what was more important, there was no rhetoric for her to use easily even if she did know [emphasis added]" (*Dispossession*, 66). Even if a writer wishes to support the Palestinian story, he/she would not find a legacy of works to whose vocabulary, ideas, imagery..etc he/she can refer. Worse indeed, the readily available Palestine story is "locked into the "Arab" (so-called) narrative, and that's usually tied into oil, and the Arabian Nights, and a whole set of other myths" (Said, "American Intellectuals and Middle East Politics", 43). In addition, Counter-voices are so rare and isolated that they are drained of effectiveness (*The Question of Palestine*,44).

Secondly, the Palestinian narrative has to compete with a "very

powerful, already existent narrative of resurgent nationalism of the retributive kind”, namely the Zionist narrative (“American Intellectuals”, 43). This narrative is institutionally tied to the liberal opinion with “the power of a consensus, of a tradition, of a coherent discourse” that “dispels any evidence to the contrary, flicks it away as irrelevant. More: it can convert what one would expect to be devastating challenges to it, into support for it” (*The Question of Palestine*, 44). Thirdly, pro-Palestinian voices are fiercely fought; Said cites USA incidents: Said points out that the choice of the figures who can appear on media to talk on behalf of Palestinians is still governed by pro-Israel lobbies (xviii : xix).

To sum up, the othering attitude and imperial ideologies are inherent in the West and so is the cultural tendency to misrepresent the East. In addition, the cultural affinity between Israel and the West helped the former enjoy a special position in the Western society and earned pro-Israeli bias an enduring characteristic. At the time of producing the articles of Genet, Fisk and Chomsky, this bias was so enduring that it was almost uncontested at all for even those members of the intelligentsia who recognized Israeli violations failed to speak up for the Palestinian cause.

III

Genet, Fisk and Chomsky adopt challenging attitudes towards the imperial pro-Israeli tradition. In their writings about the massacre, they revisit the received ideas dominating their societies, refute their claims, highlight their disastrous effects and attempt at positioning readers towards adopting critical attitudes towards these ideas. Genet questions the discourse of authority on Palestinians and gives voice to their struggle. He exposes some of the main negative features of this discourse, namely: the depiction of Palestinians as Others, the lack of true knowledge as a basis of judgment, and blind prejudice to Israelis. The French dramatist opens his essay with an epigraph that highlights the position of Palestinians as people existing “in the shadows of dominant culture”. He quotes Begin's reference to the victims of Shatila as merely “Goyim” i.e.: non-Jews (“Four Hours”, 3), in other words, “as unidentifiable others, as the negative side [of] the dominant culture” (Oswald, 55). Early in his essay Genet explores, in a passing remark, two more of these features: “The

European press spoke off-handedly, even disdainfully, about the Palestinian people” (4). Two keywords here are “off-handedly” and “disdainfully”. The first underscores the Western ignorance about Palestinians and by extension the defectiveness of its representation. The second highlights that the voices of Palestinians are silenced by “[mis] representing them as the dark side of the dominant culture” (Oswald, 47). Though short, the remark “underscores the violence of the dominant discourse and directs attention to the way the abuses of the Aristotelian tradition shape the representation of marginal cultures in the West” (Oswald, 47). In addition, by giving the native an opportunity to speak for himself, Genet underscores the blind prejudice of the European press to Israel: “It will be very easy for Israel to clear itself of all the accusations. Journalists of all the European Press are already at work clearing them: no one will say that on the nights from Thursday to Friday and from Friday to Saturday Hebrew was spoken in Shatila” (“Four Hours”, 7:8). Here Genet presents “a multi-voiced discourse reminiscent of his novels, Genet intersperses his own remarks with the remarks of friends and passerby, thus drawing the reader into the discourse as a firsthand observer” (Oswald, 53).

To make the deficiencies of Western attitude to Palestine clearer to the mind of European readers, Genet resorts to analogies. As mentioned above, the West’s attitude to Israel is based on an ideology of difference that holds Israeli atrocities to be “different” from any similar atrocities “so that—as a case in point—comparisons between the Palestinians and American Indians, or South African black, are routinely not made, even though similarities between them are striking” (*Dispossession*, 83). Genet breaks this rule fulfilling one of the most important roles of intellectuals namely, “to unearth the forgotten, to make connections that were denied” (Said, *Representations*, 22). He compares Palestinians to a series of victims: “I saw a skinny but strong woman crouching in the cold, crouching like the Andean Indians or certain Black Africans, the untouchables of Tokyo, the Tziganes at market” (“Four Hours”, 12). This intensive analogy shakes the double-standard bases of the Western attitude. In addition, Genet draws an analogy between the Western attitude to Palestinians and the French attitude to Algerians highlighting the way power relations determines how one nation views the other. Two key words in this

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analogy are “the scales finally fell” and “they had achieved political freedom in order to be seen as they were”. They refer to the distortion of the French view of Algerians, and by extension, the Western image of Palestinians:

In France, before the Algerian war, the Arabs weren't beautiful, their gait was awkward, shuffling, they had ugly mugs, and almost suddenly victory made them beautiful; but a little before victory was assured, while more than half a million French soldiers were straining and dying in the Aures and throughout Algeria, a curious thing happened to the faces and bodies of the Arab workers: something like the intimation, the hint of a still fragile beauty which was going to blind us when the scales finally fell from their skin and our eyes. We had to admit it: they had achieved political freedom in order to be seen as they were: very beautiful. In the same way, once they had escaped from the refugee camps, from the morality and the order of the camps, from a morality imposed by the need of survive, once they had at the same time escaped from shame, the fedayeen were very beautiful; and since this beauty was new, shall we say pristine, native, it was fresh, so alive that it discovered at once what connected it to all the beauties of the world, freeing themselves from shame (“Four Hours”, 19).

I believe that the way Genet structured his essay was informed by the desire to build a counter attitude that attempts at giving a glimpse into Palestinians “as they were”. The writer chose to build “Four Hours in Shatila” on juxtaposition between episodes about Palestinian fedayeen in Jordan and scenes from the massacre in Lebanon. Through this, he wishes to introduce to the Western reader a Palestinian other than the “disdainful” one the media talks about; the Palestinian Genet knew through first-hand experience “For me, the word “Palestinian”, whether in a headline, in the body of an article, on a handout, immediately calls to mind fedayeen in a specific spot—Jordan—and at an easily determined date; October, November, December 1970, January, February, March, April 1971”. This experience is particularly illuminating for Genet with respect to his knowledge of Palestinians. “It was then and there that I discovered the Palestinian Revolution. The extraordinary evidence of what was happening, the intensity of this joy at being alive is also called beauty” (4).

Genet's depiction of Palestinians in Jordan is centered on images

of rebirth, beauty, light and harmony. The newly acquired freedom of the Fedayeen is depicted as having a life-giving quality: “a new freedom pushes through the dead skin” leading Palestinians to experience “the joy of blood flowing through the veins”. This rebirth extends to touch upon the Fedayeen’s surroundings too: “that beauty subtly pervaded a forest made alive by the freedom of the fedayeen” (“Four Hours”, 11). This resurrection comes with light and beauty; eyes are filled with “sparkle” (3) and “gleam” (11), women have “radiance”, even pride is “glowing” and camps are receiving “a sort of light from the combat bases” (11). In addition, beauty is everywhere; the fedayeen have “a beauty of face, body, movement and gaze”, the forests they live in have a subtle beauty and the camps have “a different, more muted beauty” (11). Harmony is the mark of this vibrant world whether with respect to inter-person relations or man-environment interaction.

The feeling in the air, the color of the sky, of the earth, of the trees, these can be told; but never the faint intoxication, the lightness of footsteps barely touching the earth, the sparkle in the eyes, the openness of relationships not only between the fedayeen but also between them and their leaders. Under the trees, everything, everyone was aquiver, laughing, filled with wonder at this life, so new for all, and in these vibrations there was something strangely immovable, watchful, reserved, protected like someone praying. Everything belonged to everyone. Everyone was alone in himself. And perhaps not. In the end, smiling and haggard (3).

Hence, Genet presents an attractive, idealized poetic image of the Palestinians which challenges the negative image dominant in the western media. This poetic image is juxtaposed, throughout the essay, with episodes from the massacre. The juxtaposition becomes more stark by the end of the essay where he suddenly moves from a paragraph describing how the fedayeen “were perfecting a new beauty” to the massacre “Many died in Shatila, and my friendship, my affection for their rotting corpses was also immense, because I have known them. Blackened, swollen, decayed by the sun and by death, they were still fedayeen [emphasis added]” (“Four Hours”, 21). The underlined words are key to understanding this juxtaposition; Genet is keen on creating intimacy between the Western reader and the Palestinians, the true Palestinians as Genet knew them through firsthand experience. This intimacy is the only way to win the reader’s sympathy with the victims.

Genet's keenness on enhancing this intimacy determines how he renders the massacre scenes. The supposedly horrendous scenes of butchered corpses are rendered in a poetic tone that gives prominence to aspects of romance and human warmth. Things which are normally repellent like the smell, touch, and sight of decaying bodies are no more so. The smell "didn't bother" Genet (4), it is even described as not bad though strong (9). The untouchability of corpses fades away: "the absence of life in this body corresponds to the total absence of the body, or rather to its continuous backing away. You feel that even by coming closer you can never touch it. That happens when you look at it carefully. But should you make a move in its direction, get down next to it, move an arm or a finger, suddenly it is very much there and almost friendly" (5). Even the sight and imagined voices of the dead are far from being horrifying: the "black and swollen face" of an old Palestinian dead woman "seemed, without moving a muscle, either to grin or smile or else to cry out in a silent and unbroken scream" (8). In the above-mentioned examples, we find that the French poet addresses almost all the human senses with his intimacy-enhancing vivid images. This atmosphere is further highlighted when he comes to describing the houses of the dead giving an image that is sharply different from the "ghost houses" common in the literature about the dead. The room that leads to where four corpses lie "gave an impression of serenity and even friendliness, of near happiness; perhaps real happiness had been created out of others' throwaways...A fairly quiet room, in spite of the carpet of spent shells" (8:9). This intimacy, nay, fusion culminates with the following situational impression: "The smell and the flies had, so it seemed, gotten used to me. I no longer disturbed anything in these ruins, in this quiet" (9). Through this, Genet tries to position the reader towards adopting a new attitude to the Palestinians that is based upon love and sympathy; love and sympathy that are the fruit of intimacy and true knowledge.

Another means by which Genet tries to position the reader is raising rhetorical questions which are used to create more emotional involvement with the victims and to push the reader to imagine the details of the murder. The readers are made to identify with the victims by posing questions like: "Was he running away?" (5), "Did they drag him through the streets with this rope?... who tied him

up?...what was the torturer like?" (6), "Where these bruises or the natural result of rotting in the sun? Did they strike her with the butt of the rifle?" (8). In addition, the reader is made to empathize with the massacred and their families through questions like:

What can we say to their families who left with Arafat, trusting the promises of Reagan, Mitterrand and Perini, who assured them that the civilian population of the camps would be safe? How can we explain that we allowed children, old people and women to be massacred, and that we are abandoning their bodies without prayers? How can we tell them that we don't know where they are buried? (15).

In addition to addressing the reader's heart with rhetorical questions, Genet addresses his mind too. The reader is invited to refute Israeli claims by questions like: "Did the Shatila massacre take place in hushed tones or in total silence, if the Israelis, both soldiers and officers, claim to have heard nothing, to have suspected nothing whereas they had been occupying this building since Wednesday afternoon?" (5). Moreover, readers are invited to challenge the justification-oriented attitude to Israel through rhetorical questions such as: "To the argument: what did Israel gain by assassinating Bashir: entering Beirut, reestablishing order and preventing the bloodbath. What did Israel gain in the Shatila massacre? Answer: what did it gain by entering Lebanon? What did it gain by bombing the civilian population for two months; by hunting down and destroying Palestinians?" (15). Perhaps the best way to conclude Genet's attitude towards discourses of authority and his efforts to illuminate his readership will be to quoting what Said said in his article "American Intellectuals and Middle East Politics": "Genet was the man who was able in fact to rise above this French identity, to identify ... with the Algerians and ... with the Palestinians. This was a remarkable act of self-exile and repatriation in another's homeland" (50).

Like Genet, and even more extensively, Fisk revisits the dominant culture with a critical eye. This attitude is established in the title "Terrorists". Here, Fisk evokes one of the paradigms governing the Western attitude to Palestinians. In the twentieth-century Western society the word "terrorists" refers to a definite Other (Arabs/Palestinians), yet no definite article appears in the title. This must raise numerous questions in the minds of Western readers,

including: who are the terrorists? should the label “terrorists” be exclusive to “the” “definite” group we know? According to which standards can a group be judged as such? And how far is our (Western) judgment of people as terrorists valid? To enhance the title’s effect in shaking the Western paradigm, Fisk follows it by a quotation that shows how the judgment “terrorist” is manipulated in practice and highlights the implications of the dominant view regarding the Other: “Pregnant women will give birth to terrorists; the children when they grow up will be terrorists” (359). This statement is made by a Phalangist in justification of the Sabra and Shatila massacre.

Throughout the essay, the British Journalist gives a thorough critique of the terrorism paradigm. In fact, it is startling that almost no page passes without reference to “terrorists” or “terrorism”, a reference usually made between inverted commas to highlight the author’s reservations on the word’s usage. The first flaw Fisk highlights about “terrorism” is its double-standard quality, or “the imbalance in its perception, and the imbalance in its perpetration” (xxxviii), as Said puts it in *The Question of Palestine*; or rather its “selectivity”: ““we” are never terrorists no matter what we may have done; “they” always are and always will be” (Said, “The Essential Terrorist”, 4). Fisk elaborates that “the Israelis reserved the word ‘terrorism for their enemies, not their Phalangist friends, as the Kahan report demonstrated all too revealingly” (387). The report, Fisk points out, makes repeated references to the Palestinian ‘terrorists’ in the camps though “the judges provided not a single piece of evidence to substantiate the allegation that these ‘terrorists’ existed”. At the same time, the real terrorists who committed the massacre “were respectfully described by the judges as Phalangists, or ‘soldiers’. *Soldiers*” (383).

For the Israelis — for Sharon and Begin and their soldiers — ‘terrorist’ did not have the same connotation as it does elsewhere. In Europe and America, in many Asian countries, even in the Soviet Union, the word ‘terrorism’ evokes images of hijackings, bombs planted in restaurants of schools or airports, the murder of civilians on planes, buses, trains or ships. But in Israel, ‘terrorist’ means all Palestinian Arabs — and very often, all Arabs — who oppose Israel in word or deed. Loren Jenkins used to refer to ‘the careless depreciation of meaning’ that the Israelis imposed on the

word, claiming that this distorted the reality of terrorism. But it was not 'careless'. It was deliberate. Like the Syrians, the Soviets, the Americans, and the British, the Israelis drew a careful distinction between good terrorists and bad terrorists. In Israel's case, the former were sympathetic to Israel and were graced with various, less harmful epithets — 'militiamen', 'fighters', 'soldiers' — while the latter opposed Israel and were therefore terrorists pure and simple, guilty of the most heinous crimes, blood-soaked and mindless, the sort of people who should be 'cleansed' from society (Fisk, 388).

The second flaw about the terrorism paradigm is its being ahistoric. In "Identity, Negation and Violence" Said points out that terrorism is no more considered as a historical and social phenomenon (48). Where terrorism is concerned, there is a "wholesale attempt to obliterate history, and indeed temporality itself. For the main thing is to isolate your enemy from time, from causality, from prior action, and thereby to portray him or her as ontologically and gratuitously interested in wreaking havoc for its own sake" ("The Essential Terrorist", 5). Thereby, 'terrorism' becomes "an excuse for murder...a Nazi kind of method' to influence minds, 'a process of dehumanizing people that was essential to prepare for war'" (Fisk, 388). It simply becomes a means of "implicit validations of one's own brand of Violence" ("American Intellectuals and Middle East Politics", 44). For if your enemies are essentially terrorist, "you can go on to attack them and their "terrorist" states generally, and avoid all questions about your own behavior or about your share in their present fate." ("The Essential Terrorist", 5).

By labeling Palestinians as terrorists, the Israelis were describing their enemies as evil rather than hostile. If the Palestinians could be portrayed as mindless barbarians, surely no sane individual would dare regard their political claims as serious. Anyone who expressed sympathy for the Palestinians was evidently anti-Semitic — and therefore not just anti-Israeli or anti-Jewish, but pro-Nazi — which no right-thinking individual would wish to be. Anyone who even suggested that the Israelis might be wrong in their war against the Palestinians could be castigated in the same way. Do you think Hitler was right? Do you agree with what happened at Auschwitz? No, of course not. If Israel called the PLO its enemy, then the Middle East dispute involved two hostile parties. But if the world

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believed that the Palestinians were evil — that they represented sin in its crudest form — then the dispute did not exist. The battle was between right and wrong, David and Goliath, Israel and the ‘terrorists’. The tragedy of the Israelis was that they came to believe this myth (Fisk, 388:389).

What Fisk presents here is the missing resistance to the “massively inflated claims, undocumented allegations and ridiculous tautologies” of the terrorism scam (“The Essential Terrorist”, 7).

It is not ‘terrorism’ alone that is manipulated to justify unjustifiable political ends: the ‘Holocaust’ is another weapon, Fisk declares in his critique of received ideas. The Holocaust became an ideological weapon deployed to sustain political interests, a weapon through which “one of the world’s most formidable military powers, with a horrendous human rights record, has cast itself as a “victim” state... Considerable dividends accrue from this specious victimhood — in particular, immunity to criticism, however justified” (Finkelstein,3). The effect of such a weapon is so powerful that the Holocaust became “probably the most serious psychological obstacle preventing close and fair political scrutiny of Palestinianism” (*Dispossession* 22). Fisk remarks that “reasonable and thoughtful people — even men who suffered terribly — cannot bring themselves to criticize Israel when it is palpably obvious that the nation is at fault, that its army has behaved in a brutal, cruel way”, he adds that “at these times normal standards of judgment seem to be suspended”. He attests to this, citing names of leading activists and writers who are known for their humanitarian attitude, namely: Eli Wiesel, Nathan Sharansky, Conor Cruise O’Brien, Jane Fonda, and Barbara Tuchman (394, 395). With a rare courage, Fisk sheds an all-new light on the Holocaust:

It would be nice to believe that people who have undergone suffering have been purified by suffering. But it’s the opposite, it makes them worse. It corrupts. There is something in suffering that creates a kind of egoism. Herzog [the Israeli president] was speaking at the site of the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen but he spoke only about the Jews. How could he not mention that others — many others — had suffered there? Sick people, when they are in pain, cannot speak about anyone but themselves. And when such monstrous things have happened to your people, you feel nothing can be compared to it. You get a moral power-of-

attorney, a permit to do anything you want – because nothing can compare with what has happened to us. This is a moral immunity which is very clearly felt in Israel...Politicians, according to Avneri, used the Holocaust as moral blackmail (394).

Fisk's critique of the dominant culture, then, extends to include criticism of the attitudes adopted by media men and Western intelligentsia regarding the massacre. He criticizes the double-standard judgment and insensibility of AP's Steve Hindy who keeps arguing about whether what happened is a massacre or not though he has seen images of victims and heard eye-witness accounts. Commenting on this attitude Fisk says: "I could go home if I wanted but the conversation was part of the same tragedy I had seen that morning. When does a killing become an outrage? When does an atrocity become a massacre?... When is a massacre not a massacre? When the figures are too low? Or when the massacre is carried out by Israel's friends rather than Israel's enemies?" (371). In addition Fisk refutes O'Brien's claims that the Sabra and Shatila massacre should be seen "in the context of a Lebanese war in which different communities had traditionally committed atrocities against one another" (395). He plainly states the difference between this massacre and other war incidents: "There had been massacres before in Lebanon, but rarely on this scale and never overlooked by a regular, supposedly disciplined army". Fisk adds that this incident is also different because it is not a killing carried out "in the panic and hatred of battle"; rather the people murdered were civilians "shot down unarmed". "This was a mass killing...It went beyond what the Israelis would have in other circumstances called a terrorist atrocity. It was a war crime" (360).

Fisk juxtaposes the defense of Israel by Wiesel, Sharansky, Fonda and Tuchman to condemnations declared by the Israeli novelist Yehoshua and Chomsky, for instance:

Wiesel "failed dismally to speak out on the massacre of Palestinians at Sabra and Chatila, expressing 'sadness' but adding that this 'sadness' was 'with Israel, not against Israel' and concluding that 'after all, the Israeli soldiers did not kill.' As Noam Chomsky says of this startling remark, the Israelis 'had often killed [by bombing] at Sabra and Chatila in the preceding weeks, arousing no "sadness" on Wiesel's part (394:395).

As in the case of Genet, Fisk chooses to build an atmosphere that

positions his readers towards adopting a sympathetic stance regarding the Palestinians. The means is different however, for Fisk focuses on highlighting aspects of horror and disgust. This would be evident when contrasting how both writers describe the smell and flies. As noted above, Genet does not find the smell disturbing and develops a kind of intimacy with the flies. Fisk, on the other hand, says that “the stench in Chatila made us retch” (358) and emphatically repeats that “all of us wanted to vomit. We were breathing death, inhaling the very putrescence of the bloated corpses around us” (360). As for Fisk’s flies, they are likened to a vigil army that is always ready to attack its victim in an image that highlights how much these creatures are disturbing and even hostile “If we stood still, writing in our notebooks, they would settle like an army — legions of them — on the white surface of our notebooks, hands, arms, faces, always congregating around our eyes and mouths, moving from body to body... their small green bodies panting with excitement as they found new flesh upon which to settle and feast”. Instead of the silent scream of Genet’s victims, the sounds heard in Fisk’s articles are the “hum” and “panting” of flies (359). These discrepant choices of Fisk and Genet are also clear in the way each of them describes the movement among corpses. In Fisk’s text, the reader encounters this dreadful episode:

I could hear Jenkins and Tveit perhaps a hundred yards away, on the other side of a high barricade covered with earth and sand that had been newly erected by a bulldozer. It was perhaps 12 feet high and I climbed with difficulty up one side of it, my feet slipping in the muck. Near the top, I lost my balance and for support grabbed a hunk of dark red stone that protruded from the earth. But it was no stone. It was clammy and hot and it stuck to my hand and when I looked down I saw that I was holding a human elbow that protruded, a triangle of flesh and bone, from the earth.

I let go of it in horror, wiping the dead flesh on my trousers and staggered the last few feet to the top of the barricade. But the smell was appalling and at my feet a face was looking at me with half its mouth missing. A bullet or a knife had torn it away and what was left of the mouth was a nest of flies. I tried not to look at it. I could see, in the distance, Jenkins and Tveit standing by some more corpses in front of a wall but I could not shout to them for help because I knew I would be sick if I opened my mouth.

I walked on the top of the barricade, looking desperately for a place from which to jump all the way to the ground on the other side. But each time I took a step, the earth moved up towards me. The whole embankment of muck shifted and vibrated with my weight in a dreadful, springy way and, when I looked down again, I saw that the sand was only a light covering over more limbs and faces. A large stone turned out to be a stomach. I could see a man's head, a woman's naked breast, the feet of a child. I was walking on dozens of corpses which were moving beneath my feet.

The bodies had been buried by someone in panic. They had been bulldozed to the side of the laneway. Indeed, when I looked up, I could see a bulldozer – its driver's seat empty – standing guiltily just down the road.

I tried hard but vainly not to tread on the faces beneath me. We all of us felt a traditional respect for the dead, even here, now. I kept telling myself that these monstrous cadavers were not enemies, that these dead people would approve of my being here, would want Tveit and Jenkins and me to see all this and that therefore I should not be frightened. But I had never seen so many corpses before (363: 364).

Fisk renders the scene in excessive detail and with premium focus on his feelings towards every component of the scene: the smell, the flies and the experience of moving under these circumstances. He uses around twenty three verbs to denote his actions as well as his abstention from action. The actions mainly vary between movements (e.g.: "climbed with difficulty up", "slipping", "lost my balance", "for support grabbed", "staggered", "jump", "walking", "took a step") and attempts at exploring the place by sight before deciding upon his next act "looking desperately for a place from which to jump all the way to the ground on the other side". Fisk is torn between action and abstention from action "I could not shout to them for help because I knew I would be sick if I opened my mouth", "I tried hard but vainly not to tread on the faces beneath me". Many of his verbs are supported by adverbs or adverbial phrases that highlight negative feelings "in horror", "desperately", "in panic", "guiltily", "vainly". Along with his acts, Fisk also underscores actions done to the buried corpses "A bullet or a knife had torn it away and what was left of the mouth was a nest of flies", and by them "the whole embankment of muck shifted and vibrated with my weight in a dreadful, springy way". His description of the victims is picturesque and addresses the

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senses of touch: "It was clammy and hot and it stuck to my hand", smell "the smell was appalling", and sight "a triangle of flesh and bone", "I saw that the sand was only a light covering over more limbs and faces... I could see a man's head, a woman's naked breast, the feet of a child". He even takes us in an interior monologue in the last paragraph through which we know the conflicting feelings his mere presence there arouses in him. Though the British Journalist elsewhere highlights the beauty and serenity of victims – as will be discussed in details later – the main atmosphere is fear-inspiring and disturbing. This choice of Fisk is perhaps dictated by the main focus of the article: the issue of how horrible the manipulation of Otherness can be and the question of responsibility.

Genet renders the same scene in two paragraphs of parallel structure. Both paragraphs begin with abstention from description of movement – the opening sentence is a space of silence that opens up the imagination. In the first paragraph the sentence is followed by techniques that show the horridness of the event (grotesque simile, very detailed description of corpses, and question tags that direct the reader's judgment) but whose effect is mitigated by intimacy building remarks "it (i.e.: the smell) didn't bother me" (4). In the second paragraph, the imagination-inciting sentence is followed by intimacy-building description of the writer's interaction with the corpses.

A paragraph has two dimensions, so does a television screen; neither can be walked through. From one wall of the street to the other, bent or arched, with their feet pushing against one wall and their heads pressing against the other, the black and bloated corpses that I had to step over were all Palestinian and Lebanese. For me, as for what remained of the population, walking through Shatila and Sabra resembled a game of hopscotch. Sometimes a dead child blocked the streets: they were so small, so narrow, and the dead so numerous. The smell is probably familiar to old people; it didn't bother me. But there were so many flies. If I lifted the handkerchief or the Arab newspaper placed over a head, I disturbed them. Infuriated by my action, they swarmed onto the back of my hand and tried to feed there. The first corpse I saw was that of a man fifty or sixty years old. He would have had a shock of white hair of a wound (an axe blow, it seemed to me) hadn't split his skull. Part of the blackened brain was on the ground, next to the

head. The whole body was lying in a pool of black and clotted blood. The belt was unbuckled, a single button held the pants. The dead man's feet and legs were bare and black, purple and blue; perhaps he had been taken by surprise at night or at dawn. Was he running away? He was lying in a little alley immediately to the right of the entry to Shatila camp which is across from the Kuwaiti Embassy. Did the Shatila massacre take place in hushed tones or in total silence, if the Israelis, both soldiers and officers, claim to have heard nothing, to have suspected nothing whereas they had been occupying this building since Wednesday afternoon?

A photograph doesn't show the flies nor the thick white smell of death. Neither does it show how you must jump over bodies as you walk along from one corpse to the next. If you look closely at a corpse, an odd phenomenon occurs: the absence of life in this body corresponds to the total absence of the body, or rather to its continuous backing away. You feel that even by coming closer you can never touch it. That happens when you look at it carefully. But should you make a move in its direction, get down next to it, move an arm or a finger, suddenly it is very much there and almost friendly (4:5).

Like Genet, Fisk uses rhetorical questions to inform the reader's stance, yet on a narrower scale. Unlike Genet's essay, the plurality of Fisk's questions addresses the reader's logical thinking rather than driving him to direct and powerful emotional involvement. The questions focus on the parties involved in the action: "Who had dug this earth over with such efficiency? Who drove the bulldozer? There was only one certainty: that the Israelis knew the answer, that they had watched it happen, that their allies — Phalangists or Haddad militiamen — had been sent into Chatila and had committed this act of mass murder" (365). Here, the effect of questioning is enhanced by the direct emphatic remark. Some questions expose the Israeli linguistic (and by extension political) manipulation: "The title of the inquiry — into 'the events at the refugee camps ...' — managed to avoid the fatal, politically embarrassing word 'Palestinian'. Was this not in fact an inquiry into 'the events at the Palestinian refugee camps'? But that is not what it said. And why did the commission use the word 'events' when it meant 'massacre'?" (383). Other questions underscore the absurdity of the terrorism-obsessed dominant culture with all its bias and flaws: "How could I explain to them that the terrorists had left, that the terrorists had

worn Israeli uniforms, that the terrorists had been sent into Chatila by Israeli officers, that the victims of the terrorists were not Israelis but Palestinians and Lebanese?” (369). Likewise, Fisk puts the reader in a direct confrontation with the holocaust paradigm in an attempt to help him overcome what Said called the psychological pressure of the holocaust which may blind the West to Israel’s guilt: “Even if the Palestinians could be equated with the Nazis, how could the Israelis, whose people were victims of the Nazis, have allowed the massacre to take place?” (393:394).

Similarly, Chomsky gives a comprehensive critique of the culture dominating his society. In the second chapter of *Fateful Triangle*, the American writer thoroughly analyzes USA’s special relation with Israel; the factors leading to it and various forms of pro-Zionism support. Since it is irrelevant here to present a detailed discussion of this chapter, I will limit myself to the critique of media, American Liberalism, and Otherness. Chomsky accuses the media of promoting “considerable illusion about the nature of Israeli society and the Arab-Israeli conflict” (51). Media blackout is imposed on criticism of Israel, even if this criticism is discussed in Hebrew press “so that the people who are expected to pay the bills are kept largely in the dark about what they are financing or about the debates within Israel concerning these matters” (53). One example about this is that Ha’aretz newspaper condemned the Israeli wave of repression in the West Bank on 1981 whereas the issue did not find its way to the American press (53:53). Those who dare to question the pro-Zionist received doctrine face “a remarkable effective campaign of vilification, abuse, and sometimes outright lying” (51). American liberalism is widely blamed by Chomsky for being a pioneer in establishing this attitude of ““blindly chauvinistic and narrow-minded” support of Israeli policy” (78). The case is so, according to Chomsky, because the liberalist paradigm is dominated by the image of “an Israeli David confronting a brutal Arab Goliath”, an image that gives way to justifying even the atrocities carried out by the major military power of the Middle East (79).

Furthermore, in his review of the dominant culture, Chomsky echoes the same views expressed by Genet, Fisk and Said regarding the way Otherness is manipulated to make all political ends acceptable, no matter how horrific they are. “It is always a useful

device, when in difficult straits, to concoct an opponent who can be refuted easily, as when critics of orthodox ideological distortions are “refuted” on the pretense that they are pro-Communist” (639). Here otherness takes off the mask of terrorism and puts on the mask of anti-Semitism. Any criticism of Israel is dismissed as a manifestation of anti-Semitism or, in the case of Jews, Jewish self-hatred, in a systematic process that erases the demarcation between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism (58). This effective weapon was deployed when the Sabra and Shatila massacre took place as the government published in several American newspapers an advertisement whose “heading was “BLOOD LIBEL,” a reference to traditional anti-Semitic incitement. It is a reflex reaction to accuse critics of Israel of anti-Semitism, a device of proven effectiveness to deflect any rational discussion of the issues”. The advertisement contains nothing but “shameful lies” declaring Israel non-guilty: “As soon as the IDF learned of the tragic events, Israeli soldiers put an end to the slaughter and forced the Lebanese unit to evacuate the camp” (637).

Chomsky moves from criticizing Western and Israeli paradigms and attitudes to exposing the hypocrisy of the whole world. Many of the countries who denounced the massacre were silent about, nay involved in recent massacres of nearly similar scales. The examples are numerous: the Kassinga massacre in Namibia carried out in collaboration between the French and the Americans, the Hama massacre carried out by the Syrian regime, and Afghanistan atrocities carried out by the Russians, to name but a few. “The message is clear enough. Israel had violated a cardinal rule of international etiquette: if you intend to engage in mass murder, then do so when there are not too many reporters in the vicinity or when the editorial offices at home understand the virtues of silence” (630:631). The ironic tone emphasizes the world’s lack of integrity making the remark all the more stunning. Here I remember Hugo of St. Victor’s: “but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land” (“The Mind of Winter”, 147) for Chomsky is able to keep enough distance between him and the whole world in a way that made it feasible for him to expose the hypocrisy not only of his own direct world, but of the whole world as well.

Like Genet and Fisk, Chomsky is aware of the dominant culture’s effect on his readers and therefore resorts to various

techniques for increasing the reader's involvement in the act of questioning received ideas. Having presented evidence on Israel's involvement in the massacre, Chomsky addresses notes directly to the readers: "The reader might want to keep these eyewitness investigations and reports in mind, as we turn to the much-lauded Report of the official Kahan Commission of Inquiry later on" (625). Here, Chomsky is engaging the reader in an act of opinion formation that is built on logical reasoning, evidence assessment and analysis rather than submission to 'facts' that are taken for granted. In addition, like Genet and Fisk, Chomsky resorts to rhetoric questions that push the reader to recognize certain inconsistencies in the official narrative. Refuting the claim that Israel has sent 100-150-Phalangists into the camps so that they fight 2000 Palestinian 'terrorists', Chomsky raises logical questions:

"How credible is this claim, considering the size of the force that was introduced into the camps? And once this claim is dismissed as the obvious nonsense that it is, what remains as the plausible explanation for Israel's decision to send Phalangists of the Damouri Brigade and Haddad troops to enter defenseless Palestinian camps, knowing perfectly well what they had done in the past, and would do again? Recall again that Israel invaded West Beirut to protect Palestinians from Phalangist terror [emphasis added]" (627).

What is noted here is that Chomsky's rhetorical questions are more directive than Genet's and Fisk's for the American writer narrows the space of supposedly free answer given to the reader by following the question with remarks as those underlined in the quotation. In addition, we note that in his attempts to position the reader, Chomsky almost never attempts at engaging him emotionally; he focuses on a purely logical argument, unlike Genet and Fisk. His tone is, likewise, far from being emotional. This negatively affects the reader's sympathy with Palestinian victims but it suits the nature of the work of which the text on the massacres is a part, as will be highlighted in details afterwards. Yet, what the three writers achieve with remarkable success is presenting a "true critique" of Israel that meets the criterion established by Said, namely that it should "touch the ideological premises upon which Zionism acted towards the Palestinians" ("An Ideology of Difference", 92).

IV

As abovementioned, one of the main functions of the intellectual is to tell the “missing narrative”. According to Said, “facts do not at all speak for themselves, but require a socially acceptable narrative to absorb, sustain and circulate them” (Said, “Permission to Narrate”, 34). Hence, the significance of the intellectual’s role as a representative figure; representative in the sense that he/she represents a definite stance, and makes “articulate representations”, or tells the story to the public (*Representations*, 13). The first requires a skeptic involvement in world affairs so that the intellectual becomes an active and critical “witness to persecution and suffering” (Said, “The public role of writers and intellectuals”, 1). The second necessitates being “endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public [emphasis added]” so that he/she gives voice to “all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug” (*Representations*, 11). The narratives represented by the intellectual should, when necessary, challenge the official narrative by providing new and fresh perspectives on history and dogmas, and exposing “demonized or distorted representations of undesirable and/or excluded populations” (“The public role of writers and intellectuals”, 8). In other words, the intellectual provides alternative narratives that shape an alternative consciousness for the tamed majority and gives voice to the silenced/disfigured minorities or marginals. Therefore, this role involves risk and vulnerability (*Representations*, 13) and may inspire fear in the intellectual’s heart; fear of losing the reputation for being balanced and objective, of losing prize and honorary degrees, of losing the approval of authority figures...etc (*Representations*, 100). Hence the necessity of commitment and boldness for “the truth deserves to be spoken, represented by an unafraid and compassionate intellectual” (*Representations*, 101). Indeed, the representative role is so important for Said that he regards it the intellectual’s “*raison d’être*” (*Representations*, 11).

However, the risks involved in the intellectual’s role as a representative figure are not confined to the consequences of confrontations with established norms and official institutions, for they also include the risk of consciously or unconsciously falling into misrepresentations, particularly when the intellectual represents

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Other peoples or groups. In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said thoroughly discusses the issue of misrepresenting Others touching upon four factors that lead to this phenomenon, namely detachment, textual attitude, authoritative attitude, and power relations. The first three factors have to do with the writer's attitude towards the subject he/she represents whereas the fourth has to do with the relation between the entity/country to which the writer belongs, and that to which the represented party belongs. A careful study of the representations provided by Genet, Fisk and Chomsky of the Sabra and Shatila massacre should not only examine the literary features of these representations but should also explore the above mentioned factors and the extent of their effect (or lack thereof) on the case under study.

The first factor that leads to misrepresentation according to Said is the detachment between the writer and the object he represents. Detachment refers to a state of cold emotional distance resulting from a cognitive attitude centered upon the binary opposites "we" and "them". "What I do argue also is that there is a difference between knowledge of other peoples and other times that is the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes, and on the other hand knowledge—if that is what it is—that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation, belligerency, and outright war [emphasis added]" (*Orientalism*, xix). In other words, the author should not be metaphorically "outside" (*Orientalism*, 222) the object represented and should not see it as essentially inferior on the one hand and on the other, he/she should be willing to understand the object represented with an eye on the truth; not to subdue his/her perception of it to self-centered cultural or political considerations.

The three writers are far from being emotionally detached from Palestinians. They admit, nay defend the Palestinians' entitlement to universally accepted rights and show various degrees of sympathy with them. "Chomsky repeatedly urges attention to the Palestinians, not only on moral but also on political ground" (Said, "Chomsky and the Question of Palestine", 96). However, Chomsky's sympathy nowhere reaches complete identification with the Palestinians as in the case of Genet. Worse indeed, he fails to admit "that the Arab Palestinians *as a people* had an unprecedented unilateral wrong done

them by State-Zionism”, that they –the indigenous population- were being systematically replaced with foreigners (“Chomsky and the Question of Palestine”, 101). He also fails to see the “moral distinction” between Palestinian and Israeli violence (102). Still, having said that, we must admit that Chomsky is a man of outstanding “individual courage and vision”, that his involvement in the question he treats “is primarily moral and intellectual”, that he earns nothing from this involvement other than “vituperation and solitude”, that he is a man “whose humanity is armed with learning, with an indefatigable energy for seeking out uncomfortable truths and little-known (because deliberately buried) facts” (102). It should also be noted that reaching a sympathetic stance with Palestinians must in itself have been much more difficult in the case of Chomsky than in the cases of Genet and Fisk, for Chomsky directly belongs to American Jews, a group that is unwilling even to “tolerate any allowance for the existence of an actual Palestinian people, except in the context of terrorism, violence, evil and fanaticism. Moreover, this refusal to see, much less hear anything about, the existence of “another side” far exceeds the fanaticism of anti-Arab sentiment among Israelis” (Said, “Crisis for American Jews”, 1). Chomsky may have failed to achieve complete identification with the Palestinians and may have failed to view certain parts of the story from their perspective, but he remains a sympathetic intellectual who regards them as having the same rights as his own people and more important, a courageous intellectual who is willing to say this out loud. In addition, his honest and audacious critique of the orthodoxies governing his sphere is astonishing. Unlike Chomsky, Fisk’s attitude to Palestinians is one of open sympathy as clear from the emotional tone of his representation. However, he too fails to completely identify with them and even sometimes falls into accepting claims about them that lack tangible evidence. He suggested that the Palestinians might have murdered Gemayel to square accounts “in the aftermath of Karantina and Tel al-Za’atar” (Fisk, 397), though Chomsky for example dismisses that view as “hardly credible” (629). Hence, Fisk stands midway between Chomsky’s contained tone and Genet’s intimacy.

As for Genet, his compassion towards the Palestinians is so strong that it takes the form of complete and open identification. He openly declares that he opted to belong to the Palestinians though he

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was not born a Palestinian: “this selection is based on an irrational affinity, which is not to say that justice has no role, but this justice and the entire defense of this community take place because of an emotional—perhaps intuitive, sensual— attraction; I am French, but I defend the Palestinians wholeheartedly and automatically” (“Four Hours”, 13). Moreover, the French poet adopts the Palestinian cause seeing a universal aspect in it; for him the Palestinian struggle is not only a struggle of the oppressed against occupation and injustice but also a struggle against all distorted values. In an article entitled “The Palestinians”, he discusses this point: “what has come out of this [i.e. the Palestinian] struggle in the sharpest focus is the fact that the conflict has gone beyond itself in the sense that is no longer only against Zionism and imperialism, but against a tyrannical morality, the morality which gives rise to Western “values,” and also to racism, anti-Semitism, capitalism and the various imperialisms” (28). As such, the Palestinian cause becomes something that gives meaning to Genet’s life and helps him achieve “fulfillment” (Genet, “The Intellectual as Guerrilla”, 39). In fact, Genet spent two years in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan and gave political and philosophical insights into this experience in his book *Prisoner of Love*. Genet’s tendency to the Palestinians influenced his representation of the Sabra and Shatila massacre making it so beautifully full of delicate emotions, and perhaps nowhere more beautiful than in the image where Genet and the victims dissolve in one entity: “the stench of death was coming neither from a house nor a victim: my body, my being, seemed to emit it” (“Four Hours”, 18).

The second of the factors that lead to misrepresentation is the adoption of a “textual” attitude by the writer. Said defines this attitude as a preference of “the schematic authority of a text to the disorientations of direct encounters with the human” (*Orientalism*, 93). As clear from the definition, this attitude gives the text the upper say over the actuality it describes leaving no room for a critical perception of the image created by the text. An intellectual who adopts a textual attitude takes a text’s representation of an object for granted and puts what he/she sees in reality in the mold of this representation rather than subjecting the textual representation to scrutiny according to real-world observations. When a textual intellectual travels to a country whose representation he studied or

read about, he approaches the country with blinding prejudged ideas and becomes interested in nothing but “proving the validity of these musty “truths” by applying them, without great success, to uncomprehending, hence degenerate, natives” (*Orientalism*, 52). To make his points clear, Said likens this attitude to the kinds of views attacked by Voltaire and Cervantes in *Candide* and *Don Quixote*: “what seems unexceptionable good sense to these writers is that it is a fallacy to assume that the swarming, unpredictable, and problematic mess in which human beings live can be understood on the basis of what books —texts— say; to apply what one learns out of a book literally to reality is to risk folly or ruin” (*Orientalism*, 93). When writers adopt such an attitude, they allow these texts to enjoy the power of a discourse “whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it” (*Orientalism*, 94). The writers become both recipients and promoters of this discourse in a vicious circle of unceasing misrepresentation.

Fortunately, our writers overcome this pitfall giving primacy to critical consciousness and first-hand experience over textual tendencies. As discussed in details above, they all adopt a critical attitude towards the discourse created by the textual canon. In addition, in the cases of Genet and Fisk the massacre’s representation is an eye-witness account for both intellectuals were among the first to enter the camps in the aftermath of the massacre. Yet, Genet is perhaps the most conscious of his own personal transition from the textual to the real-life attitude. This transition took place long before the massacre as it dates back to his journey to the commandos’ camps in Jordan. In an interview entitled “Jean Genet, The Intellectual as Guerrilla”, he discusses this transition: “When I left Paris I still was under the influence of a very literary Middle East. Even the newspapers reported about it in a very literary manner. The only thing missing were quotes from *1001 Nights*. Up to then I knew only the traditional Arab World [emphasis added]” (41). But this influence vanishes as Genet gets into direct contact with the Palestinian freedom fighters: “Almost immediately I was captivated by the weight, the truth of the gestures of these men... Now, among those Palestinians I saw people whose gestures were filled with heavy, real weight. It was the weight of reality” (41). For Genet, reality has a capturing weight that overrides the literary

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world's effects. In "Four Hours in Shatila", he openly admits the importance of direct interaction for the representation he is producing: "I am writing this in Beirut where, perhaps because death is so close, still lying on the ground, everything is truer than in France [emphasis added]" (16). What is clear here is that Genet is indeed overtaken by the "weight of reality" of the object he describes thanks to closeness to it, and that he regards this closeness inevitable for guaranteeing, even dictating, the truth of the representation. The French writer touches upon the significance of firsthand experience once again when he says: "From Paris one can entertain doubts about the whole thing, especially if one knows nothing about the layout of the camps [emphasis added]" ("Four Hours", 17). The quotation reflects Genet's awareness that direct interaction is the source for true knowledge and by extension true representation. Direct experiences also leave no room for doubt and hence no option for the intellectual but to take a definite and bold stance. This is felt by Fisk too: "what we found inside the Palestinian Chatila camp at ten o'clock on the morning of 18 September 1982 did not quite beggar description...This was a mass killing...an atrocity" (Fisk, 360). Perhaps it is the privilege of firsthand experience that made Genet's and Fisk's accounts much more compassionate and emotionally charged than Chomsky's.

The third factor that leads to misrepresentation, according to Said, is the authoritative attitude of writers. The Orientalist used to approach the object represented with a sense of authority fancying that he is entitled to evaluate this object, interpret it, and make statements about it that have the weight of science, for he is after all an "expert" (*Orientalism*, 222). The party producing the representation of the Orient is an authority in itself and this is enough to guarantee the image produced its validity: "any vision of the Orient ultimately comes to rely for its coherence and force on the person, institution or discourse whose property it is" (*Orientalism*, 239), i.e.: not on its correspondence to reality or its truth and sympathy. Indeed, the whole "field" of Orientalism was regarded as scientific: constant and undisputable (*Orientalism*, 239). Such authoritative attitude is so strong that the Orientalist viewed himself entitled to impose certain aspects on the represented object. Embabi gives an example: "Gibb's work is evaluative and throughout his

representation of Islam he assesses the religion as an authority forcing views and supplying concepts that are not necessarily inherent in Islam” (“Forms of Representation”, 43). Indeed Said almost equates Orientalism with authority:

There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces...All these attributes of authority apply to Orientalism (*Orientalism*, 19:20).

Chomsky, Fisk and Genet are far from being authoritative towards the Sabra and Shatila massacre. None of them is evaluative or interpretative in his representation of the Palestinian victims. None goes about making statements regarded as having the authority of science. None claims possessing “the truth” about what happened or even providing a “complete” and “finished” account of the event. On the contrary, to various degrees the three writers regard their representations as somehow incomplete and think of the massacre as something elusive. For Genet, even things as tangible as pictures and videos cannot fully represent the massacre for they do not show “the flies nor the thick white smell of death” neither do they show “how you must jump over bodies as you walk along from one corpse to the next” (“Four Hours”, 4:5). Sabra and Shatila massacre is, for the French writer, an experience to be lived, not in any way reported or represented. Even though he underwent a direct experience in the camp, the poet admits that he is far from presenting a comprehensive account of the massacre: “I had explored, and poorly at that, only a twentieth of Shatila and Sabra, nothing of Bir Hassan, nothing of Bourj al-Barajneh [Emphasis added]” (“Four Hours”, 21). The great writer humbly admits that his account covers only one part of the massacre, and that even this part is not perfectly covered. Notice the repeated negation. Indeed, Genet’s sense of the illusiveness of the objects he represents is not limited to the massacre for we read similar statements when he narrates his visit to Jordan “No one, nothing, no narrative technique, can put into words the six months, and especially the first weeks, which the fedayeen spent in the mountains of Jerash and Ajloun in Jordan” (“Four Hours”, 3). It is in fact striking that he opens the article with this intensive negation.

Similarly, Fisk finds that words and journalistic/literary techniques fail him when he is trying to represent the massacre. He thinks that it would be easier to tell what he has seen “in the cold prose of a medical examination” (Fisk, 360). In addition, he thinks that the full story is unattainable. At one point in the article he says: “Their stories would never be known” (Fisk, 365). Part of the massacre’s story was buried once the victims died, and hence no claim for authoritative representation can be made. Likewise, Chomsky finds that “the exact truth will probably never be known” (Chomsky, 634). In short, none of the three writers approaches the massacre as an “expert” whose statements are valid, final, and up to the status of complete truths. On the contrary, they are well-aware of the great difficulties of providing a full description of the massacre.

The fourth factor that leads to misrepresentation is the power relations between the party carrying out the representation and the party represented. According to Said, the West’s superiority over the East played a major role in making the oriental discourse possible. The Orient was Orientalized “because it could be—that is, submitted to being—made Oriental” (*Orientalism*, 6). The Orientalist simply can go to the orient and make statements about it without being challenged in any way. In fact, “Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand” (*Orientalism*, 7). The Orientalists’ position as part of the superior power not only enabled them to institutionalize their whims about the orient, but also blinded them to the points of weakness in the system of power they belonged to even when they were not blind to the very same weaknesses in rival empires. “European intellectuals were prone to attack the abuses of rival empires, while either mitigating or excusing the practices of their own” (*Culture and Imperialism*, 241).

Here, a number of questions emerge: firstly, has any change occurred in the Western-Eastern power relations at the time of the massacre and of the representations’ production? Since a detailed political discussion of power relations between the East and each of the countries to which the writers belong is beyond the scope of this study, I have to resort to generalizations when answering this question. As clear to any Middle Eastern citizen, power relations

between the West and East, in the first place, remain largely unchanged. Colonialism ended only to give way to neo-colonialism, a condition in which “the ex-colonial powers and the newly emerging superpowers such as the United States continued to play a decisive role through international monetary bodies, through the fixing of prices on world markets, multinational corporations and cartels and a variety of education and cultural institutions” (Ashcroft *et al*, 162:163). Neo-colonialism also means that in some cases the colonizers were replaced by a new elite that was “unrepresentative of the people and even acted as unwitting or even willing agents for the former colonial ruler” (Ashcroft *et al*, 163). In short, the West managed to maintain its domination over the East though the latter “technically” gained “independence”. The East remains “the third world” and the West remains the icon of development and civilization.

The second question is: did these power relations affect Chomsky, Fisk and Genet the same way they affected Orientalists? Obviously not. As clear from previous discussion of the writers’ critique of the dominant culture and from the subsequent discussion of the representations’ features, these writers managed to overcome the blinding effect of their countries’ supremacy over the East. Indeed, Genet went so far as to expose the disastrous effect of power relations on the perception of Others underscoring, as detailed beforehand, how the French used to negatively regard the Algerians while they were under occupation and how this view changed after the latter’s liberation pointing out that, similarly, the Palestinians’ inferior position in the scale of power makes them prone to this damage (“Four Hours”, 19). Here, the third question is inevitable: were the three writers able to condemn the massacre only because it was carried out by the Israeli, rather than the French, English or American occupation? The answer comes in two points. Firstly, Zionist colonialism is not regarded by the West as a “rival” imperialist endeavour. Zionism, as noted in details above, is sponsored by the West; the West created Zionist state and then identified itself with it. Secondly, Chomsky’s text is a part of a book condemning the American foreign policy and Zionist practices. Likewise, the French Genet suggested that the Europeans – the French included – share direct responsibility for the massacre.

If the American Marines, the French paratroopers, and the Italian

bersagliere who made up an intervention force in Lebanon left so quickly (the Italians, who arrived by ship two days late, fled in Hercules airplanes!) one day or thirty-six hours before their official departure date, as if they were running away, and on the day before Bashir Gemayel's assassination, are the Palestinians really wrong in wondering if Americans, French and Italians had not been warned to clear out pronto so as not to appear mixed up in the bombing of the Kataeb headquarters? [Emphasis added] ("Four Hours", 7).

V

A- Overshadows and highlights

Genet, Fisk and Chomsky do not attempt at documenting the massacre chronologically. In addition, the major incidents that took place during the three days of the massacre are largely missing. This includes incidents as important as the incursion into Akka and Gaza hospitals and the ensuing violations against medical staff and sick children for example. Indeed, Genet mentions the Akka attack saying: "Akka Hospital, occupied by the Israelis, and across from an entrance to Shatila, is not two hundreds yards from the camp, but forty. They saw nothing, heard nothing, understood nothing?" ("Four Hours in Shatila", 18). The French writer here mentions the incident to testify for Israel's accountability without documenting the incident or even referring to the horrors it brought about. Perhaps this is the same incident Fisk meant when he said – again with minimum details: "The patients at a Palestinian hospital had disappeared after gunmen ordered the doctors to leave" (Fisk, 360). In addition, the British journalist gives the following account on the resistance of the camp:

There had been fighting inside the camp. The road near the Sabra mosque was slippery with cartridge cases and ammunition clips and some of the equipment was of the Soviet type used by the Palestinians. The few men here who still possessed weapons had tried to defend their families. Their stories would never be known. When did they realize that their people were being massacred? How could they fight with so few weapons? In the middle of the road outside the mosque, there lay a perfectly carved scale-model toy wooden Kalashnikov rifle, its barrel snapped in two (Fisk, 365: 366).

The scene is structured upon suppositions and questioning. Even

when Fisk wishes to point out the helplessness of the camp Palestinians he does so in terms of the metaphor of “perfectly carved scale-model toy wooden Kalashnikov rifle, its barrel snapped in two”, rather than documenting the event historically.

The matter is even worse in the case of Chomsky for he not only ignores historical documentation of the massacre’s details but also overshadows the brutal scenes of murder. Unlike Genet and Fisk, he gives no detailed accounts of the atrocities suffered by the Palestinians. Even the only scene described is largely governed by emotional detachment and is accounted for with minimum details “One Palestinian boy was reported to be sitting on a Haddad Land Rover, his cheeks slashed by bayonets, forced “to reiterate his crime, ‘I am a Palestinian’,” before being killed” (633:634). Here two points need to be discussed: the choice of the scene and the way of rendering it. The choice is perfect for Chomsky highlights the emblem of innocence and helplessness, a child, subjected to psychological and physical torture before being murdered. Though a brilliant choice, the scene is stripped of literary touches and of manifestations of the writer’s emotional involvement with the victim. The reader does not see the boy’s facial expression, nor is the scene rendered in a way that highlights the victim’s feelings. What else could be added to this scene? Perhaps discussions of whether the boy’s mother is seeing him in this situation, or reference to how he was taken from his family..etc, a lot indeed remains to be said. Perhaps the case is so because Chomsky employs the scene not to underscore certain aspects about the massacre, but to discuss Haddad’s involvement in it. Again, a purely logical argument.

The absence of documentation of the massacre’s events in the three pieces negatively affects Sabra and Shatila’s representation. It not only strips it of historic authenticity but also weakens the emotional involvement for few things are more touching than an eye-witness account of an atrocity by the victim who experienced it. In addition, this makes the representation far from being comprehensive or panoramic. In the case of Chomsky, shifting the focus from the victims and the lack of imaginative treatment of the only scene included deprives his writing of strong emotional impact and negatively influences the reader’s involvement. However, it must be admitted that these omissions have nothing to do with ideological stances or political interests. As discussed in details

beforehand, the three writers are more than brilliant in challenging received ideas and facing orthodoxies, whether political or cultural. These omissions have to do mainly with the circumstances of writing and the forms chosen. The essays of Genet and Fisk are more like memoirs or eye-witness accounts in which they highlight only the incidents they witnessed in their first-hand experience, a thing that makes elisions of incidents they have not experienced personally logical. The time of writing is another factor for both essays were written immediately after the massacre i.e. before works including survivors' accounts have been published or even compiled. Though Fisk later revised the essay and republished it in 1990, he might have not wished to distort the essay's somewhat memoir-like nature. In addition, the essay form itself gives no space for comprehensiveness; after all, the writer has to be selective, to omit. As for Chomsky, he is a linguist and political observer concerned primarily with the workings of the status quo and American foreign policies. His chapter about the massacre comes as part of a book whose aims are: accounting for "the origins of Israel's attack upon the Palestinians during its invasion of Lebanon in 1982" ("Permission to Narrate", 42). This account includes "a survey of diplomatic, intellectual, economic and political history that connects these disparate realms with each other (42). The second aim of Chomsky's book "is to compare the history...with its systematically rewritten record as kept by those whom Chomsky calls "the supporters of Israel"" ("Permission to Narrate", 43). With a view on the purposes of the overall work of which the chapter on the massacre is part, it must be said that it is natural for the writer to focus in his representation on Israel's claims about the massacre's justifications and on refuting the lies of Israel's apologists regarding the responsibility for the atrocity, even if this comes to the detriment of the piece's emotional weight.

It must be noted also that in the case of Fisk and Genet the scale of the crime and the sense of brutality are more powerfully communicated. Though he does not refer to the scale of the massacre in terms of the number of victims, Genet conveys a sense of this scale by such metaphors as "I felt as if I were the center of a compass whose quadrants contained hundreds of dead" ("Four Hours", 6). Fisk resorts to a similar technique: "When we had seen a hundred bodies, we stopped counting. Down every alleyway, there

were corpses – women, young men, babies and grandparents – lying together in lazy and terrible profusion where they had been knifed or machine-gunned to death. Each corridor through the rubble produced more bodies” (Fisk, 360). When counting fails Fisk, he resorts to imagination describing the place as a deadly womb that gives birth to corpses in a shocking metaphor. In addition, the heartbreaking savageness of this atrocity is made home through a brilliant choice of the scenes to be highlighted and through outstanding rendering of these scenes. Genet presents an image of a woman tormented morally and physically:

She was crying over her brother whose body almost blocked the way. I came closer to her. I looked more carefully. She had a scarf tied around her neck. She was crying, mourning the death of her brother next to her. Her face was pink, a baby pink, the same color all over, very soft, tender, but without eyelashes or eyebrows, and what I thought was pink was not the top layer of skin but an under layer edged in gray skin. Her whole face was burned (“Four Hours”, 19).

The power of this scene does not lie only in the choice of victim and the extensive details but also in the shock created by the sudden shift from beauty and innocence to brutality. The beginning of the sentence “her face was pink, a baby pink” gives the reader a fake impression that what follows will be reference to the woman’s beauty only to discover that this baby-like skin is indeed a burnt one! Only then does the reader fully grasp why Genet said earlier that this woman “could have been sixteen or sixty”. Fisk resorts to a similar technique:

On the other side of the main road, up a track through the debris, we found the bodies of five women and several children. The women were middle-aged and their corpses lay draped over a pile of rubble. One lay on her back, her dress torn open and the head of a little girl emerging from behind her. The girl had short, dark curly hair, her eyes were staring at us and there was a frown on her face. She was dead.

Another child lay on the roadway like a discarded doll, her white dress stained with mud and dust. She could have been no more than three years old. The back of her head had been blown away by a bullet fired into her brain. One of the women also held a tiny baby on her body. The bullet that had passed through her breast had killed the baby too. Someone had slit open the women’s

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stomach, cutting sideways and then upwards, perhaps trying to kill her unborn child. Her eyes were wide open, her dark face frozen in horror (Fisk, 361:261).

What the reader faces here is a panorama of horror showing variations of the image of a murdered mother with her child highlighting various means of murder and different manifestations of inhumanity. Like Genet, Fisk's shocking effect depends on putting innocence amidst this brutality. Innocence is not only incarnated in the babies but also in the metaphor of the "white dress" and the simile of "like a discarded doll".

Furthermore, Genet, Fisk and Chomsky focus on the Israeli responsibility for the Sabra and Shatila massacre. They expose Israel's involvement in the atrocity and refute the claims of its apologists. Genet does so mainly by means of logical and historical arguments. For example, he refers to the 1928 massacre in Syria pointing out that since the French were blamed for the Damascus atrocity though it was carried out by Moroccan and Tunisian infantry why should Israel be exempted from responsibility for the Sabra and Shatila massacre only because the killing was done mainly by the Kataeb?! ("Four Hours", 14). Likewise, Fisk and Chomsky highlight Israel's involvement by citing media materials which testify to Israel's full control of the crime scene and its awareness about the mass murder. To prove the first point Fisk quotes the following Israeli press release made on September 16th "the IDF is in control of all key points in Beirut. Refugee camps harboring terrorist concentrations remained encircled and enclosed" (379). The incriminating words here are, according to Fisk, "*encircled and enclosed*. The Israelis controlled the camps. They admitted this. Therefore they had to take responsibility for what went on inside them" (379). Similarly, Chomsky opens his chapter by stating that Sabra and Shatila "were "sealed off" by the IDF so that "no one could move in or out" and under direct Israeli observation from nearby command posts" (Chomsky, 619). Israel did not only control the camps but also knew about what was taking place, a fact highlighted by Fisk at the very beginning of his article for he opens it with quoting a message from an Israeli commander to his men on September 17: "We know, it's not to our liking, and don't interfere" (Fisk, 359). The British journalist supports this quote by referring to

a tape showing a camp resident reporting the massacre to an Israeli soldier who coldly dismissed the report and ordered the woman to return to the camp (Fisk, 380). Fisk makes the following comment: “The Israeli soldier on the tape does not seem to be disturbed by what he hears. He looks away. The clip ends” (Fisk, 381). In a similar manner, Chomsky blows away the official narrative that Israel did not know about the massacre “with a vast amount of counter-evidence” in a technique that is recurrent throughout his book as Said points out in “Permission to Narrate” (43). He includes evidences by *Jerusalem Post*’s Hirsh Goodman, *Washington Post*’s Loren Jenkins and Thomas Friedman, as well as *Newsweek*’s Ray Wilkinson and James Pringle, to name but a few. It is noted that almost all the media material that Fisk and Chomsky used to support their argument draws on Israeli and Western sources, a thing that would make it irrational for western readership to dismiss them as unreliable or fabricated.

B- Techniques

The grotesque is one of the techniques employed by Fisk and, to a much greater extent, by Genet in their rendering of the Sabra and Shatila massacre. The grotesque is built on disharmony and incompatibility or conflation of disparates, as Philip Thomson points out in *The Grotesque* (20). What matters is that this disharmony should be detected both in the work itself and in the reaction it produces (20). A second element in the grotesque is that of abnormality (24). Fisk resorts to the grotesque to highlight the Israelis’ obsession with terrorism. Soldiers are so obsessed with the idea that Palestinians are terrorists that they are blinded to the fact that the majority of camp residents are dead despite the smell of corpses that spreads in the place and therefore prepare to “go into action against the ghosts” (Fisk, 368:369). Here the grotesque is built upon the absurd abnormality of the situation and derives its force from the detailed description of the soldiers’ military action and discipline, from the irony that it is the soldiers who accuse Fisk of madness warning him that his life is endangered by the terrorists, as well as from the author’s subjective voice underlined below

This was more than grotesque. The Israelis were instructing the dead to stay off the streets. It was farcical, absurd, monstrous. I walked to the gate, my handkerchief still across my mouth and nose. The tank of column was followed by two lines of Israeli

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infantry. They walked behind the camp wall and then, when they reached the entrance to Chatila, they sprinted across the opening, rifles at the ready, taking positions at the other side, covering each other from the ghostly 'terrorists' inside...I was mesmerized by these soldiers. They were still running across the entrance to the camp to avoid the phantom 'terrorists' [emphasis added]" (Fisk, 368).

The function of the grotesque in this scene is to shock the reader into adopting a new perspective with respect to the terrorism paradigm.

Genet's grotesque is as radical as Fisk's but more intensive. The French writer builds his grotesque mosaic on four main images: the party image, the game image, the sex image and the animal image—with the first three being repeated sometimes as much as four times as in the party image. In the party image, the writer describes atrocities using partying motifs. "The ten fingers [of the murdered woman] were cut as if with gardening shears. Soldiers, laughing like kids and gaily singing, had probably had fun discovering and using these shears" ("Four Hours", 8). The shocking element in this grotesque image highlights the criminals' reckless brutality. The image is repeated with more party-related vocabulary. "What partying, what feasting went on there as death seemed to take part in the pranks of soldiers drunk on wine, on hatred, and probably drunk on the joy of entertaining the Israeli army which was listening, looking, giving encouragement, egging them on" ("Four Hours", 15). Few things can make the inhumanity of the murderers more evident than this incongruous image.

The game images are similar to the sex images with respect to effect and function. In the game images Genet compares his attempts to move among the corpses to hopscotch and jeu de l'oie games. In one sex image death is likened to sex: "In both cases the body had nothing more to hide: positions, contortions, gestures, signs, even silences belong to one world and to the other" ("Four Hours", 5). In another, four corpses of men are said to be piled on each other "as if they had been caught in a decaying orgiastic copulation" ("Four Hours", 9). Here, intimacy becomes repulsive and denotes an abnormal situation imposed by the killers. In the game and sex images the element of bizarreness is stronger than the element of horror so as to give the reader a sense of the absurdity of the whole event. The last grotesque scene depicted by Genet is built upon the

animal image:

In a narrow street, in the shadow of a wall, I thought I saw a black boxer sitting on the ground, laughing, surprised to have been knocked out. No one had had the heart to close his eyelids, his eyes as white as porcelain and bulging out, were looking at me. He seemed crestfallen, with his arm raised, leaning against this angle of the wall. He was a Palestinian who had been dead two or three days. If I mistook him at first for a black boxer it is because his head was enormous, swollen and black ("Four Hours", 18).

This shocking image pushes the reader into recognizing the extent to which Palestinians were stripped of their humanity by the slaughterers and how they were deprived of their simplest human rights: the right to live, and to die decently, one might say.

The second technique employed in depicting the massacre is that of irony. It is most stunning and recurrent in the case of Chomsky reflecting a great degree of anger at Israeli practices. Exposing Israel's lies he mentions the statement Sharon made to the Knesset to the effect that the Israeli soldiers did not enter Sabra until Sunday and did not enter Shatila at all and follows this statement with the ironic remark "a fact that did not prevent the Israeli government from officially taking credit for bringing the massacre to a halt" (Chomsky, 620:621). This irony exposes Israel's lack of integrity and its notorious skill at polishing its image. The American scholar mocks Israel's claimed role in ending the massacre once more by referring to the incident when Israeli officers freed foreign medical staff who were taken away from Gaza hospital by the Phalangists. The report ends with the ironic remark: "it would, then, be quite unfair, further evidence of a double standard if not outright anti-Semitism, to assert as some do that Israeli forces made no attempt to stop the slaughter" (Chomsky, 625). The irony exposes the cunning scheme of rescuing few victims of different nationalities so as to claim later that Israel had no hand in what happened. More important, it mocks the terrible propaganda discourse which will readily dismiss such analyses as Chomsky's as manifestations of anti-Semitism or double standard stances. The American linguist furthermore ridicules Israel's claim that it did not know about the massacre. He points out that some mass graves could be seen from Israeli posts by naked eye "but "whether the Israelis actually looked down and saw what was happening was unknown" (Chomsky, 623).

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The irony exposes the inconsistency of Israel's claim. Moreover, Chomsky ridicules Israel's claim that the Lebanese troops were sent into the camps to face terrorists by highlighting the fact that these troops were limited to 100-150 murderers while the claimed terrorists amount to 2000 gunmen adding "so heroic as this are the Christian fighters!" (Chomsky, 627). The irony exposes the illogicality of Israel's claim. Likewise, Genet resorts to dark irony to mock Israel's stance towards the Arabs by quoting an ironic remark by a Palestinian Fedai:

We are linked to Israel by many currents which bring us bombs, tanks, soldiers, fruit, vegetables; they carry off our soldiers, our children to Palestine, in a continual and unceasing coming and going, because according to them, we have been linked to them since Abraham, in his lineage, in his language, in the same origins... they invade us, they stuff us, suffocate us and would like to hug us. They say they are our cousins. They're very sad to see us turn away from them. They must be furious with us and with themselves ("Four Hours", 10:11).

The multi-layer irony exposes the discrepancy between Israel's claims of being tied to Arabs with fraternal relationship, of being keen on peace with them, and the human-rights violations it commits against them. Indeed the effect of irony is emphasized by the parallelism in "bombs, tanks, soldiers, fruit, vegetables" and "they invade us, they stuff us, suffocate us and would like to hug us". Parallelism "promotes the perception of a relationship between the elements of which parallelism is composed, and this relationship is one of correspondence" (Berlin, 2). Here Genet equates food with lethal weapons and invasion with hugging unmasking the reality of Israel's inhuman practices .

Thirdly both Fisk and Chomsky compare the Sabra and Shatila massacre to anti-Jewish massacres. To highlight the enormity of the anti-Palestinian massacre for the nearby Israeli officer, Fisk points out to him that the scenes in the camp are like those of Treblinka. "It was the first comparison I could think of to what I had just witnessed. I had not said 'Treblinka' because Jews were murdered there. Treblinka was an extermination camp. The Israeli looked at me without emotion" (367). In addition to highlighting the hideousness of the cold-blooded Israeli crime, the same comparison

is repeated to ridicule Israel's claim that it did not know about what was happening and hence could not put an end to it. Here the comparison is made by Israeli Novelist Yehoshua, Fisk points out. "This would be the same lack of knowledge of the Germans who stood outside Buchenwald and Treblinka and did not know what was happening" (395). Furthermore, to underscore the massacre's scales, Fisk makes another link, again to anti-Jewish atrocities "Even Israel's lowest estimate of fatalities in the massacre — 460 — is only nine fewer than the estimated number of victims who were murdered by the Nazis at the Czech village of Lidice in 1942 or subsequently transported to concentration camp" (390). Fisk is well aware that making these comparisons "outrage[s] the sensibilities of Israelis" (390). Yet, he makes the denied connections and speaks the unspoken. This reflects keenness on challenging the dominant discourse and a high degree of reader-consciousness.

Similarly, Chomsky takes the same daring step and compares Sabra and Shatila to the Kishinev Pogrom (Anti-Jews riot that took place in the city of Kishinev on 1903. A boy was murdered and rumors spread circulating that he was killed by Jews who wanted to use his blood in their rituals. Violence erupted against them murdering dozens and injuring hundreds). Here, the comparison is much more extended for Chomsky highlights numerous aspects of similarity and dissimilarity between the two massacres throughout the essay. The first aspect of similarity is that officials of both sides willfully abstained from preventing the massacres. Israel was "well aware" of the atrocity "just as the Czar's police and army could not have failed to know what was happening in the Jewish quarter of Kishinev" (621). The second aspect is the ideologies governing the actions of both criminals, ideologies based on otherness and pragmatism. Israelis thought that the Lebanon massacre is justified because "terrorists" had to be eliminated. Besides "If innocent people have to die, that's the price of all wars". Chomsky comments: "Perhaps the Czar's officers harbored similar thoughts" (621). Sabra and Shatila also resembles Kishinev in the number of casualties among the attackers "The 150 Phalangists sent in to overcome them [the so-called terrorists] reported 2 killed—exactly the number of casualties suffered by the murderers at Kishinev, by macabre coincidence" (627). Yet when it comes to the massacre's scale, the discrepancy is shocking; if we are to judge by the reports of the

Israeli Defense Minister we will find that the scale of the anti-Palestinian massacre is “almost 20 times the scale of the Kishinev massacre, 375 terrorists for each Phalange fighter” (628). The overall result of the comparison is that Israel is more brutal “One wonders whether the Czar could have carried it off with such grace and elegance” (629). Through these comparisons, Chomsky, like Fisk, helps the reader to perceive the massacre in a completely new light.

Fourthly, to various degrees, the three writers resort to mimetic reversals in their representations. Mimetic Reversals means “a reversal of the images and motifs previously applied to the native and his land” (“Forms of Representation”, 72). The main image that is reversed is that of the savage native. The concept of savageness “has performed an important service in Eurocentric epistemologies and imperial/colonial ideologies” for it designates “the West as norm and define[s] the rest as inferior, different, deviant, subordinate and subordinateable” (Ashcroft *et al*, 209). Contrary to this, the three writers attribute savageness to the Israeli occupiers and their allies. Chomsky points out that their attack is far from being chivalrous for they overtake camps that are “defenseless” (619) praising slaughter as “good work” (620). This image is even stronger in the accounts of Genet and Fisk. In Genet’s essay savageness is evident in the writer’s direct comments as well as in the images he underscores. Describing Israeli soldiers he says: “I saw them coming in single file: one column...their brutality preceded them” (“Four Hours”, 7). They bomb cemeteries (10) and their allies do not merely kill; they kill brutally torturing the victims and mutilating the corpses: “as I looked closer, it became clear that it [an artificial leg] had been brutally wrenched off the amputated leg, because the straps that usually held it to the thigh were all broken” (18). Similarly, Fisk directly describes what he sees in the camps as “evidence” of “savagery” (Fisk, 360). Worse than barbarians, Israel’s military protégés; the Phalangist gangs; slaughter old men and throw their corpses “in a pile of garbage” (365). Related to the concept of savageness in the colonial discourse is the concept of cannibalism. Though “the eating of human flesh on occasions of extremity or transgression, or in ritual, has been recorded from time to time as a feature of many societies...the emergence of the word cannibal was an especially powerful and distinctive feature of the rhetoric of

empire” (Ashcroft *et al*, 30). Though Genet does not directly describe the attackers using the word “cannibal” the party images discussed before echo scenes of cannibalism in colonial discourse, especially this scene: “a barbaric party had taken place there: rage, drunkenness, dances, songs, curses, laments moans” (“Four Hours”, 19). References to barbarism, songs, dances and moans that accompany the murder of men bring to the mind the sounds of African drums and dances that are said to be accompanying the so-called cannibal festivals.

The second image that is reversed by Genet and Fisk is the fragmented image of the native. In the colonial discourse, the native usually is not depicted as a human being, rather as a fragmented being. Achebe criticizes Conrad for describing the African natives as “a whirl of black limbs” and “a mass of hands clapping” in his novella *Heart of Darkness* (784:785). This is the opposite of the image of Palestinians we find in the essays of Genet and Fisk. Describing a Palestinian woman in Jordan, Genet says “Her face was serious but not ill-tempered, tired but not weary” (“Four Hours”, 12). The French writer not only gives a humanitarian description of the woman but also highlights the heroic aspect of her life for he describes in details one of her commando operations (12). In fact, even dead victims are not described as mere corpses but as individuals; each with a story, each with a positive imprint to leave on Genet as detailed in the discussion of his intimacy with the Palestinians. This is the case with Fisk’s account too. He even repeats the name of one of the victims: “Mr. Nouri” (365 and 380). Likewise, a dead woman is described as a saint: “Her face was peaceful, eyes closed, a beautiful woman whose head was now granted a strange halo” (362). Her individuality is stressed by highlighting the following details:

She must have hidden in her home when she heard the shooting in the camp. She must have escaped the attention of the Israeli-backed gunmen until the very morning. She had walked into her yard, heard no shooting, assumed the trouble was over and gone about her daily chores. She could not have known what had happened. Then the yard door must have opened, as quickly as we had just opened it, and the murderers would have walked in and killed her (362: 363).

Two other images are reversed. Genet reverses the image of the

lazy native. In the colonial discourse the native is depicted as irrationally committed to enjoyment and completely incapable of the hard work necessary to bring about his country's progress (Dobbins, 72). This is the exact opposite of the image of Palestinian men and women engaged in the labor of bringing about the well-being of their country and heroically bearing all the difficulties that ensue from the liberation struggle. They are not only hard workers, but also clever at their work. Describing how Palestinians take care of their weapons, he says that soldiers "disassemble them to clean and grease them, then reassemble them quickly. Some managed this feat of disassembling and reassembling their weapons blindfolded so they could do it at night" ("Four Hours", 4). Moreover, in the colonial literary works the native was sometimes given a space to speak only to condemn himself. In *Robinson Crusoe* for example Friday spoke to expose his people's cannibalism (218). However, what we find in Fisk's "Terrorists" is that it is the colonizer who speaks to condemn himself and expose his army's Nazi racism: "what was it that Israeli lieutenant had told me on the hills above Beirut on 16 June? "I would like to see them all dead... I would like to see all the Palestinians dead because they are a sickness wherever they go... Personally, I don't think our government would take the responsibility for massacring a lot of Palestinians" (382). These mimetic reversals help Genet and Fisk fulfill one of the main roles of intellectuals, namely "to break down the stereotypes and reductive categories that are so limiting to human thought and communication" (*Representations*, xi).

Finally, what remains to be said is that Sabra and Shatila emerged as a chronotope in writings about the massacre. The concept of chronotope was introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin in his essay "Forms of Time and of The Chronotope in The Novel". This term literally means "time space" and refers to "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (84). It was originally introduced as part of Einstein's Theory of Relativity and was borrowed by Bakhtin for literary criticism "almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely). What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space)" (84). In other words, in literary chronotopes "spatial and

temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out concrete whole” and through this time “takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible” and space “becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history” (84). Chronotopes are remarkable for having “*representational* importance”:

It is precisely the chronotope that provides the ground essential for the showing-forth, the representability of events. And this is so thanks precisely to the special increase in density and concreteness of time markers –the time of human life, of historical time- that occurs within well-delineated spatial areas... Thus the chronotope, functioning as the primary means for materializing time in space, emerges as a center for concretizing representation, as a force giving body to the entire novel (250).

What the writers see in the crime scene is not only the slaughtering that took place at Sabra and Shatila, but also various episodes of Palestinian history. In Fisk’s essay, Sabra and Shatila is charged with the history of other Palestinian massacres. Once his colleague Jenkins sees the corpses he shouts “This is Deir Yassin all over again” (Fisk, 360). Here the fourth dimension of Lebanon’s camp refers to the 1948 massacre during which Israeli terrorist gangs attacked the Deir Yassin village while its residents were asleep and murdered more than 100 of its 750 residents most of whom are women, children and elderly men, and expelled hundreds of others despite the resistance of the village’s men (Al-Khalidi, 3:4). In addition, Sabra and Shatila could not be discussed, according to Fisk, without reference to Ein el-Helweh siege. Trying to explain why Israel resorted to Lebanese militia to carry out the Sabra and Shatila massacre instead of its soldiers, he pointed out that Israel managed to kill many of Ein el-Helweh’s civilians through bombarding it during the siege but when it tried to send its infantry to the camps the Palestinian gunmen there managed to kill more than 40 of them. Wishing to carry out a new atrocity with no losses, Israel resorted to the Christian militias (Fisk, 386:387). Sabra and Shatila also refers to Tal al-Za’tar. Discussing the fact that the 1982 massacre was not difficult to predict, he points out that in fact the Israelis might have structured the whole Gemayel episode to liquidate Palestinians “They are going to shoot them – it is going to be a huge Tel al-Za’atar” (Fisk, 387). Here, the recent massacre is seen in the light of the 1976 siege and massacre during which “Perhaps 3,000

Palestinians, mostly civilians, died” (Harris, 165).

For Genet, the Sabra and Shatila chronotope is charged with the history of refugees’ crises. The French writer sees in Sabra and Shatila camp the moral torment suffered by its inhabitants for being away from their country and for fearing to lose the dream of return, to lose the Palestine they knew: “in the camps, after twenty years of exile, the refugees dreamed of their Palestine, and no one dared to think or say that Israel had destroyed it from top to bottom” (“Four Hours”, 14). Yet Genet points out that suffering is far from being only moral for he says that the Palestinians “may remain prisoners of the camp’s unhappy spell” (15). What unhappiness and what spell? Perhaps the unhappy spell refers to exposition “to hunger, to every degradation and to every form of oppression” in refugee camps (El-Ali). Perhaps it refers to the atrocities suffered by the camp residents during the civil war. Perhaps it refers to massacres suffered during the Israeli invasion. Perhaps the loss of family members and loved ones during the 1948 Palestinian Nakba and its aftermath. The space is open for infinite interpretations. Yet, Genet does not see in the Sabra and Shatila chronotope the history of suffering of its residents alone, for it brings to his mind the history of other Palestinian refugee camps, namely those in Jordan. And again, this is a history of suffering

They [refugees in Jordan] still saw a Palestine which no longer existed when they were sixteen, but finally they had a land. They were neither under nor on top of it, but in a disturbing space where any movement was a wrong one. Under the bare feet of these octogenarian and supremely elegant tragediennes was the earth solid? It was less and less true. After having fled Hebron under Israeli threats the earth here seemed solid, everyone was lighthearted and moved sensuously in the Arabic language. As time went by the earth seemed to experience this: the Palestinians were less and less bearable at the same time as these Palestinians, these peasant-farmers, were discovering movement, walking, running, the pleasure of ideas dealt out nearly every day like playing cards, the weapons assembled, disassembled and used (“Four Hours”, 12).

Here, the “disturbing space” which the refugees occupy in the nonsolid lands of exile gives clue to the Palestinians’ problematic

relation with these lands. Palestinians had to struggle not only with Zionism but also with the pressures of the state of their residence (*The Question of Palestine*, 121). The latter struggle is not only limited to the struggle for satisfying the basic needs of everyday life, for it had a more fatal element. The existence of Palestinians itself in some Arab states, most notably Jordan and Lebanon, was regarded as a threat; as the armed commandos gained more power, and the PLO's role crystallized the Palestinians emerged as a state within a state. They threatened the regime's monopoly over power whenever this power seemed to threaten Palestinian interests within the state (164). Therefore there is the irony that "the Palestinian cause is highest on every Arab government's agenda, but the number of Palestinian dead at Arab government hands is appallingly high" (170). Indeed, the land on which the refugees stand is far from being solid and they find that they have to struggle for their homeland without having a place, a "physical terrain on which to conduct our struggle" (122).

In addition, Eli Hobeika emerges as a chronotopic figure in the accounts of Fisk and Chomsky. In the introduction of his essay Bakhtin says "the image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic" (85). When talking about the Rabelaisian Chronotope, he says "What is at issue here is that special connection between a man and all his actions, between every event of his life and the spatial-temporal world" (167). In Fisk's essay, Hobeika, leader of the Phalange troops that participated in the Sabra and Shatila massacre, carries also the history of the Lebanese civil war for he is said to be a survivor of the Damour massacre carried out by Palestinians during the civil war in retaliation for massacres against Palestinian civilians. In this massacre he lost all his family, his fiancée included (Fisk, 387). Chomsky highlights a different episode of the Civil War history Hobeika reflects; for he mentions that the Phalange was "the architect of the Tel al-Zaatar massacre" (Chomsky, 632). Both writers highlight the history of the man to testify to the fact that Israel could have well predicted the consequences of sending such a man to the Muslim Palestinian quarters.

VI

To conclude, the accounts presented by Genet, Fisk and Chomsky on the Sabra and Shatila massacre can well be regarded as exemplary of

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truthful representations and of works that reflect authors' success in carrying out their roles as intellectuals. The three writers manage to various degrees to avoid the pitfalls that can lead authors astray from their roles towards their societies and the whole of humanity. They force themselves into exile and adopt an amateur attitude, and thus become capable of questioning the discourse of authority on the Arab/Israeli conflict and challenge the coercive status quo. They dare to speak up, making denied connections, and giving voice to the silenced narrative. More remarkable is that they are so aware of the orthodoxy's effects on their readers and thus manipulate their writings in ways that take into account possible challenge and denial on the part of the reader.

In addition they managed, to a great extent, to overcome the ideological and political factors that hinder writers from presenting a truthful representation of other cultures and peoples. Their representations of the Sabra and Shatila massacre are to various degrees truthful, sympathetic and disinterested. Even the episodes overshadowed are neglected for factors pertaining to the form and circumstances of writing, as well as to the elusive nature of the topic discussed. Indeed, great injustice will be done to these beautiful works if we expect each of them to be in itself all-comprehensive or covering all the aspects (logical, emotional, historical...etc) related to an event as immune to description as the Sabra and Shatila massacres. These works must be seen as complementing one another, as forming together part of the main picture, part of the missing narrative rather than wishing for each piece to present the whole picture by itself, which is impossible. In fact, it is enough credit for the writers that they all admitted that their accounts on the massacre does not give it its due.

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