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**The colonisation of the female body in Liana
Badr's *The Eye of the Mirror***

submitted to

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Abstract:

Lina Badr's *The Eye of the Mirror* (1970) is, by and large, a narrative documentation of the 1975-6 siege and fall of Tal el-Zaatar in Beirut during the Lebanese civil war. Through her female protagonist Aisha, Badr introduces the Palestinian collective trauma as it is enacted on Aisha whose desire to free her body from the confines of traditions is a reflection of the Palestinian nostalgia to liberate themselves and their land from the Israeli occupation. We argue that Badr depicts the experience of women and reveals the ways that the Tal al Za'atar war both oppresses women by merging traditions and function as an arena of emancipating women from gender roles. In doing so, Badr undermines the masculine discourse that excludes and marginalizes women's war experiences and their roles in narrating and preserving Palestinian memory through the act of narration.

Introduction:

Badr's *The Eye of the Mirror* portrays the suffering of Palestinians in general and women in particular during Tal Al-Zatar war in 1975-76. All the Palestinians who were in Tal al-Zatar at that time were deprived from of basic rights as electricity, food, water and ammunitions while women in particular were deprived from everything related to life; all the tragedies in the novel are what Badr saw, heard and experienced when she visited the camp as a journalist during the truce. In fact, she confirmed to us during a private call we made with her that all the events of the novel are parts of the bitter reality that Palestinian women as Aisha passed and are passing through. The cancelation of identities dominates the novel from the beginning to the end; Aisha's Body represents all Palestinian women's bodies who are considered as victims of both the war and society. So, Badr tries to heal the wounds of these women by giving them attention and narrating about them. The following paragraphs will shed light on some of the struggles that women face in patriarchal societies.

Romance:

Palestinian women and girls live under the violation of the human rights and traditions; they lack for their simple rights which every human being needs. According to Engy Saleh, "Liana Badr's *The Eye of The Mirror*" (1991) has been tackled mainly as a novel that hits heavily on the Palestinian experience, in general and the Palestinian women in particular". The voice of Palestinian women is almost faded, but this is not the case according to many women in Palestine because their tone is not raised up in the community. In the past, Palestinian fathers tend not to send their daughters to schools because it has stuck in their mind as my grandmother told me once that the girls would send a written letters for boys after learning the alphabets in schools. Therefore, in their opinion, the girl must not go to schools. It mentions that Aisha is sent by her mother to serve in the church in exchange for education. Therefore, she suffers from the absence of the educational freedom right. In some Palestinian areas, women's role has not only been marginalized, but also vanishes in all the life's aspects.

Every girl has feelings and they like to love and to be loved. Aisha is like any other girl who has feelings and falls in love. Her name suggests the meaning of being alive but in the reality, she is a dead body. Palestinian girls don't have the right to show their feelings and emotions in public. They have to keep silent or they will be killed. Love is forbidden in Palestine and women are not allowed to express their feelings openly. In fact, Romance is associated with disgrace in most traditional areas in Palestine. For example, in the mountain journey autobiography of Fadwa Touqan (1985), it is mentioned that she was deprived from learning in schools because she

was given a rose from a strange boy. So, according to the traditions of the Palestinian society, to be considered as a respectful woman, she has to be deprived from practicing her innocent behaviors.

In *The Eye Of The Mirror*, Badr shows that female figures are complicit with their oppression. Aisha's name means life which implies a good thing; however, her family and her surrounding society kill the connotations of her name, so she becomes an almost dead person who breathes injustice. There is a contradiction between her name and the life she lives. Aisha loves someone called George. She practices her love secretly because of two reasons. On the one hand, she is afraid of her father and her family in general. On the other hand, she has a big fear from her society. George is "the camp fighter. People use to welcome him to listen to his stories about the war. All people loved him, old men consider him as an heir to their wisdom, women treat him as the most intelligent son and looked up to him as ideal". (p. 75). Therefore, he deserves to be loved in her opinion. She loves him because of his brave actions and his unique character.

Arab women create a strong love towards their lovers as it has been known. Aisha seems to represent all the Arab, Palestinian women. She loves George in all of her senses. "She forgets herself and the surrounding world when she sees him. The boy, the adult or the brave man. She loses the feelings when she looks at him" (p. 50). She uses to wait for him. Once he comes; she hides herself in the corner. She lives in a secret grief and it begins and never ends. The Patriarchal society will never allow her to show her emotions. Our society forces women to hide their voices. As a result, silence becomes the only weapon to express feelings rather than expressing their true feelings. When she sees him coming to her house, she says inside herself "how beautiful is he" (p. 52). She is not allowed to express what her feelings.

Moreover, her dilemma doesn't stop here. Her struggle with her father goes for one side and the other is that George loves another girl called Hana. Many Palestinian women like Aisha don't have the freedom to choose the person whom she wants to continue her life with. Saleh claims that "Women are to be submissive enough, so that they do not even think of freedom which is not an option in their case. As a result, they may lose control and get into a state of madness that serves to reflect how oppressed and objectified they have been" (p. 41). In contrast, males have the total freedom and authority to choose and love whoever they want without any force.

Women do not have the right to speak or to express their emotions. Aisha's silence and acceptance of the reality were obligatory. According to Saleh "Aisha was trying to keep up with her innocence that is directly linked to immaturity, while her silence and naïve perspective towards life in the beginning of the novel reflects Aisha's immaturity, giving it up at the end of the novel, signifies her coming into maturity" (p.

42). Aisha and the other characters who fall in love secretly reflect the situation of some Palestinian girls when it comes to love. They all represent the passivity and objectification of women in their homeland.

Silence is a big issue in the novel. Women are always afraid of raising up their voices. Mirriam Cooke (1991) argues that "women are more than victims. They embody silence, the prohibition on language. They live apart, far from places that give space to speech. Their mouth are covered, their voices are strangled" (p. 42). The quotation implies that the Palestinian women are enforced to be committed to silence as a sign of conformity. The Patriarchal society is a monopolizing resource, controlling power of women's bodies and voices which ensures the absence of the female voice and how they must be controlled by the society's backward traditions and restrictions.

Love is an endless story which has no limits. Amina, the tough girl, but when it comes to love, she turns into a soft girl. She loves Ali Samir the one who is the responsible for the well of water. She tries to create chances to go to see him. She couldn't express her feelings too because she is afraid of her society. When people mention his name, her heart laughs." they mention his name. Her heart melts and a big smile has drawn into her face" (p. 366). And the tragic love stories are continued in the novel. The following paragraph shows another character who loves a person but she couldn't show her emotions.

Khazna in this story falls in love with the doctor she works with. Elias is engaged yet he continues saying "I'll leave my fiancé for you" (p. 300) in a funny tone but she believes him and he moves her feelings too. Khazna used to watch his movements but she could not declare her emotions. Women in Palestine used to love secretly. The examples which are mentioned above talk about the misery of the reality in the Palestinian society. Any girl who falls in love but she couldn't express her feelings and emotions though. Romance is being forbidden in this society. In fact, women in Palestine are enforced to be silent machines who have to obey rules correspondingly.

Aisha symbolizes the Palestinians in not owning their land. "Aisha's not owning her own body is like all Palestinians not owning their own land". (p. 45). At the end, it seems that it's the responsibility of Aisha to speak out and to show her voice. Palestinians have been silent since ages. Therefore, the time has come for Aisha to show up and not to be silent anymore. Aisha's loss of her right to express her feelings is like the case of Palestinians who have been lived in long silence. Once Ghasan Kanafani said " Silence is a cry of the same kind, more profound and fit more in human dignity". Silence seems to be as a powerful weapon for Aisha and other Palestinian girls. It is considered as a sign of saving dignity rather than being defected.

The Arranged and Enforced marriage:

Badr's novel shows that gazing is a patriarchal weapon that males use to control women's body and sexuality: "he follows her with his eyes, casting an invisible chord that traces her movement between the kitchen, the room and the roof" (p. 38); Assayed who is Aisha's father always monitors Aisha's body waiting for any sign of change in order to take the necessary procedures of subjecting her and keeping her under the patriarchal authority. "Her body spoke, and she became agitated. She shivered before her mother's inquisitive gaze as it searched her body inch by inch" (p. 25). The parents' intrusive gazes are like restrictions that deprive Aisha from moving freely. The hatred of oneself body is dramatized by Aisha who is afraid of her body's changes that all female naturally pass through; her fears are caused by her father and even her mother, who becomes masculine through her patriarchal gazes. They both diagnose Aisha's body inch by inch to the extent that makes Aisha feel that she has committed an unpardonable sin.

The intrusive gazes represent a power relationship between the one who looks and the one who is looked at. This relationship transfers people into objects and subjects; Aisha is the captured object whose body does not belong to her. "the intrusive stare of her father, who would never stop gaping at her, forced her to hunch her back when she walked to hide her growing bosom" (p. 25), so Aisha becomes afraid and embarrassed due to the surrounding gazes. According to Sartre (1966), "Beyond any knowledge which I can have, I am this self whom another knows. And this self which I am – this I am in a world which the Other has made alien to me" (p. 350), so the gaze has the strength to alienate not only a being but also the whole world. The eyes of Aisha's parents enforce her to be detached from the whole world and make her feel that her parents are strangers who scare her. In addition, her body becomes alien to her because of the surprising and unusual physical changes that any human must experience as signs of maturity.

In the patriarchal society, women's bodies do not belong to them because they have to be controlled by the superior patriarchal figures under the excuses of morals, traditions and honor. Assayed's obsessions with Aisha when he says "What a catastrophe this is. What am I to do with you in future" (p. 39) represents the obsession of honor at many Palestinian areas that sometimes ends with honor killing. In this regard, *Palestinian Women and Security* by Chaban, Daraghmeh and Stettler referred to a housewife from Jenin who stated that "Sometimes police will protect the victim of violence for a while, and maybe they will send her away from her family to Ramallah or Hebron, but finally when she returns back, they will kill her in the name of honour in order to wash away their stigma" (p. 38). In addition, this corresponds with what Bought-Brooks, Duaibis and Hussein stated that "Existing laws in the occupied Palestinian territory are often discriminatory and do not offer sufficient

protection for women" (p. 124). As a result, even the authority whose role is to protect humans from being murdered could be participants in murdering innocent women.

Assayed tries to practice his role as a fanatic patriarchal subject by insulting Aisha and humiliating her femininity, "Why are you always wearing that pink dress?" "That's my dress, Yaba... I haven't got another one." (p. 39). Assayed as his name implies authority, power and force tries to intervene not only in Aisha's body, but also what her body should be covered with, so that transfers Aisha from being a human into being an object that belongs to Assayed. As a result, in the patriarchal society, the first thing that girls must learn is that their sexuality does not belong to them but to their families. In addition, Assayed wants to control her tongue that he considers as a source of coquette and flirt by saying "why do you say Yaba the way spoilt kids do?" (p. 39). Aisha's father manifests the concerns and worries of the patriarchal society towards the future of their immature daughters and their virtues.

Assayed's obsession with female sexuality changes the concept of virtue from being an abstract thing to a concrete thing that is only placed in women's bodies. As a result, the patriarchs are ready to commit the most criminal acts to keep their reputation that only comes from women's virtue clear. Honor, virtue, reputation, virginity and morality are all excuses to humiliate women and keep them under the vexing control. In this regard, it is stated by Al-Sadawi that according to Arabs' perspectives, women are considered as a source of threats that must be subjected and controlled using any potential way to the extent that males are ready to detach women from the whole world for the sake of avoiding any possible harm (1980).

In some Palestinian areas, whenever a girl becomes mature, it is her father's obligation to find a husband for her. According to Chaban et al, a working woman from Hebron reported that "If her father is not able to protect [his daughter], he marries her off to someone who can protect her. By doing so, he gets rid of a heavy responsibility" (p. 36). Therefore, what happens with Aisha is a reflection of the bitter reality that some Palestinian women face. "He called to his wife in his usual noisy manner: 'Prepare her, Um Jalal. Prepare your daughter because her fiancé is coming tonight!'" (p. 135). because Assayed is one organ of the patriarchal body, he considers that the girls' desires to marry the person she wants is a matter of dishonor and shame, so it is his responsibility and obligation to enforce his daughter to get married in order to avoid any possible calamity that could occur as a result of delaying marriage.

In fact, the patriarchs are always suspicious of their ability to protect their daughters' virginity; it is reported by Chaban et al that a housewife from a village in Hebron said that "Girls in our community marry at the age of 15 or 16. If a girl exceeds that age, no one would court her. She will be viewed as a spinster" (p. 36). A spinster is one of the worst abuses that patriarchal families could hear about their daughters. As a result, families usually decide to get rid of this burden and shut up all people by searching for husbands for their daughters who will be the alternative

authority without consulting their daughter as if marriage is a contract between a man and a man not a man and a woman.

Aisha tries to express her rejection towards this dictatorial conduct by saying to her mother, "What is up? What is going on? Has that husband of yours gone mad? Who told him I want to get married?" (p. 135), but her mother silences her by comparing her daughter to other girls as if the unjust situation must be equally practiced over all girls "All young girls wish for marriage....and that will make your father happy, Let him experience one happy day in his life. He has not had the pleasure of marrying off his son... so let him have the pleasure of marrying you off." (p. 136). Women who experience violence are ordered to keep silent in order to protect their honor and reputation. Um Jalal is a complicit attacker who follows the patriarchal society blindly by enforcing her daughter to accept her father's decision without objections; she archly convinces her daughter through exploiting the compensation theory by stating that Aisha's marriage could compensate her father's miseries and sadness.

Um Jalal tries to convince Aisha by focusing on people and what they might say about her daughter if she refuses to get married "I hope you are not intending to become an old maid and remain at home so that people will say my daughter could not get a husband"(p. 136). As a result, Aisha has to concern about her father, her mother and the whole society. In fact, some mothers in the patriarchal society play the role of the father's supporter whose mission is to convince their girls to marry. Despite what the Article 16 indicates; the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and the equality of men and women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, some girls in our society remain the weakest link, and they are enforced to get married under the pretext of "protection".

Women are treated as objects with no voice or choice. It is reported by Chaban et al that a university student from Nablus Refugee Camp argues that "she has another friend who used to be in love with a man and before he could ask for her hand in marriage. her parents forced her to marry another man under the pretence that she was 21 years and too old to marry (she was like an old maid), so they forced her into another marriage. The marriage decision is not in her hands, not like the young men; they choose", (p. 35). In some places, women are completely ignored just like Aisha "Aisha imagined that the whole thing was a punishment for her, while the others saw it as an honor and cause for joy" (p. 137). To be a woman in a patriarchal society is to experience pains, grieves, hurts and offenses without expressing or protesting. Indeed, Aisha wants to speak and to shut up all people around her, but as she is a female living in a patriarchal society, the only thing that she is allowed to do is accepting her marriage as one form of the punishments that the patriarchs practice over women.

In most democratic societies, women have rights and it is their families' duties to listen and achieve their rights. However, in Aisha's society and other patriarchal ones what happens is what Zuhur states that in the patriarchal society women's duties are

given the priority over their rights (2003). Aisha's voice is unheard and it is subjected to the savage patriarchal authority as expressed in "he looks like a wolf ready to pounce on its prey.... He began to undo his belt. He pulled it off and laid it on the floor next to him, determined to show her the hiding that she might get with the leather belt.... It was her tongue that was unable to speak. Did one speak to a monster? And if she spoke. What would she tell him?...Her knees felt loose and her leg joints became shaky and unable to support her. Her vision clouds over, and she runs up to the roof" (p. 138,139). Aisha tries to express her objection to the person who is supposed to be the closest to her, but he silences her and enforces her to experience a moment of being dumb. As a result, she forgets how words can be uttered to the extent that she is unable to pronounce a word of only two letters "No" because she knows that this word could end her life or at least color and distort her face by her father's belt to keep her tamed.

It is a tradition in many Palestinian societies to paint women with henna before their wedding night as a sort of decoration. "Aisha had not wanted henna painted on her"(p. 158), for Aisha and other women henna, which is a Palestinian wedding ritual, is a sign of subjection. Aisha's body becomes like a doorplate that all people want to touch and leave their prints on as a sign of controlling the women's bodies and virginity, so women in the patriarchal societies own their bodies and do not own at the same time. The only permissible choice for her is silence as a sign of approval for people around her and a sign of oppression for her. Indeed, she tries to voice her disfavor towards henna, but she is answered by saying "shame on you, paint yourself with henna how you dare to refuse henna at the wedding night" (p. 158). Women in the patriarchal society must paint their bodies with henna in order to avoid being called impolite figures, so the voice of the society is louder than their voices and its fist that crushes them is stronger than theirs.

At the wedding night, Aisha goes to the bathroom where she can feel some safety to express some of her buried feelings "In the bathroom, Her eyes fell on a pair of scissors that had been left on the window sill. She picked them up and began cutting off her hair in front of the broken mirror...She cut off her hair in terror as her sobbing rose, drowning out the ululating and chanting outside" (p. 162). Whenever Aisha looks, she sees eyes gazing and diagnosing her body, but she is unable to defy them; the only eye that she could defy is the eye of the mirror by facing her other in the mirror and cutting her hair. It is stated by Badr through a call we made with her that the title of the novel is very significant; the use of the word mirror is a reference to a traditional belief that says looking at a mirror for a long time brings madness; indeed, Badr through the mirror can see all women's miseries that are created by the occupation and the Palestinians themselves. The arranged marriage that is enforced over Aisha pushes her to hurt herself by cutting her hair that represents her femininity because for her femininity brings her unbearable miseries and deprives her from being a free human. As a result, the mirror could represents oppression because Aisha looks

at the mirror and she sees herself and wishes to change herself into a free person, but the surrounding society deprives her from being what she really wishes.

Aisha starts suffering from self-loathing. In regards to that, Badr said through the private call that self-loathing is a common phenomenon that occurs in all places around the world because whenever a person fails in expressing their feelings and desires, they resort to torturing themselves as a sense of compensation and we should not blame them. Aisha and many women start to hate their lives because of their gender, identity and the imposed culture and traditions. Indeed, Aisha's cutting of her hair can be considered as an implicit weapon that is used to rebel and resist the patriarchal society through crushing the standards that they put for a perfect woman. We took in the Novel course that the long untied hair represents the sexual accessibility of the body, so Aisha's cutting of her hair represents the sexual inaccessibility of the body. However, the mother considers Aisha's action as an act of madness, which ensures that madness according to the patriarchal figures is defined as rebelling, opposing or resisting the patriarchal orders and defying the social conformity, so as the mirror reflects Aisha's image, Aisha's cutting of her hair reflects how fanatic, unjust and backward the patriarchal society is.

Projection:

Some Palestinian male figures project their weakness and emasculation by the Israeli occupation on women. They project their deprivations against their families particularly against their females in an attempt to compensate their lack. "Assayed always warns Um-Jalal to give him money in order to buy wine. He still asks her strongly" (p. 26). Men reflect their bad traditions, actions and powers on the women and girls in terms of virility. However, they consider women like objects who do not have emotions. Therefore, women are excluded from their effective participation in the public sphere. Subsequently, in Palestine, women's movements are restricted. There is no complete freedom to go out and to engage in different activities.

Projection is one of the psychological orders which is defined as a theory in psychology in which humans defend themselves against their own unconscious impulses or qualities, both positive and negative by denying their existence in themselves while attributing them to others (Marriam- Webster Dictionary) Furthermore, it means the attribution of one's own ideas, feelings and attitudes to other people or to objects; especially, the externalization of blame, guilt or responsibility as a defense against anxiety.

Bader shows that male figures' voices are deceptive and hypocritical. Men usually play the role of dominance. They claim that they have strong ideas about what their daughters' life and behavior should be, but men themselves are defeated in their life.

Also, it states that Palestinian men force silence and obedience to suppress the female voices and bodies to their immoral voices. Chaban, Daraghmeh and Stettler (2010) state that Palestinian men treat their women as objects to their desires. "Very little attention has been paid to documenting and combating violence against Palestinian women and girls in the public sphere....Fear of entering the public sphere prevents women and girls from taking part in professional and educational activities" (p. 23). These lines manifest that there is no sense of security towards Palestinian women and girls. As a result, this sense of insecurity leads all men to use their masculinity against womankind. Furthermore, men exploit women's passion in order to project their cruelty which is emanating from the repression by the Israeli siege upon women.

The deprivation in Palestine, especially against women becomes as a part of traditions or even a subculture that is rooted in the society. For example, Aisha's father uses ironic ways that reflect negatively upon her psychology. Assayed says to Aisha "Oh that girl.. why you are always wearing that pink dress?. Also, "Why do you say Yaba the way spoilt kids do? you think you are one of the nuns' girls, do not you? (p. 39). According to these quotations, Assayed still criticizes Aisha about every single movement even the way she wears. Also, these lines indicate that Assayed suppresses her daughter's behaviors for the sake of projecting his cruel masculinity upon her personality. As a result, he always scolds Aisha whenever she calls Yaba.

Assayed is deprived from his freedom to choose the home where he has wanted to live to the extent that in his dreams he always sees himself in his original home land. Therefore, he tries to compensate for the lost freedom of choice by enforcing his daughter to get married. "Um Jalal, prepare your daughter because the groom will come tonight, (p. 135). Um Jalal also warns her daughter" Do not do anything Aisha. Your father says yes to Hassan which means that he agrees. Or, do you want to stay maiden? (p. 136). Here, according to Shihada (2011), "Um Jalal acts as a patriarchal agent tries to persuade Aisha by reinforcing the patriarchal suppressive culture that is a wish for every women to get married" (p. 231). On the other hand, her father tries to project all his inferior feelings by using force against her. Aisha, as one of the women who lives in a patriarchal society, must commit to silence. It is a shame to allow them to speak and to choose their partners.

In this novel, projection equals losing women's bodies and voices. Indeed, loss of Palestinian land affects negatively on women's and girls' bodies. For instance, "Georgette shouted loudly, she falls down upon her baby's corpse, she clung to him, moved her head like a mad person on his clothes after they are tainted with brown and gray spots. Then, Georgette starts plucking her hair and hitting her cheeks unconsciously" (p. 320). Here, these lines clarify that women suffer and sacrifice their lives and their babies. Georgette gives birth to a baby who suddenly dies because of the lack of food and milk. After his death, she begins crying and shouting loudly until

her voice disappeared. In addition, losing Palestinian land prevents Aisha from her innocent dreams because she lives in a foreign country where she is not allowed to move or do anything. "Oh Allah, Aisha at least was thinking, she was waiting and she was expecting to be a professional teacher" (p. 22). Therefore, Aisha undergoes persecution and oppression as a result of Assayed's actions against her.

Abu- Jalal projects his own weaknesses and his oppressed behaviors not only upon his daughter, but also upon his wife. However, she cannot refuse because he will immediately curse her and use bad words. According to Palestinian male figures, women do not have the right to say no because they consider women as weak and have no personality and objects to their voices.

However, in Bader's novel, the injustice falls on Aisha through different aspects. For instance, "nuns always ask Aisha questions, but she is prevented from responding because all nuns warn her to keep silent and not trying to talk with girls from high classes, (p.19)". Relying on this quotation, nuns at the convent school deal with Aisha only as a servant, she has no permission to enjoy or at least talk with others. Therefore, Aisha always feels that she is inferior than other girls because of nuns' racist behaviors. In addition, the discrimination that stems from nuns' actions against Aisha, crushes her personality and her self- confidence.

All the time, Um Jalal says "we become homeless, there is no dignity and no house. Our chastity and honor disappear for a long time and now our sons die" (p. 19). These lines ensure that they are strangers in Lebanon; they are exposed under the policy of apartheid by the Lebanese and then their sons die treacherously. Furthermore, " The big disaster is that the enemies begin arresting the young children under the age of ten; especially the balding kids in an attempt that they help the defenders" (p.378). In Palestine, women are not able to protest against high orders because the result is killing all people. Also, it shows that the fighters do not have mercy even on the young kids and women; they are cruel like monsters.

Aisha's father projects his own physical displacement and weakness on his wife and his daughter. Obviously, Palestinian circumstances reflect the same effects on all Palestinian women and girls. They deprive them from the simple rights in an attempt to protect their families from shame. However, the environment has practical influences upon people. In other words, the place where men live in, determines their behaviors. Therefore, all Palestinian men apply the same road of suppressing upon their women.

Anderlini (2000) confirm that "women and girls are not only victims of armed conflict; they are also active agents and participants in conflict. They may actively choose to participate in the conflict and carry out acts of violence because they are committed to the political, religious or economic goals of the parties to the conflict" (p. 125). Also, Mu Sochus maintains that "female participants in decision-making processes, have the responsibility to ensure that the voices of women as a whole are

not lost" (p. 44). In brief, Palestinian women are more exposed to violence which women experience in their society through different aspects. However, they live under both the violence of the Israeli occupation and the physical and psychological violence by their men.

Violence against women is one of the most influential theme in this novel which United Nations General Assembly (1993) signifies as any act of "gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of acts such as coercion and arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (p. 139). Violence against women represents different functions such as child marriage, forced pregnancy, honor crimes, deprivation and other violence perpetrated by someone either an intimate partner or non-partner violence Implementation of violence may lead to physical, mental and emotional health problems. For example, Aisha becomes pregnant as a result of her marriage. Unfortunately, she is obliged not only to marry, but also to be pregnant.

In most areas in Palestine, women become pregnant after marriage because of traditions rather than growing families. In other words, women's husbands and also their husbands' families want to have a child to carry out their names and reputations. However, if a women does not have a child after her marriage immediately, people around her will talk about her fertility. For instance, Um Hassan asks herself " Is it possible that my son's wife becomes pregnant?. At the same time, she replies, if and only if Aisha is pregnant, I will sacrifice a sheep"(p. 186). Depending on these words, mothers - in - law think only about their sons' future. They afraid of the deformation in their masculinity if they do not have children. In other words, mothers- in -law do not care about the health of women's bodies; especially who gets married at a young age because her body has not been completed yet.

Nation is Narration:

It is doubtless that words have their own magic and hidden power in taking people's minds beyond their border of imagination. This has been proven by Shahrazad and her magnificent style of storytelling, in addition to her wide and rich imagination. Shahrazad succeeded in transmitting stories of variety of people and events from all over the world. Moreover, she became herself a romantic and heroic symbol which is used in many literary works. Thus, in our case, Liana Badr becomes Shahrazad who tells the stories of the people of Tal- Ezza'tar Refugee camp in Beirut. *The Eye of the Mirror* is similar to *One Thousand and One Nights* (1704) in the dominance of female characters. The woman in *One Thousand and One Nights* has occupied a great part of the stories and has played various major roles in the stories. *The Eye of the Mirror* also focused on the feminine side of the camp and their daily life.

However, *The Eye of the Mirror* differs from *One Thousand and One Nights* in telling real stories about men and women who lived through realistic suffering.

Liana says, "you know very well that I am not Shahrazad , and the greatest wonder of all is that I can neither go to my country nor cross the lands that surround it" (p. 9). Liana and Shahrazad are alike in that both of them were telling the stories of people and places that they have never experienced. It is indeed a wonder that a person do not get the right to go to his/her homeland, but still has this kind of imagination to tell and describe each and every inch of it. It is unfortunately the reality of those who live in the refugee camps in other country. *Tal-Ezza'tar* is no exception since this novel shows how much the Palestinians are so attached to their land and eager to talk and know about it even though some of them might have never seen it before. It is again the power of words and narrating stories about the land and its people which could deliver a sense of patriotism in the hearts of those who are deprived from living there. Losing one's homeland does not only mean losing the home and the shelter but it also means losing one's dignity and honor as Um Jalal would say "We became homeless, without a home, a dignity neither a house" (p. 20). It is definitely the greatest loss of all; this also means the loss of traditions, habits and culture. It results in assimilation to a new culture and traditions.

In Aisha's situation who is a muslim girl who spent seven years living in the church school. At that place, Aisha learned a lot from the nuns, their stories, customs and prayers; she even learned how to pray to Jesus. Aisha's life in the church made an influence in her way of thinking and character. It did not fit those who were dominant in the camp. Her father was one of those who showed his disturbance through the way she speaks. "Do you think yourself a daughter of nuns, do not you?" (p. 38). It is indeed that language determines our identities in such cases, using the other's own language or even some words which might come out spontaneously gives the feeling of alienation of someone's own language and homeland. This is perfectly demonstrated by Assayed when he told her "be ashamed of yourself, we are Palestinians" (p. 40). The words that Palestinians utter should express their identity as a way of expressing their conflict and suffering. It is a kind of shame to use others' diction.

Aisha also becomes Shahrazad but not through the tales she tells rather through her silence and imagination. Aisha creates different scenarios inside her heads which could be the only possible way for her to express her thoughts and feelings in the patriarchal society she lives in. "Because the words that God made was not for her, and because if she dared to utter some, it will transform to a blade that will cut her throat".(p. 158). The difference between Aisha and Shahrazad is that the later challenged the patriarchal oppression by her words, by the narration of tales and stories which eventually led to her salvation. For Aisha it is not allowed for her to speak about almost anything, not even have a say in her marriage.

Every character in this novel has her\his own version of Shahrazad. Each character found her/his identity by telling the stories either of the nostalgic memories in Palestine or some of personal views of the land. For example, Aisha's father, Assayed who keeps telling heroic stories of his ancestors during the war believes that through telling these stories, he preserves his Palestinian identity and heritage. Another is George, this resistant young man who speaks proudly about his hometown and his family. The male characters in the novel mostly narrate the history of Palestine, the war in Tal-Ezza'tar and the political situation in the camp.

"My gracious God, do not forget the oppressor" (p. 244). Women such Um Jalal and others of the same age and mentality use prayers to express their resentment of everything that happens around them. These kinds of prayers are their only relief and salvation. It is their way of resisting tyranny and oppression. The simplicity of the words but the power of their meaning is very important as it narrates the stories of their pain and suffering inside the camp and during the war.

Narrating Trauma:

Narrating trauma such as this that was narrated by Bader, Aisha and others expresses the suffering of the people of the whole camp. Each woman's suffering in the camp is a reflection of all women's suffering. The individual narrative of any incident expresses the collective feelings and pain. According to Alexander & Breese (2011) "the construction of collective trauma is often fuelled by individual experiences of

pain and suffering, but it is the threat to collective rather than individual identity that defines the kind of suffering at stake." (p. 12). Narrating such feelings and stories by the individual forms the identity of all people who went through this experience. In the *Eye of The Mirror*, each individual's own experience with the war reflects the whole camp suffering. Aisha's suffering did not only form her identity but also formed the identity of all girls and women who went through the same circumstances and experience. Moreover, this emphasizes the idea that trauma defines not only the individual rather the collective. Trauma recreates the whole community.

Another idea that is emphasized by Alexander and Breese (2011) "Some trauma narratives find willing, able, and homogeneous audiences; other stories are received by fragmented or constricted audiences; still others simply fall on deaf ears" (p. 12). This is related to the Palestinian audience when reading Bader's novel, the Palestinians can easily interact with the novel since it expresses the reality of many people who lived or still living the same experience.

Bader's narration of *The Eye of The Mirror* is affected not only by the history of the camp and the stories of the people of the camp; it was also affected by the reality of Bader herself. Listening to people's trauma brings to memory latent experiences and incidents. As Coetzee and Rau (2009) argue in their article "memory is not an exclusively individual act. Even the most personal accounts and memories transcend our subjective experience of them, as they are shared and mediated by others around us" (p. 2). In Bader's novel, the women situation is both depicted by the author herself as well as the female characters in the novel. It is a reflection of the reality of the Palestinian women in almost everywhere and in anytime.

In that sense, Aisha became a reflection of Liana Bader herself as Aisha is the narrator of her suffering. Bader narrates the stories of Tal- Ezza'tar Camp depending on what she heard from the people who went through the war and the siege. On the other hand, Aisha narrates her reality based on the images stuck in her memory. Aisha narrates the incidents that occurred during the war while Bader narrates the history of Tal- Ezza'tar war.

Conclusion:

We have argued that Badr's *the Eye of the Mirror* is a depiction of the trauma of the Palestinians who lived in Lebanon as enacted in the figure of Aisha who is always repressed by her surrounding society . Aisha's disposition of her body is a reflection of the Palestinians who lost their lands and were enforced to live in an unjust society without being allowed to express any sign of objection. However, Badr struggled against the occupation by narrating the trauma of the Palestinians because narration is considered as a process of healing ; in her novel she tries to shed light on many sensitive issues as romance, the enforced marriage, projection, narration itself and other issues.

Badr indicates to the idea of having two different kind of occupation; the explicit occupation that is represented by the enemies who carry weapons in their hands and the implicit occupation that is represented by the common people who carry rusted and poisonous weapons in their minds. In the Palestinian society being killed by the explicit occupation is considered as a heroic act while being killed by the implicit occupation is considered as a disgraceful act. Indeed, Palestinians in Lebanon duringTal- Ezza'tar war were killed by both the explicit and the implicit occupation.

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