An-Najah National University
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ABJECTION AND SUBJECTIVITY IN MANSOOR ADAYFI'S *DON'T FORGET US HERE: LOST AND FOUND AT GUANTÁNAMO* AND ALBERT WOODFOX'S *SOLITARY*

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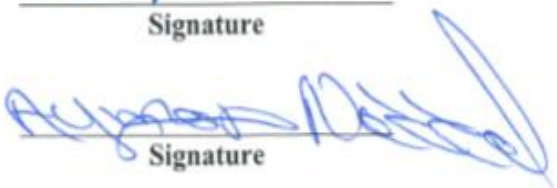
Dr. Ayman Nazzal **Internal Examiner**	 **Signature**

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents who have always supported and encouraged me to seek higher education.

I also dedicate my thesis to the people of my nation, the Palestinians; most especially people of Gaza, May Allah grant you liberty. This thesis is an act of solidarity with those who are oppressed all over the world and who constantly struggling for their freedom.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that I submitted the thesis entitled:

ABJECTION AND SUBJECTIVITY IN MANSOOR ADAYFI'S *DON'T FORGET US HERE: LOST AND FOUND AT GUANTÁNAMO* AND ALBERT WOODFOX'S *SOLITARY*

I declare that the work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

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Abstract

Drawing on Foucault's writings on prison, Judith Butler's concepts of precarity, precariousness and vulnerability as highlighted in her writings on Guantanamo's "indefinite detainees," Kristeva's concept of the abject, Lacan's doctrine of the gaze, and Agamben's concept of "bare life", in addition to the theoretical frameworks of Elaine Scarry, this thesis explores the dehumanization and the abjection of prisoners and the defensive mechanisms they adopt to resist the abject identities forced upon them by the American government in Mansoor Adayfi's, a former Guantanamo detainees, memoir, *Don't forget us here: lost and found at Guantánamo* (2021), a memoir that documents Mansour's imprisonment in Guantánamo and the brutal strategies that the US government used to terrorize Guantanamo detainees. In addition to Adayfi's memoir, this thesis examines Albert Woodfox's *Solitary* in which he recounts his experience as a minority, Black American, within the American penal system, and the methods the prison system uses to control and silence those behind its walls. As the memoirs highlight, the American government uses interpellative abject terms that dehumanize and strip prisoners of their rights, or, in Agamben's words, reduce them to bare lives. In addition to this linguistic violence, the government uses torture so as to dispossess their subjectivity and agency. In such a context, the memoirs highlight the disruption of the ethical responsiveness of the guards towards prisoners which are assimilated as art of the imprisoning self that consolidates itself by humiliating and dehumanizing the other, that is, the prisoners. However, as Foucault puts it, power and oppression gives way to resistance. In other words, the prisoners, as these literary works emphasize, are conscious of the prison guards' humiliating treatment of them, resort to an array of defensive, corporeal strategies – hunger strike, writing, protests – so as to claim authority and subjectivity.

Keywords: Abjection; subjectivity; black Americans; linguistic violence.

Chapter One
Introduction

1.1 Prison is inherently an oppressive space

Prison is designed to break one's spirit and destroy one's resolve. To do this, the authorities attempt to exploit every weakness, demolish every initiative, negate all signs of individuality— all with the idea of stamping out that spark that makes each of us human and each of us who we are. Our survival depended on understanding what the authorities were attempting to do to us, and sharing that understanding with each other.

—Nelson Mandela (1999, 202)

Prisons are presented as a modern and humane form of punishment and rehabilitation for the individuals deemed by society as "criminals" (Harcourt, 2012, p. 76). However, in his book *Discipline and Punish -The Birth of the Prison,* Foucault (1977) traces and records the history of prison in the Western world, concluding that prisons are in fact an inadequate means of punishment. He describes prison as the "darkest region in the apparatus of justice" (Foucault, 1977, p. 256). This suggests that despite being a part of a legal system designed to ensure justice for all individuals within society, prisons are corrupt and unjust. This stems from the absolute power the penal system has over the prisoners. Therefore, while the modern criminal justice system claims to have abolished physical forms of punishment due to ethical concerns (Harcourt, 2012), the legacy of torture is still embedded within its structure; evident in elements of corporal and psychological torture present in certain prison practices which are mostly rooted in isolation (Davis, 2011). These mechanisms also include surveillance, disciplinary actions, and other punitive measures. Foucault (1977) asserts that "There remains, therefore, a trace of 'torture' in the modern mechanisms of criminal justice – a trace that has not been entirely overcome, but which is enveloped, increasingly, by the non-corporal nature of the penal system" (p. 16). The fact that modern prisons still employ the use of violence and torture to subjugate the bodies of prisoners in an effort to subdue their wills makes prison a "place where the power to punish, which no longer dares to manifest itself openly, silently organizes a field of objectivity in which punishment will be able to function openly as treatment" (Foucault, 1977, p. 256). As a result, the penal system through prisons perpetuates oppression rather than facilitate genuine rehabilitation.

The penal system legitimacy is established by making a decisive distinction within society between those who break the law and those who abide by it, taking upon itself to correct and reform those “recalcitrant subjects” (Simon, 2007, p. 150). It labels those who break the law as dangerous to the community, expressing "in concrete terms the idea that the offense has injured, beyond the victim, society as a whole" (Foucault, 1977, p. 232). Framing a prisoner's crime as an offense against society as a whole leads him/her to be perceived as an enemy of that society. Wacquant (2009) explains that “the prison operates as a judicial garbage disposal into which the human refuse of the market society are thrown” (p. 12). In other words, when a crime is portrayed as an attack on the well-being of the collective, prisoners are interpellated as “dangerous” by what Althusser (2014) calls the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs)- an ideology that relies on persuasion and social pressure from family, law, religion, politics, education, and media to address people and offer them a particular identity. These ideologies play an essential role in constructing individuals' identities, assigning them certain positions in society. The interpellation of prisoners as dangerous leads society to view them in the light of their “immorality” (Althusser, 2014, p. 78). This results in the exclusion of these identities from society, making their punishment a demanded necessity. According to Simon (2007), this forms a domain where “to be for the people, legislators must be for victims and law enforcement, and thus they must never be for (or capable of being portrayed as being for) criminals or prisoners as individuals or as a class” (p. 100). Thus, giving prison the right to employ any method needed to maintain discipline and control over this immoral other and protect society from their danger, leading prison to have "almost total power over the prisoners" (Foucault, 1977, p. 236). This means that within the walls of prison, the penal system is entitled to exert its power to punish the prisoners in any way or form it desires to maintain control over them.

1.2 The dehumanization of prisoners

Prisoners, then, become the exiled and despised object of the public’s fear of the danger they represent. This leads the prisoner to internalize his worthlessness and degradation, thus adopting the perspective forced upon him by the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs). This interpellation process employs violence, imprisonment, torture, execution, and exile, to enforce a specific form of address on the individuals in institutions such as the army, police, courts, and prisons (Althusser, 2014, p. 77). Therefore, prisoners

become what Hanna Arendt (1976) terms in her book *of The Origins of Totalitarianism* as the “superfluous” (p. 30). Those who were once a part of the society are no longer wanted nor needed with in it. Alan (1997) explains that “the uncanniness, the threat of the abject is that it used to be (part of) ourselves.” (p. 212). The society’s fear of the superfluous stems from the fact that these abject identities are “once a part of ‘us,’ but has since been rendered not only unnecessary on the ‘inside’ of ‘our community,’ but also persistently threatening to its cohesion, perfection, and purity” (Czajka, 2005, p. 113). These prisoners exemplify the abject, because they represent the aspects of society it despises, while also serving as a stark reminder of the disturbing possibility that any member of the society could become them tomorrow (Czajka, 2005, p. 112). This leads society to make a distinction between themselves and those “criminals”. These prisoners are exiled (Simon, 2007, p. 143) and thrown away; rejected as the exception. The prisoners, thus, are banished into a space, the prison, that best described in Kristeva's words as “ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable” (Kristeva, 1982, p. 2). Prison becomes a waste management system whose sole purpose is to be a space to isolate those individuals rejected by society. Simon (2007) insists that: “[t]he waste management prison promises no transformation of the prisoner through penitence, discipline, intimidation, or therapy. Instead, it promises to promote security in the community simply by creating a space physically separated from the community in which to hold people whose propensity for crime makes them appear an intolerable risk for society” (pp. 142-143). Within the walls of the prison the rights of prisoners are striped from them and they become excluded from human rights. They signify the other "where meaning collapses" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 2), thus evoking both "pity and terror” (Smith, 2008, p. 244). The classification of prisoners as “dangerous” or “immoral” is a mean to dehumanize them (Simon, 2007).

While all prisons are abject spaces, it is essential to draw a distinction between prisons and the camp. Agamben (1998) insists that camp and prison are completely different spaces; he argues that while prison is a space of confinement, the camp is a space of complete exception. Agamben (1998) defines camp as “the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule” (p. 169). Though prisons are often meant to be a temporary punishment, which means that the state of exception the prisoner experiences should be confined within the duration of their sentence, the camp prisoner

is viewed by society as an unwanted and offensive object. This leads the society they are once a part of to make a deliberate decision to evacuate them and push them outside the borders of said society. This marginalization is not meant to be temporary; it is instead intended to be final and permanent, as it aims to erase the presence of this individual from the collective social consciousness and therefore from their own sense of identity. While not all prisons fit Agamben's definition of camp, super maximum-security prisons exemplify this state of exception. As Czajka (2005) observes, "American supermaximum security prisoners and prisons epitomize the subjects and spaces to which Agamben alludes" (p. 115). Super maximum-security prisons' indefinite confinement and its acts of stripping its inmates' of their rights and agency mimics the dynamics of the state of exception and exclusion found in the camp. Agamben (1998) argues that modern states create a state of exception in which certain individuals or groups are stripped of their legal and political rights as they become “excluded from humanity” (p. 66). This means that “the state of exception, which was essentially a temporary suspension of the rule of law on the basis of a factual state of danger, is now given a permanent spatial arrangement, which as such nevertheless remains outside the normal order” (Agamben, 1998, p. 169).

In this context prisons—especially super maximum-security facilities serve as physical manifestations of the state of exception. These spaces are designed to strip prisoners of their humanity, which reduces them to mere biological lives, or "bare life," where they are subjected to sovereign power without legal protection. In Agamben's interpretation, the state's power to declare certain individuals as homo sacer results in creating lives that “may be killed without the commission of homicide” (Agamben, 1998, p. 165). This leads to the interpellation of prisoners as lives devoid of legal and political rights, making them expendable and susceptible to violence without it being legally categorized as a crime. Agamben’s notion of bare life establishes that these prisoners exist in a space where they remain under the legal system’s control but are excluded from legal and political protections. This legal exclusion is still evident in modern forms of incarceration and detention. Building on Agamben’s theories, Butler (2004) examines how indefinite detention operates within the framework of this state of exception. In her seminal article, “Indefinite Detention” she points out that,

> There is a reduction of these human beings to animal status, where the animal is figured as out of control, in need of total restraint. It is important to remember

> that the bestialization of the human in this way has little, if anything, to do with actual animals, since it is a figure of the animal against which the human is defined (Butler R. , 2014, p. 50).

These lines reflect the notion that the prison guards and the government define their humanity against the bestial other, the prisoners, who are stripped of their human rights. In fact, the prisoners' society also seems to be dependent on its "thirst to suck out of all convicted criminals the last vestiges of humanity, reduce them to the lowest possible denominator of eligibility, and the barest of life" (Czajka, 2005, p. 121) to state their humanity. Czajka (2005) explains that at "the core of the doctrine lies the assumption that a disjuncture must exist between the living conditions of prisoners and free citizens, with the former necessarily inferior to the conditions encountered by the most marginalized social groups" (p. 118). This points to the reality that this act of disconnection is intentional, as it is meant to emphasize the disciplinary aspect of imprisonment, which is used to further isolate and oppress those who are already vulnerable. The penal system does not only intend to take away prisoners' freedom but it also ensures these prisoners experience a level of suffering and hardship significantly worse than anyone in free society. Society demands that the penal system performs the harshest possible punishments on those who it deems criminals as they "should not be rewarded with conditions of imprisonment that resemble the living conditions of those who chose the more difficult path of righteousness" (Czajka, 2005, p. 119). The severity of the deprivation the penal institution administer behind its walls become a sign of its success in the public eyes (Czajka, 2005, p. 120).

1.3 The subjection of the prisoner's body and mind

The prison environment is structured to enforce the prisoner's compliance with their role as the inferior other through various mechanisms. One of the most important methods used is the prison guards implementation of "extremely regimented schedule that wholly deprives [prisoners] of the element of choice, a "privilege" exclusively associated with "respectable" and "worthy" citizenship" (Earle, 2016, p. 120). Within these rigid schedules, prisoners lose all control over their most basic aspects of their daily lives -such as, when and for how long they can take a shower, when and what to eat, recreation time, and even their sleeping routine. The prisoners' loss of autonomy combined with their societal otherization and dehumanization leaves them more vulnerable to torture.

Torture aims to destroy the prisoner's body in order to destroy his voice. Scarry (1985) claims that "the purpose of which (torture) is not to elicit needed information but visibly to deconstruct the prisoner's voice" (p. 30). This deconstruction of the voice occurs because "[t[orture inflicts bodily pain that is itself language-destroying" (Scarry, 1985, p. 19). Exposing the prisoner's body to torture reduces him to a mere vessel of pain and suffering, stripped of agency and autonomy, Scarry (1985) explains that, "Although the torturer dominates the prisoner both in physical acts and verbal acts, ultimate domination requires that the prisoner's ground become increasingly physical and the torturer's increasingly verbal, that the prisoner become a colossal body with no voice" (p. 57). The act of confessing becomes a manifestation of the prisoner's fading agency and communication; it is "a halfway point in the disintegration of language" reducing them to an audible representation of impending silence (p. 29). In contrast, the torturer and the regime amplify their own voices, as the prisoner now speaks their words. According to Scarry, the fact that the prisoner, under severe physical pain, gives his torturer the answers he demands transforms the torturer's voice into a "colossal voice (a voice composed of two voices)" (p. 57). This emphasizes the torturer's power and control over the prisoners' voices, reducing them to mere bodies, Scarry (1985) affirms that "physical pain always mimes death and the infliction of physical pain is always a mock execution" (p. 42). The act of inflicting pain on a prisoner is an act of mock execution, as it is a threat to his very essence and autonomy. Scarry (1985) argues that "It is true that though man is primarily a body, he is (at least at the edges of experience) not wholly without a voice" (p. 195). Stripping a prisoner his voice, then, is an act of stripping him of his identity and humanity.

The process of interrogation in prison is closely intertwined with torture. According to Scarry (1985), "Torture consists of a primary physical act, the infliction of pain, and a primary verbal act, the interrogation. The first rarely occurs without the second" (p. 39). This means that the torturer intentionally inflects pain upon the prisoner to acquire answers. The perception and understanding of physical pain experienced by others is not something that comes naturally or effortlessly to an observer. In fact, what is "'effortless' is not grasping it" (p.14), or empathizing with the depth and intensity of another person's pain. This makes it easier not only to ignore or deny the suffering of prisoners, but to also inflict pain upon them. The interrogator's interpellation of the prisoner as the superfluous, in addition to his inability to fully grasp the reality of the other's pain, allows him to justify

the acts of torture he performs against prisoners and interpret them as power, “the objectified pain is denied as pain and read as power” (Scarry, 1985, p. 28). The torturer seeks to assert dominance and control over the prisoners' existence, using the act of asking a question as a means to achieve this objective, while perceiving signs of pain as evidence of his power. Scarry thus contends that torture creates a disturbing dichotomy in its impact on both the torturers and the prisoners. For the torturer “the moral fact of inflicting that agony is made neutral by the feigned urgency and significance of the question” (Scarry, 1985, p. 29). However, for the prisoners, enduring unbearable pain, the questions and the world to which they refer to lose all importance and significance. The torment becomes so overwhelming that it erases any meaning the questions may have held (p. 29). Being subjected to intense pain leads the prisoner entire sense of reality and connection to the world to shatter.

1.4 The possibility of resisting the power of interpellation

While Althusser (2014) suggests that the individual can only exist within a society through submitting to the law of interpellation and complying with the address given to them by it, Butler argues that it is our need for social existence that makes us willing to adhere to these laws, despite its oppressive nature. She notes that the individual unconsciously engages with social and institutional practices in order to declare themselves as subjects. This means that according to Butler, the individual is not merely a passive recipients of the laws of interpellation, on the contrary, they often willingly or unconsciously participate in these interpellative calls when they answer. Butler (1997) also emphasizes the political nature of interpellation, as it is a staged call that is structured by the law and results in consequences in connection with this same law. Therefore, because interpellation is often a political construct, she explains that the call to individuals does not necessarily mean that they will obey. She argues that the notion of power in interpellation is something that leads to resistance (Butler, 2014). Since, the interpellation process produced by the penal system is rooted in politics and power, this leads to the conclusion that the prisoners are capable of rebelling against these calls. The prisoners’ choice to refuse to answer the call allows them to maintain their agency. In Butler’s reinterpretation of Althusser’s theory, she explains that,

> He [Althusser] does not consider the range of disobedience that such an interpellating law might produce. The law might not only be refused, but it might

> also be ruptured, forced into a rearticulation that calls into question the monotheistic force of its own unilateral operation. Where the uniformity of the subject is expected, where the behavioural conformity of the subject is commanded, there might be produced the refusal of the law in the form of the parodic inhabiting of conformity that subtly calls into question the legitimacy of the command, a repetition of the law into hyperbole, a rearticulation of the law against the authority of the one who delivers it (Butler J. , 1993, pp. 122-23).

While prison uses it's law's power to hail the prisoners and force them into subjectivity and behavioral conformity, according to Butler those prisoners are capable of actively resisting these demands and may elect to challenge it, which leads to its reconstruction. Still, these acts of resistance the prisoners perform in order to maintain their subjectivity do not come without a price. Butler points out that the prisoners might negotiate or protest the name forced upon them by the person calling to them. However, these prisoners' attempts to defy these labels often does not change the classification they are given, and these names will persist and remain associated with these prisoner in a different circumstance or setting (Butler J. , 1997).

Fanon's interpretations support this analysis by examining the methods colonial and dehumanizing systems use to impose restrictive identities on individuals or groups and how acts of resistance to these roles become a means of reclaiming autonomy and challenging oppression. Fanon explores how systems of domination work not only to label and confine individuals but also to strip them of agency and humanity, this resonates with Butler's ideas on the challenges detainees face resisting imposed identities within the oppressive system of indefinite detention.

He explicates that that power of interpellation operates through the collective shared consciousness about a particular racial and religious identities. This awareness shapes how individuals are perceived and treated within society. Racial interpellation leads to perpetuating a portrayal of radicalized groups of people - people of color, black people, Muslims, and Arabs - in a way that matches the dominant narrative and ideologies, labeling them as "threats to be managed" (Fanon, 1963, p. 59). This contributes to the maintenance of existing power structures and inequalities. This is highlighted in the prison camp's setting, where the prisoners often fall into these radicalized social groups,

which can be observed in the way political and war prisoners are labeled by those who imprison them. For example, the Israeli government employs abject terms such as "terrorist" and "vandal" to label Palestinian prisoners. Pekka Hakala explains, “These suspects are regarded as politically motivated criminals or terrorists, charged with terrorist offences or violent crimes, considered a national security threat to the state and detained without charge” (Hakala, 2013, p. 6). In other words, the Israeli government and prison administrators dehumanize Palestinian prisoners through categorizing them as criminals and terrorists in order to strip them of all their human rights, which makes subjecting those prisoners to physical and psychological torture acceptable. However, Fanon insists that those who are deprived, oppressed, and mistreated will always continue to persist in their efforts to seek recognition (Fanon, 1963). This is why within the Palestinian national discourse the Palestinian prisoners are celebrated as icons of resistance and sacrifice. Palestinians hail them as "captives of freedom" and the flames of liberation (Hamamra, 2018). This can be observed in the Palestinian practice of strewing the walls of Palestinian villages and cities with pictures of Palestinian prisoners who are even deemed, due to the Israeli criminal system, martyrs.

In the same vein, the detainees held at Guantánamo Bay are also branded by the American government as "terrorists" and “potential criminals” who pose a challenging threat to America and its security. This criminalization of detainees surfaced during the Bush administration which used these labels as justification to exclude and deprive the Guantánamo detainees from the protections guaranteed by the Geneva Conventions for prisoners of war. Prosper, Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes, points out that “[W]e have concluded that the Geneva Conventions do apply, however, to the Taliban leaders who sponsored terrorism. But, a careful analysis through the lens of the Geneva Convention leads us to the conclusion that the Taliban detainees do not meet the legal criteria under Article 4 of the convention which would have entitled them to POW status” (American Society of International Law, 2002, p.480). This declaration implies that “The prisoners indefinitely detained in Guantánamo Bay are not considered ‘subjects’ protected by international law, are not entitled to regular trials, to lawyers, due process” (Butler J. , 2004, p. xv). The detainees at Guantánamo Bay “then, are placed in a precarious situation where they are objectified and alienated by the American gaze, which described by Lacan as “the object when faced with which the subject becomes object”

(Lacan, 1991, p. 220). This gaze ensures their subjugation and offers them no support or protection. To cause a meaningful change to their situation, the detainees fight against the camp's system. They aim to dismantle its power over them and create a new reality where their worth and dignity are acknowledged.

1.5 Overview of analyzed literary works

In his memoir, *Don't forget us here: lost and found at Guantánamo*, Adayfi & Aiello, (2021) recounts the harrowing journey of an 18-year-old boy who was kidnapped by warlords and sold to the US as an Egyptian al-Qaeda leader following 9/11. He departs from his home in Yemen on a cultural mission to Afghanistan, but he has never returned. Instead, he was disappeared in to Guantánamo Bay, where he endured 15 years as Detainee #441. In his memoir he describes the years during which he is physically and psychologically tortured, dehumanized and humiliated by the American guards in Guantánamo camp. However, he also details the various methods he and the other detainees employ to maintain their humanity and agency.

Throughout American history, African Americans have consistently faced oppression and inequality due to deeply ingrained racist laws. This still translates to the black people's treatment within the judicial system years after the abolition of slavery and the consequent slavery laws. One way this is clear is in the fact that "The gap between Black and white Americans serving time in state prison for long prison sentences is growing" (Rios, 2022). This results from the reality that "Black Americans were more likely than white Americans to receive long prison sentences" (Rios, 2022). Amy Fettig, a task force member and executive director of the Sentencing Project, a nonprofit advocating for the reduction of bias in the criminal justice system, explains that "Even as crime went down, extreme sentences went up. The harshness of our sentences isn't related to public safety," she insists that that reason this is happening is the "politics in America and it's racism. Anyway you slice, if you don't account for racism, you don't understand what's truly going on" as cited in (Rios, 2022).

This absolute bias against black people is evident in Woodfox's memoir, *Solitary* (2019). *Solitary* is an account of Woodfox's journey through over four decades of solitary confinement, primarily at Louisiana's infamous Angola State Penitentiary. Woodfox (2019) tells of the experiences of poverty and racism he endures during his childhood,

which ultimately leads him to a life of crime. He recounts how systemic racism, which is prevalent within the penal institution, transformed his initial transgressions into a nearly lifelong sentence of isolation and deprivation. In prison, due to Woodfox's affiliation with the Black Panther Party—an organization advocating Black Nationalism and socialism with the initial purpose of safeguarding Black neighborhoods from police brutality—and his activism within Angola prison, the authorities framed him for the killing of a white guard in an attempt to undermine his commitment to social justice and stop his activism. Woodfox details his struggles to maintain his reputation which the justice system's attempts to tarnish in order to hinder his appeals. They accuse him in the media of heinous crimes such as sexual assaults and rape, aiming to portray him as a dangerous monster undeserving of freedom to dissuade his supporters from advocating for his release.

1.6 Methodology

This thesis analyses Adayfi's *Don't forget us here: lost and found at Guantánamo* (2021) and Woodfox's memoir, *Solitary* (2019), to trace the impact of the camp's use of abject names to identify detainees, leading to their dehumanization and making them more susceptible to violence. It also examines the interconnected relationship between the politics of naming and torture. While being categorized as dangerous makes a prisoner an object of torture, torture is used to coerce the prisoners into accepting and conforming to such a label, thereby subduing them into a state of objectification. On the other hand, this thesis studies the prisoners' methods of resistance and struggle; hunger strikes, education, writing and creating connections within prison and beyond its walls, to reject these false identities and maintain their selfhood.

Chapter Two

The Struggle for Freedom in Guantanamo

2.1 Introduction

This chapter studies Adayfi's memoir *Don't Forget Us Here: Lost and Found at Guantánamo* (2021), examining the methods employed by Guantanamo camp administrators to subjugate and dehumanize detainees in order to erode their sense of self. These strategies are linguistic, emotional and physical aimed at the body and the psyche of prisoners. However, this thesis will examine the detainees' tactics of resistance to counter these oppressive measures and regain agency over their bodies, reclaiming their subjectivity and control over themselves.

This chapter draws on Butler's hate speech and Althusser's interpellation to examine the terms of address that the American prison guards and administrators use to refer to prisoners. The chapter also draws on Foucault's concepts of surveillance and panopticon to scrutinize the threatening and surveilling gaze of the prison guards who control the prisoners' movement and even facial expressions and gestures. This subjugation of prisoners to the panoptic gaze of the guards is destructive to the prisoners' psyche as they internalize the threatening gaze of the other, nurturing self-discipline even with the physical absence of the gazing other. In addition to this surveillance, the prisoners are subject, in terms of Butler's concept of hate speech, to humiliating terms of address that degrade and dehumanize their identities. In other words, while the proper name is the site of one's individuality and identity, the use of terms of address such as animal, terrorist and so on are meant to deprive the prisoners of their individuality. However, despite of these humiliating strategies, the prisoners, like Mansour whose name evokes victory, employ counter narratives and strategies so as to wrestle control from the prison guards and administrators. The detainees, then, use the body that is subject to sheer pain and torture to assert subjectivity and agency. Writing and artistic creations which are expressed via the bodily part that is the hand that prison guards attempt or strive to castrate are the means through which the prisoners assert their sense of self. Furthermore, in contrast to the torture imposed upon them by the other, the detainees play the role of the subjects and objects in their hunger strike which, even though raises the specter of demise of the hunger striker, politicizes their bodies and publicizes their case.

2.2 The politics of naming and renaming

Governments often employ the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) to assign abject labels to order a group of individuals it finds undesirable to force them into a “state of exception” (Agamben, 1998, p. 9). Carl Schmitt declares that “Sovereign is he who decides on the exception” (Schmitt, 2005, p. 5). To create this state of exception, where individuals lose their right to have rights, the government often utilizes media to propagate negative images about a particular group to rally public support for policies against that group and decrease support for policies that could potentially help them (Brinson & Stohl, 2012). The American “war on terror” is a prime example of this media manipulation. The American government uses media to spread fear among its public through using horrific images of terrorism, connecting them to Muslims and Islam, which leads to the interpellation of all individuals who are or seem to be Arab or Muslim as terrorists, causing them to become a radicalized group of people in the United State of America (Volpp, 2020). As a result, when the American politicians device violent policies to counter this “threat”, the public chooses to accept and support them (Gadarian, 2014), this process leads the American and Western public to view these “terrorists” to be responsible and deserving of the act of violence administered against them. In other words, Muslims and Arabs are viewed as violent individuals while being subjected to violence themselves.

Guantanamo Bay camp is a product of ISAs. This is evident in the language it uses to dehumanize the detainees, rendering them the exception. The fact that all detainees are named terrorists or potential threats creates what Butler terms as a “black hole” in the world, leading to the “Guantánamo Limbo” (Butler J. , 2004, p. 54). In Guantanamo, Butler believes that the national and the international laws have been suspended. This situation is made more problematic because the Geneva Conventions, Butler argues, classifies terrorists as “outside the protocols” and even “outside the law” by providing "'universal" rights only to imprisoned soldiers who are a part of "recognizable" nation-states, but not to every imprisoned fighter” (Butler J. , 2004, p. 68). This means even an attempt to apply the law to protect these detainees is futile, because the law does include them. Giorgio Agamben and Ulrich Raulff explain that “The detainees of Guantanamo do not have the status of prisoners of war; they have absolutely no legal status. They are subject now only to raw power; they have no legal existence” (Agamben & Raulff, 2004).

Since they are not recognized as prisoners of war, these detainees are not awarded the rights and protections that such a status would normally provide, for example, humane treatment, the right to a fair trial. Thus they become vulnerable to mistreatment and abuse.

The American government, then, uses abject terms of address so as to criminalize the prisoners and justify detaining them in Guantanamo. Throughout Adayfi's memoir *Don't Forget Us Here: Lost and Found at Guantánamo*, prisoners are referred to "terrorist," "the worst of the worst," a "suspected terrorist," and a "low-level threat" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 293). "Terrorist" means that the detainee is designated with a name. To be a terrorist is not to be a person, but to be depersonalized. The politics of naming work effectively in Guantanamo, as it renders the detainee an abject identity. Thus, the American government has never apologized for their inhuman treatment of the detainees as it views these prisoners as "terrorists who needed to be detained" (p. 270).

The camp insists on imposing upon Adayfi an identity that is alien to him: "They wanted me to admit that I was a man named Adel, an Egyptian al Qaeda recruiter, a terrorist who planned bombings" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, pp. 6-7). The relentless insistence of the camp to redefine Adayfi & Aiello as a terrorist causes him to lose vital aspects of his being: "I reach for the memories, but the details are lost" (p.11). The relentless insistence to redefine Adayfi & Aiello in this way has influenced not only how others perceive, but also the way he perceives himself and his memories, causing him to doubt and lose details of his own experiences. This leads him to fear losing "that Mansoor who had dreamed of going to university one day" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 224). The camp's choice to force names upon Adayfi that do not align with his true identity serves to obliterate his subjectivity and reduce him to what Kristiva terms as an abject entity. Adayfi despairs as he begins to lose his identity: "You are nothing now. No name. No family. No self" (p.16).

The proper name is the pre-constructed part of an individual's identity, as it holds within it meaning and social context before the subject is even able to consciously engage with society (Hamamra, Alawi, & Herzallah, 2020). Most importantly a proper name is a signifier of the subject's position within their society from the moment they are born and named; a person is inscribed into the process of becoming a subject within society. Lacan notes that a subject's place in discourse "is already inscribed at his birth if only in the form of his proper name" (Lacan, 1991, p. 495). This makes proper names an essential tool society uses to structure and understand individuals. That is why one of the first acts

of violence against the subjectivity of prisoners the American government commits is renaming prisoners, using racial and humiliating terms of address and nicknames or even numbers. Prisons including Guantanamo bay detention camp use numbers to refer to the prisoners instead of personal names. Mansour, the author of the memoir, is repeatedly referred to as #441, a number that signifies nothing human. In Guantanamo, Adayfi is alienated from his sense of self when he is given a number for an identity: "You don't recognize yourself because you're only a number now—detainee 441" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 18). Every encounter in which he is addressed as a number rather than his given name leads him to feel as though his "self" is torn out of him "piece by piece until nothing is left but fear and the quiet whisper of memories. Poof. You have disappeared" (p. 18). The deliberate replacement of Adayfi's name with a number in Guantanamo signifies not only the loss of personal identity but also the intentional devaluation and erasure of his existence.

This humiliating term of address – terrorist – is further consolidated by the fact that the prisoners' protestations of humanity fall on the guards' deaf ears and threatening gazes. In fact, the gaze is a literary topoi that Adayfi employs throughout the memoir to examine the criminalization of him and his fellow prisoners. Adayfi tells the readers that "I wanted to yell at them that they should treat us like human beings" (p. 136). This shows the utter subjugation of the prisoners. While the expression "I want" emphasizes the lack that the prisoners try to fill in, that is, their human rights, it also highlights their inability to assert their subjectivity and humanity to the prison guards. Indeed, Adayfi attempt of self-assertion is shattered by the investigators whose "eyes said that I was an animal and not worth their words" (p. 136). The threatening gaze that freezes his words in his lips places him, imaginatively, in "a laboratory to study how Muslims would react to crazy rules and punishments, and how the human spirit could endure the worst harassments. Everything seemed designed to humiliate and demean us" (p. 78). Adayfi is perceived by the camp as a test object, subjected to degrading and humiliating techniques that strip his agency and render him controlled "for interrogation" (p. 50). In other words, the administrators educe the detainees to objects to be manipulated and controlled objects.

2.3 Torture and pain

Guantanamo detainees exist outside both human and political laws. They live in an indistinctive space, where their human rights are suspended by the international community. Agamben explains that "Whoever enter[s] the camp move[s] in a zone of in

distinction between outside and inside, exception and rule, licit and illicit, in which the very concepts of subjective right and juridical protection no longer [make] sense" (Agamben, 1998, p. 142). Guantanamo camp exists in a zone where human laws and protections do not apply, this creates a condition where the distinctions that usually govern society are no longer clear or relevant.

Behind the walls of Guantanamo the detainees are completely isolated from all forms of support. That is because "Detainees at Guantánamo initially had no contact whatsoever with the outside world" (Rossdale & Taylor, 2017, p. 50). Adayfi bemoans that "When I was kidnapped, I disappeared. The United States wasn't going to contact Mansoor Adayfi's family when they were insisting I was someone else" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 195). The fact that his family is not made aware of his detention in Guantanamo means that Adayfi is denied any familial support. Even when the family is eventually informed, the camp does not allow them to communicate with the detainees. Adayfi explains that "Some families did send letters through the Red Cross, but they all ended up detained like us, kidnapped" (p. 194). Adayfi's use of the word "detained" suggests that the camp policies prevents any attempt by the detainee to form a connection with the outside world or to rally support or petition, this emphasizes the extreme isolation imposed on detainees. This becomes even clearer when examining the fact that a vast majority of the indefinite detainees at Guantanamo are imprisoned without facing a trial or being convicted with a crime. Anges Callamard, French human rights activist, explains that "Very few of these men have ever been charged with a crime, and absolutely none has faced a fair trial" as cited in Amnesty International (2023). Adayfi informs his readers that even seven years after he was kidnapped in Afghanistan, "they'd never once charged me with a crime or told me what crime they thought I'd committed" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 216). The camp administrators' insistence on accusing Adayfi of being Adel and then Alex, al Qaeda leaders, refusing to provide him with the evidence that connects him to these men (p. 216), is meant to render the detainee defenseless and disoriented, unable to prove their innocence. This deprives them of the chance to be heard and released. This is highlighted in Adayfi's account of the detainees' discussion about "how they wanted the Americans to accuse them of a crime so they could prove their innocence" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 162). The fact that the detainees are not allowed a trial to defend their innocence causes them to fall into state of precarity (Butler J. , 2004).

Detainees in Guantanamo are defenseless against the camp administrators. Adayfi proclaims that many of Guantanamo detainees live in a constant fear of being simply executed without a trial, as they "had all been given the same paper to sign that said if we tried to escape, soldiers had the right to shoot and kill us" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 23). For in Guantanamo, they are denied the international laws that would protect them from the American army's attack on their body, which is clear in a Guantanamo general's announcement to Adayfi and his comrades " 'You have no rights here,' he said. 'You gave them up when you joined al Qaeda' " (p. 57). The American general attests that as perceived al Qaeda members these detainees become bare lives unworthy of human rights. Adayfi's accounts of the detainees' interactions with the Red Cross organization provide evidence of the manipulative tactics employed by their representatives. The Red Cross is present at both Guantanamo and the American Interrogation center in Kandahar. Adayfi reveals that the Red Cross representatives strategically worded their questions to elicit specific answers from the detainees, creating an illusion that their basic needs are being met: "do you have food? Do you have water?" (p.24). Meanwhile, they choose to purposefully ignore the detainees' detailed complaints about their mistreatment. (p. 24). This deliberate approach aimed to present a distorted image of the detainees' conditions, potentially obscuring the true extent of their mistreatment and abuse, as "their only purpose was to give legitimacy to what the Americans were doing" (p. 24). Not only does the Red Cross manipulate their reports to diminish the violence the detainees face in the camp, they also "laughed at us when they came" (p. 129). The fact that a human rights organization, The Red Cross, is denying and justifying the cruel treatment the prisoners are subjected to: "They are using normal circumstances to try to make you talk. You should just talk. It would be better for everyone" (p. 129) thrusts the detainees into a precarious position. They fall in to a position in which the camp's admins can act upon without restraint: pure passivity, the embodiment of abjection.

2.3.1 Physical torture

Guantanamo employs a multitude of methods to subdue the detainee. The detainee is confined in tiny, dirty, abject cages. Adayfi laments that "The conditions in the cages were terrible and inhumane" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 24). His description of his life in the cages projects a clear image of an abject space which is "horrifying precisely because it contains cruel secrets and has witnessed terrible deeds" (Creed, 2007, p. 55). Adayfi

recounts that in these cages the detainees are not permitted “to cover ourselves when we used the buckets to go to the bathroom. It was humiliating. No one wanted to use those buckets. We could see and hear and smell everything” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 24). They “only had one bucket of water each, which we couldn’t use for both drinking and washing” (p. 24). Detainees are often bound with shackles and cuffs to restrict their movement even when they are in solitary confinement. Adayfi provides many instances where he “had been short-shackled and left in a room for days with loud music and flashing lights” (p. 80). In another instance, he “woke up shivering in nothing but my shorts, shackled to a metal bed in India Block” (p. 64). Detainees find themselves burdened not only by physical restraints but also by numerous rules and regulations that assert control over their every movement. The commands echo relentlessly within the confines of Guantanamo, “SIT UP! NO SLEEPING!” (p. 20) “NO WASHING!”, (p. 21) “NO STANDING!”, (p. 22) “NO COVERING!”, “NO TALKING” (p. 24). Adayfi's use of short phrases in all capital letters effectively captures the volume and intrusiveness of these commands. They are orders that demand obedience without any need for justification, allowing no room for discussion or excuses.

Guantanamo’s order is sustained through focusing on the body as the site of subjugation. It aims to produce submissive bodies, “Guards played with my body like a toy” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 179). Cavarero (2009) argues that “torture belongs to the type of circumstance in which the coincidence between the vulnerable and the helpless is the result of a series of acts, intentional and planned, aimed at bringing it about” (p. 31). This means that the violence used by the prison is a calculated measure meant “to fabricate the degenerated figure of helplessness” (p. 34) through targeting their bodies. That is because “Invulnerability does not occur in nature; it has to be produced artificially” (p.35). Indeed, the constant disciplining, surveillance, and punishment of the detainees’ bodies creates bodies that are accustomed to external regulation. Foucault notes that disciplining “the body, optimize its capabilities, extort its forces, increase its usefulness and docility, integrate it into systems of efficient and economic controls" (Foucault, 1980, p. 139). This discipline produces the types of bodies that would co-operate in the interrogation room.

Adayfi tells readers that it is impossible for prisoners to follow all the rules imposed upon them by prison guards: “It was impossible to keep up with every no” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 2). This means that these tasks are designed to ensure the prisoners are constantly

abused both physically and psychologically: “it seemed that every rule broken was met with a punch, a slap, a boot, or worse, with that pack of guards in armor and shields who rushed your cage and knocked you to the ground” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 20). The administrators of Guantanamo employ such a strategy of impossible completion of tasks in order to keep the detainees “disoriented and weak for [their] interrogations” (p. 20), thus breaking their wills and fragmenting their resistance. This is observed in the camps brutal response to the detainees’ rejection of following the rules. Adayfi notes that every attempt at defiance during interrogation spurs the administrators to “beat [him] to the ground and got [him] shackled and hooded” (p. 40). The camp utilizes extreme violence in order to destroy the detainees resolve; this is clear in the number of guards used to subdue one defenseless detainee. Adayfi explains that “The IRF team came and six guards kicked my ass to secure me” (p.145). In addition, to ensure submission, the camp uses exaggerated violent responses to the smallest perceived unresponsiveness from the detainees. For example, “One brother who had protested a short shower was beaten so badly guards broke his jaw” (2021, p. 59). The physical abuse the detainees suffer during their imprisonment in Guantánamo is evident in Adayfi’s description of an incident of him being attacked by the guards:

> The officer knelt on my neck, pulled my head up by my hair, opened my eyes, and showered each eye with pepper spray. The world went black in a blanket of pain. I thought I was blinded forever. Now they beat me, kicking, punching, throwing me around like a plastic toy. I didn’t feel the pain after the first couple of kicks. My spirit left my body and watched from above, listening to the solid thud of boots on ribs, skin splitting, ribs cracking. When they were done, I felt the sole of a boot on my face (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 134).

Adayfi’s choice to compare his abused body to a lifeless toy shows the complete dehumanization and degradation he endures during this brutal assault. This is emphasized by the fact that the guard’s act of stepping on his face as a form of humiliation.

2.3.2 Humiliation and degradation

The detainees are subject to constant surveillance that is, one can argue, modeled on the Foucauldian concept of the panopticon. Foucault (1980) explains, “Surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action” (p. 201). The prospect of

being constantly observed forces the detainees to control their behavior as though they are supervised even when they are not being observed. Adayfi explains that in Guantanamo his every move is often watched and documented especially by the psychologists who work at the Behavioral Health Unit and “watched [them] twenty-four hours a day, taking notes on everything you did” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 54). Furthermore, the camp turns the detainees into a spectacle, displaying them as if they are wild animals. Adayfi recounts, "They walked me to the Gold Building, where I was usually taken for interrogations. There was a group of high-ranking officers and civilians gathered there, and they watched me walk by" (p. 67). Turning them in to a public spectacle adds to their dehumanization as it demonizes the detainees in the eyes of the public observing them.

Surveillance leads to self-discipline in the sense that the detainees internalize the invisible, threatening gaze of the guards to the extent they guard their own behavior. Foucault explains that “In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is this fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection” (Foucault, 1977, p. 187). Adayfi, commenting on the gaze of the nameless female guard, tells readers that the interpreters assured him that “she has orders not to take her eyes off you” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 30), adding “She must watch you at all times and take note of everything. Even when you go to the bathroom” (p. 30). The power of prison is imposed through visibility: “The camp administration knew about everything but watched us from a distance” (p. 254). The prisoners’ awareness that they are constantly observed leads them to internalize the prison’s control. They begin to regulate their own behavior and conform to the rules or expectations imposed upon them. Adayfi informs his readers that even during the times when Guantanamo chooses to impose fewer rules and less interaction with the guards on the detainees, knowing that they are observed by the prison administrators, teaches prisoners “to be skeptical” (p. 254). Thus, they begin to self-discipline.

The constant surveillance of the detainees is made even more humiliating by constantly forcing them to strip naked in front of the guards and the other detainees: “as punishment they stripped me naked” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 47). Adayfi (2021) laments that imposed nakedness challenges the detainee's sense of manhood and masculinity, being

further feminized by the female guards' gazes. He narrates “The guards strip you naked. He pours more water on you and leaves you chained to the floor, squatting with your hands in front of you” (p. 113). In addition, detainees are lined up “naked out in front of their cages, their hands cuffed behind their backs so they couldn’t cover themselves (p. 32). This deliberate exposure of their nudity in the presence of guards, particularly female guards, subjects the detainees to emasculation and humiliation. Adayfi tells readers that “every time they stripped us in front of them it was another humiliation” (p. 31). He pleads with the admins to "cover [himself] so the women can't see [him]" (2021, p. 32), highlighting his shame that arises from his self-consciousness as he is emasculated and objectified by the gaze of women. Ryan Ashley Caldwell explains that this “tactic was not only about controlling prisoners, but was also directed at humiliating and ‘feminizing’ the prisoners such that they were objectified and ‘othered,’ where culturally constructed boundaries of masculinity were crossed in an attempt to punish through humiliation itself” (Caldwell, 2010, p. 48). He argues that “female soldiers were used for the humiliation of Iraqi male prisoners” (Caldwell, 2010, p. 102). The guards seem to derive pleasure from inflicting misery and agony upon the detainee: “We stayed like this for hours, naked and duct-taped and hooded, freezing in the open wind as soldiers kicked us, peed on us, spit on us, put their boots on our necks. All of it humiliating but minor compared to what they’d done to me before” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 3). Despite the severity of these acts, Adayfi considers them minor compared to being forced to be nude especially in front of female guards. This highlights the extreme physical and psychological torment nudity causes the detainees.

While female guards do not elicit pleasure from degrading the detainees- evidenced in Adayfi (2021) “pointing out that we all knew that when there was a female commander in charge of our guards, we lived more peaceful lives” (p. 264). The camp admins’ sadistic impulses reach an orgasmic state at witnessing the detainees as being an object of pleasure. He vividly describes the genital search as a form of rape, recounting, “genital search was like a rape. Six guards held me down and the seventh one hit my genitals and then did a rough cavity search. I screamed out and I kicked and punched. It hurt, but the humiliation was worse and the guards knew that by now” (p. 76). He further explains that during some examinations, soldiers “punched us in the genitals or pulled them hard and fast so others couldn’t see” (p. 31). The guards’ choice to attack the detainees through

their sexual organs points to that the guards' intention to demolish the detainee's sense of masculinity and manhood which are further striped by the fact that the detainees are not only subject to the gaze of the prison guards but also to the emasculated gazes of the other detainees.

2.3.3 Sleep and insomnia

The prison guards deprive prisoners of the biological inevitability of sleep which signifies relaxation: "they had guards bang on my cell door every couple of minutes nonstop so that I couldn't sleep for more than a couple of minutes at a time" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, 160). This pushes the detainees to the il-y-a of anonymous existence. Levinas explains that, "Sleep is like entering into contact with the protective forces of a place" (Levinas, 2001, pp. 66-67). While sleep is the basis of consciousness and one's being in a place, refuge, home, insomnia is the horror of anonymous existence, revealing the guards' intrusion into the minds of the prisoners who are always alert and wakeful, expecting physical and psychological torture. According to Solzhenitsyn "Sleepiness befogs the reason, undermines the will and the human being ceases to be himself, to be his own, I" (Solzhenitsyn in *The Gulag Archipelago*, 1974). The Lack of sleep drains the detainees mentally and physically, which hinders their ability to think logically, and weakens their willpower. Pérez-Sales (2016) explains, sleep deprivation "prolong[s] the shock of capture and prevent[s] the detainee from recovering, regaining control or making decisions … [and it] increases the perception of pain and it diminishes the capacity to react in complex adverse situations" (Pérez-Sales, 2017, p. 186). As a result, Adayfi tells readers that sleep deprivation is " One of the worst tortures" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 115). Since it causes a myriad of horrific effects on the human body and mind, it leads to the disconnection between detainees and their own sense of self, leaving them unable to struggle against the camp's order.

One of the tools Guantanamo camp uses to prevent prisoners from sleeping is the use of ''Sonic torture'' (Hill, 2012). Adayfi's memoir vividly demonstrates the camp's use of sonic torture -though he does not explicitly use the terminology_ when he laments the camp's installation of vacuums that "never stopped. It screamed at me every hour of every day for I don't know how many weeks" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 105). Adayfi (2021) explains that to amplify the effects of this abuse the camp admin combine this constant deafening noise with the removal of all sources of comfort from his cell. In addition, the

light is continuously turned on day and night, and the “cold air blew from the vent, freezing me in my cell” (p. 105), which ensures the detainee will not be able to rest or relax enough to sleep. The camp deliberately uses this method of torture to annihilate the detainees’ sense of self through targeting their psyche. Sergeant Mark Hadsell declares that ‘‘these people haven’t heard heavy metal before. They can’t take it. If you play it for 24 hours, your brain and body functions start to slide, your train of thought slows down and your will is broken. That’s when we come in and talk to them’’ as cited in In (Borger, 2003). Adayfi describes the torment these vacuums caused him; he tells his readers “I thought that maybe the noise from the vacuums had permanently rewired my brain. I talked to my neighbors sometimes, but it was hard to think straight or even understand what brothers were saying to me. I had a hard time concentrating. I forgot things. I’d be talking to my neighbor and forget what I was talking about in the middle of my sentence” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 109). This noise impairs the detainees’ mental abilities, affecting their abilities to form connections.

Sonic torture causes the detainees to suffer from headaches, nausea, hypertension, disorientation, reduced bodily functions, altered speech patterns and cognitive abilities, in addition to anxiety, fear, and terror (Goodman, 2010; Schafer, 1994). This is observed in Adayfi’s account of a detainee’s reaction to the prolonged subjection to the noise: “I watched him plead with his vacuum. He motioned for her to stop. He shushed her. He got on his knees and begged. I laughed for a moment, but I realized how bad this could be” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 179). This reflects the state of desperation this abuse caused the detainee, as he starts to act irrationally out of helplessness, pleading, motioning, shushing, and begging an inanimate object. This suggests a breakdown in his mental state, which indicates the psychological toll it has on the prisoner. Adayfi also describes the psychological impact of the constant noise from the vacuums, highlighting how it creates a sense of disconnection and isolation among the detainees:

> The nasty vacuums screamed and the big fans roared at me all day; the noise buried me, burrowed into me, pressed down on me. There was no relief, no comfort—we couldn’t talk or sing to other brothers the way we had in the past. Whatever restraint, what little sense of humanity the guards once had was gone (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 179).

The incessant noise of the vacuums disrupts the detainees' ability to think clearly and communicate effectively. This sensory overload contributes to their sense of disorientation and mental breakdown, leading to a deeper sense of isolation. Therefore, prisoners lose the means with which they maintained a sense of companionship and humanity.

2.3.4 Torture through isolation

The camp's order is intentionally designed to separate and isolate detainees, leaving them in a precarious state where they depend on the guards for human communication. This is evident in the strict rule prohibiting detainees from speaking to each other. Any attempt at creating a connection between prisoners is met with aggressive reactions from the guards. This is evidenced in the guard shouting "NO TALKING!" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 20) as he "pounded my [Adayfi's] cage" (p. 20) to prevent Adayfi from speaking to his comrade, leaving him without any form of emotional support during his detention.

In addition, detainees are forced to helplessly watch while other defenseless "brothers" are brutally beaten, and abused. This can be observed as Adayfi (2021) recounts an incident in which soldiers pile on top of a detainee "and beat him with a fierceness that didn't match his size" (p. 19). This cruelty astound him "I had never seen anything like it" (p. 19). As he is just a body, which lacks the right to a voice, his screams of objections earns him the same fate: "the soldiers stormed my cage and beat me" (p. 19). The fact that Adayfi is brutalized in response to his support for other detainees is designed to create a passive, isolated, and vulnerable body, completely submissive to the camp's authority. This is evident in Adayfi's account of the doctors punishing a young detainee, Zakaria, who suffers from a severe tooth infection, as retribution for a riot caused by other detainees demanding treatment. Adayfi exclaims, "Guess how many teeth that asshole criminal extracted from Zakaria's mouth? Two, you might guess. No. Three. No. Please, go on. Five … six? No. Are you crazy, Mansoor? They took eight teeth at one time" (p 95). This act of cruelty is intended to deter the detainees from uniting in resistance by making the consequences of such actions unbearably harsh.

Guantanamo camp's isolation of the detainee from their world is a strategy meant to destroy the detainees' voices and their ability to communicate. The camp imposes a strict division between the outside world and the inside of the camp_ the camp mainly consists

of solitary confinement cells and individual cages: “They had built a new prison, a solid prison that was all solitary confinement cells meant for isolation and sensory deprivation. They’d sent us there to keep us apart from each other. To punish us. To keep us from organizing” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 160). The camp’s intention in building the solitary confinement block is to make sure that the detainees are “kept apart from one another and cut off from the world entirely, including our families” (p. 191). This deprives the detainees all social interactions, which eliminates any addressee to whom the detainee might give an account of themselves to (Guenther, 2013, p. 222). Thus, the prisoner is thrust into a void where he is completely severed from the world around him.

Isolation is also designed to break the detainees’ resistance against the camp’s order and make them more susceptible to submit to the interrogators. Adayfi recounts how after instances where he is severely beaten: he “was taken away to solitary confinement and isolation where I couldn’t talk to another brother for months” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 88). This account exemplifies the use of solitary confinement as an additional form of punishment. By isolating detainees for extended periods of time, the camp further aggravates their suffering, and intensifies their feelings of helplessness, in addition to disrupting solidarity among prisoners. Solitary confinement is a form of torture, favored by repressive states due to its effectiveness, administrative convenience, and minimal public outcry (Haney, 2018). However, UN representatives have publicly declared the use of solitary confinement as a violation of the CAT and ICCPR in certain circumstances (Human Rights Committee, 1994), that is because “[t]he adverse acute and latent psychological and physiological effects of prolonged solitary confinement constitute severe mental pain or suffering” (United Nations, 2011, p.6). Through the use of solitary confinement the camp intends to compromise the detainees’ mental capacity and make them more docile during interrogation. Adayfi explains, “INTERROGATORS WANTED ME to break down in isolation. I tried to hold on for as long as I could, but I felt my mind slipping away (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 47). That is because “[a]fter the isolation and not talking to anyone for so long, you feel lost. This is what they want” (p. 43). Adayfi informs his reader that having experienced numerous methods of torture he “thought I was ready for anything, but I could never have imagined the cruel isolation of solitary confinement” (p. 41). This comes as result of the psychological harm isolation inflicts upon prisoners' mental health. Grassian points out that “Even a few days of

solitary confinement will predictably shift the electroencephalogram (EEG) pattern toward an abnormal pattern characteristic of stupor and delirium" (Grassian, 2006, p. 331).

2.4 Resisting abjection and reclaiming the dispossessed body

2.4.1 Physical resistance and hunger strikes

Adayfi and the other detainees' rejection of following routine rules is a form of resistance that employs the detainees' bodies as the site of resistance. This is evident when Waddah, a fellow detainee, suggests that the detainees "refuse to come back from rec and shower" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 40). Adayfi's asserts that "Our bodies had become the battle ground for control" (p. 170). Mbembe explains that while an individual loses his freedom when he is murdered by someone, he manages to regain his freedom if he makes the choice to sacrifice his own life. In other words, "[d]eath is precisely that from and over which I have power" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 39). This choice may also release the prisoner "from terror and bondage" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 39). The camps constant attempts to prevent the detainees' suicide attempts reflect its desire to completely control the bodies of the detainees and their free will. This is reflected in Adayfi's sarcastic remark regarding the camp's desperate attempts to quell the wave of suicides initiated by Afghan detainees as a form of protest against the inhumane treatment and continuous disrespect of the Quran. Adayfi ironically states, "The camp admin loved us so much, they didn't want us to die" (p.113). Adayfi asserts that no prisoner has committed suicide despite the attempted suicides; however the guards committed multiple acts of homicide against detainees under the guise of suicide. Adayfi laments that they "had just lost three brothers and the camp was calling it suicide when we all knew that was a lie" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 277). Indeed, suicide becomes another strategy used by the guards to kill detainees and then claim that they committed suicide.

Hunger strike is another method of self –destructive resistance that has been used in prisons in various countries and time periods. Some of the earliest recorded instances occurred in Ireland (Sweeney, 1993). These acts of resistance are inspired by the women's suffrage movement in which hundreds of women (and some men) in the United Kingdom went on hunger strike from 1909 to 1914 to campaign for women's right to vote (Historic England, n.d.). In Ireland, members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) staged hunger

strikes in 1916 and 1923, demanding political recognition (Biggs, 2007, pp. 2-3). Hunger strikes as a method of protest resurfaced again in during the 1970s and 1980s. During that period around a hundred Irish prisoners participated in violent demonstrations and hunger strikes between 1973 and 1977 in high-security prisons. In 1981, ten IRA members died from starvation during a series of hunger strikes (Fierke, 2012).

In Germany, members of the Red Army Faction (RAF), including Ulrike Meinhof, went on hunger strikes from 1973 to 1975 to protest demeaning and harsh prison conditions and solitary confinement. During these strikes RAF member Holger Meins died from starvation in 1974 (Pluchinsky, 1993, pp. 135-157). In 1990, hundreds of political detainees in South Africa conducted a hunger strike, to demand an end to indefinite detention and the right to fair trials. In Turkey, prisoner at Buca prison had undergone a hunger strike in 1996, resulting in the deaths of 12 prisoners (Amnesty International, 1996). Another significant hunger strike took place in 2000–2001 in 'F-type' prisons to fight against solitary confinement. This hunger strike led to the death of hundreds of leftists and other prisoners, along with their non-imprisoned family member who were fasting in solidarity (Bowcott, 2002).

In Palestine, Palestinian prisoners have been participating in mass hunger strikes since 1968. In 2017, around 1,500 prisoners from across six jails took part in a hunger strike led by Marwan Barghouti that demands to have access to communication with their families (Al Tahhan, 2017). At Guantánamo Bay, detainees have used hunger strikes as a form of protest since 2002, however, U.S. authorities often used force-feeding as a method to end these strikes (Annas, 2006).

Hunger strike can be perceived as a 'self-destructive' method of struggle, as it carries within it notions that opposes the natural compulsion to self-preservation. However, through these strikes, the striker might accomplish transcendent justice, giving meaning to his life and death (Bargu, 2013, p. 18). While the hunger strikers in Guantanamo (as well as other cases such as the Palestinian case) cause destruction upon their own bodies_ which might not be reversible, strikers do not necessarily seek to die and put an end to their lives. On the contrary, in most cases, they aim through these strikes to survive and put pressure on the state to create better life conditions in their present and future. According to Ashjan Ajour, "[e]mploying the body in resistance and transforming bodies into weapons are at the heart of the prisoners' invention of a particular form of

subjectivation, through which they transform their otherwise powerless captive bodies into a source of strength" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 125). In other words, prisoners are asserting their subjectivity by attempting to transcend their bodies, the cause of their subjugation. Adayfi compares going on a hunger strike to entering a dark tunnel, "where the light at the end is death" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 162). He pleads with his readers to understand that "none of us wanted to die. But we understood that by going on hunger strike, we were choosing to set off on a slow and painful journey to death" (p. 163). The decision to embark on a hunger strike is not taken lightly. As Adayfi elucidates, It is a deliberate action undertaken by the detainees to assert their humanity and ensure their survival: "At some point, we looked at our options and knew we had no other choice. We could do nothing and die forgotten in this terrible place or we could die trying to bring attention to our indefinite detention" (p.163). Adayfi insists that constant resistance and confrontation is required to protect his humanity from the accumulated problems that are caused by the humiliation and abuse he is subjected to: "I had to continue the hunger strike to the very end. I had no choice" (p. 168). Adayfi declares that as long as the detainees maintain resistance "They would never tame us" (p. 147). The detainees' choice to cause their own bodies harm allows them to transcend their states as the objects of the camps abuse and become the subjects and objects of their abuse, transforming the "self" into a "resistance subject" (Ajour, 2021, p. 133).

2.4.1.1 Resisting force-feeding

The admins use of absolute brutality to end hunger strikes, however, shows that they perceive having subjects in their camps as a threat. Adayfi explains that "I went on hunger strike again. But the camp thought of that as a threat, and as punishment they stripped me naked and took everything out of my cell" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 47). The camp decision to force- feed the detainees is another tactic to reaffirm its control over the detainees' bodies. Adayfi's describes the force- feeding chair as "a thinly padded chair with a body harness, armrests with restraints, and a high back with restraints for the head. It was the same chair Americans use in executions" (p. 172). The utilization of execution chairs in the camp to strap detainees for force-feeding serves as a glaring manifestation of the camp administrators' intention to annihilate the detainees' resistant self and assert dominance over their submissive bodies. The deliberate choice to employ inhumane and degrading methods for force-feeding epitomizes the camp's objective to discourage any form of resistance, thereby eradicating the detainees' defiant identities.

Adayfi's (2021) depiction of a force-feeding session reveals a sadistic desire on the part of the medical team to inflict immense pain and psychological damage upon the detainees' bodies and minds. “The male nurse forced that huge tube into my nose. No numbing spray. No lubricant. Raw rubber and metal sliced the inside of my nose and throat. Pain shot through my sinuses and I thought my head would explode. I screamed and tried to fight but I couldn’t move. My nose bled and bled, but the nurse wouldn’t stop” (p.172). The fact the nurse chooses not stop even after witnessing the evidence of the damages he is causing Adayfi’s body shows that the nurse either does not view Adayfi as an equal so he dismisses his pain, or he gains enjoyment from observing Adayfi’s pain, or he is motivated by a combination of both reasons.

Furthermore, the camp strives to shame the detainees through using their bodies against them as a tactic to discourage the detainees from engaging in hunger strikes. The camp’s choice to mix laxatives in the Ensure - nutritional drinks- administered during force feeding sessions, and subsequently prohibiting detainees from using the restroom, undermines the autonomy that the hunger strike had afforded them over their own bodies. Adayfi (2021) recounts “I hadn’t eaten in months. Everything they forced into my stomach was going straight through my intestines. I tried to hold it all in, but I couldn’t” (p. 173). The guards and nurses actively witnessing and mocking Adayfi's loss of bodily control, “This was their special kind of humiliation” (2021, p. 173), does not only strip away his agency but also deepen his sense of shame and helplessness. As result, the detainees resort to weaponize their humiliation to sustain their resistance, Adayfi (2021) says “a brother said to me, “All we have left is our humiliation. So we will use our humiliation against them” (p. 202). The detainees claim their own abjection and use it as a means of resistance “Some brothers started throwing feces all over their cages. If death couldn’t get the camp admin’s attention, maybe this would […] When that didn’t make things better, those brothers came up with something new and even nastier. They put feces all over their clothes when they went to their force-feeding” (p. 202). By embracing and reclaiming their abject circumstances, particularly through the deliberate use of their bodily fluids as a form of resistance, the detainees assert themselves as active agents, no longer mere abject objects of the camp administrators' acts of torture. The detainees engage in these acts of resistance, knowingly enduring the accompanying pain, driven by their desire to have their voices heard and their humanity recognized. “I felt less hurt. I

don’t know how to explain it. All that hurt had come out for the camp to see. We made them see us” (p. 139). However, despite their efforts, the camp remains determined to silence them.

2.4.2 Mental and Psychological Resistance

2.4.2.1 Forming connections

Adayfi informs the readers that the purpose of his memoir is not only to uncover the atrocities he and the other detainees experience in Guantanamo, but it is also to have the world “see who we were and how we had survived through friendship and brotherhood” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 146). Building strong relationships between the detainees gives them the strength to resist the objectifying and abjectifying power of the camp, allowing them to maintain their humanity and subjectivity. Creating a community within the walls of prison creates an environment in which the detainees are given positive support to combat the constant humiliation and dehumanization they are subjected to by those who imprison them. In other words, for the detainee to withhold their selfhood “a particularly important factor is appraisal support, which consists in giving individuals to understand that they have the possibilities and abilities important for a given social group” (Kmiecik-Baran, 1995). This is clear in the pride Adayfi exhibit when he recalls the other detainees referring to him as a lion, which signifies bravery in Arabic, “ ‘Welcome, Lion!’ he sang. Other brothers joined him. ‘Our hero!’ they sang. ‘The Lion!’ ” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 71). The positive forms of address, hero, lion, are determent to Adayfi’s ability to continue his struggle against his capture, he explains that his election as the block leader gives him responsibilities towards the other detainees, which provides him with an incentive to fight for his life and identity. He admits “I wasn’t the general they thought I was—I wasn’t even a leader—but I had found my role in this place: To feel the pain of others. To stick up for those who were beaten. And to try to make our lives better” (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 72). Having a role within the walls of the camp anchors Adayfi’s sense of self because “the more a person feels a member of the prison subculture, the more satisfied his or her needs are, such as: the need for belonging, security, and social contact (psychosocial quality of life) as well as the needs connected with the possibility of making choices and pursuing personal goals and interests (subjective quality of life)” (Skowroński & Talik, 2020). Being a part of a group within the prison, prisoners creates opportunity for emotional and social support, making the camp feel less terrifying and

less isolating. Adayfi explains that "even though we were in solitary confinement or isolation or thousands of miles from the ones we loved, we had never been completely alone. It reminded us how we had grown older together and how we had become our own kind of family" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 259). The effect of the prisoners' solidarity can be observed in Adayfi's description of how this bond aids his ability to continue his struggle for agency and lifts his morale during these trying times,

> we'd suffered together and sacrificed ourselves for each other in our resistance to interrogators and the camp admin. It was more than shared pain, though, more than torture and isolation and hunger. We also shared small moments of stolen joy in the jokes we played, the songs we sang, the little news we got from our families, especially when we learned of a marriage or a new baby. Cut off from our families for so long, we found a new brotherhood in all this darkness (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 211).

Thus, Adayfi transcends the state of objecthood the camp forces on him to become a subject who creates relationships and struggle to protect himself and others and fight for better conditions.

In their total isolation from the world outside the camp walls, the detainees turn to their connection with Allah for support and comfort. Adayfi lets his readers know that whenever the pain and torture become unbearable he prays to Allah to grant him strength and patience: "I prayed silently to Allah. Allah, oh Allah, you know I'm tired. Allah, oh Allah, you know I'm weak and scared. Allah, oh Allah, please help me and don't let them win. Allah, oh Allah, please preserve me of all evil" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 158). The significance of Adayfi's relationship with Allah for his ability to maintain his sense of self and continue his resistance in the face of his tormentors is clear in the fact that the prayer, "*Allah, oh Allah"* is repeated 28 different times in his memoir. The connection with Allah alleviates the psychological crisis Adayfi is suffering by offering meaning in the midst of meaninglessness and identity integration when individuals face situations that make them question their sense of self (Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997). Adayfi notes that the only way he is able to mentally combat the dire circumstances he and the detainees are subjected to on a daily bases in the camp is through Allah, he explains that "Where do we go in these moments of pain, when the world turns black? We always turned to Allah. I prayed to Allah to guide me, to protect me, to help stop this madness and hasten my

release" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 180). His trust in Allah provides him with the strength he need to believe in the possibility of freedom even when there is no indication that the camp intends to ever release him, because connection with religion is "able to reduce the prisoner's anxiety about the uncertain future" (Maruna, Wilson, & Curran, 2006, p. 178). Adayfi's connection with Allah gives him the power to constantly struggle against the unjustness of the camp, as he vows "to Allah that I would fight with every ounce of strength I had" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 40). Invoking Allah emphasizes the spiritual aspect his struggle takes on and his faith in resistance and freedom. Adayfi insists that "Islam is a practical religion that's woven into the fabric of our daily life. General Miller, this head of interrogations, the interrogators and psychologists all failed to understand the depth and strength of our faith. Yes, we were physically weak, we were beaten, and they would beat us more, but our strength was in our hearts, and our hearts were driven by our faith and trust in Allah" (p. 96). This quote clearly demonstrates the powerful role that their deeply held beliefs in Islam plays in sustaining the detainees drive to undermine the camps power over them.

2.4.3 Writing, creativity and art

In Guantanamo, then, the detainees persistently fight to preserve their ability to actively engage with their surroundings and interact with others. According to Chris S. Earle (2016), "prisoners write not only or even principally to reclaim a subject position and political voice but also to maintain the very address-ability and response-ability that enables any sense of self or meaning in the first place" (p. 48). The detainees are confined within a place where verbal expression is forbidden, and if they speak, their voices are either disregarded or met with brutality, "You call out to break this nonsense of no talking and no standing, and the soldiers call back to you with their fists and boots. Five of them rush into your cage and slam your head to the ground again and again until your head bleeds and the message is received —you are nothing" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 18).

The detainees rely on language to affirm and reclaim their identities, and assert their agency. The camp functions through erasing the detainees' identities' using abject language like terrorist, dangerous, trouble make, or by stripping them of their names replacing them with numbers. This attack on the detainees' sense of self results in the fragmentation of their identities', which leads them to struggle to assert their individuality. According to Derrida, "the assertion of identity always betrays a 'disorder

of identity' (Derrida J. , 1998, p. 28). As the camp employs language to suppress the humanity of prisoner, this leads the prisoners to use language to establish the "I" silenced by the camp's environment, because language "manifests … the fundamental will of those who speak it" (Foucault, 1970, p. 290). This means that using language allow the prisoners to create a space that is utterly their own. Adayfi informs his readers that writing becomes his and the other detainees chosen venue for self-expression. Adayfi chronicles the extraordinary lengths he and his fellow detainees go to in order to secure the ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings through linguistic and non-linguistic forms of language, he explains "Some of us wrote on Styrofoam cups and plates. We used spoons or twisted the tiny stems off apples to write poems or draw flowers, hearts, the moon. We made flowers out of stickers we found on fruit. These were tiny expressions of our former selves breaking through, resisting the identities imprinted on us" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 253). The detainees ,then, recognize the importance of writing and creative expression as vital means for them to assert their identity and uphold their sense of self while held captives in Guantanamo "It didn't matter if we were drawing a flower or building a ship out of cardboard like Moath, Adam believed art allowed us to be who we really were" (p. 256). Using different forms to express themselves and their thoughts allows them to "be human again … to reveal who we really were" (p. 274). Adayfi highlights the significance of these moments of self-expression as crucial for the detainees' preservation of their individual identities. However, the camp administration remains resolute in its efforts to suppress and stifle these expressions in order to maintain the detainees' objectification. Adayfi insists that "These simple expressions were as necessary as food and water, and they were always punished. … For years, it was a game we played with the camp admin. We took nothing and made something, and what is more human than that? In turn, they took whatever we made and punished us to prove that we weren't" (p. 253).

The detainees also use writing and art to create pseudo social context to replace the one they are denied. Adayfi (2021) says, "We'd created a small, simple life from scraps. We had connected with each other, with guards, and with the world beyond our cells through the simple act of opening ourselves up and expressing ourselves" (p. 275). Engaging in these creative outlets allows the detainees to exercise their ability to address and respond, thereby preserving their sense of individuality. Adayfi insists that, "it didn't matter what they saw in us. We had regained ourselves, something they couldn't take away from us

ever again. And we were determined to fight for it (p. 275). Their unwavering determination to defend this newfound identity reveals their enduring resilience as individuals.

Furthermore, Adayfi's decision to learn English and write his own memoir allows him to reclaim his personal identity and reestablish his connection to the world. According to Derrida literature is "the institution which allows one to say everything, in every way" (Derrida J. , 1992, p. 36). The freedom literature bestows upon him empowers him, a detainee who is kidnaped and disappeared in to Guantanamo as a young 19 year old boy, to regain authority over his life. As the author of a book detailing his life experiences he has the power to mold his own world, choosing who to write and who to discard in his own narrative. It provides him with the power to choose the attributes to describe himself and others. This results in a counterbalance to the official "power of writing" (Gready, 1993, p. 489), which has unjustly labeled him as a "terrorist" devoid of fundamental human and political rights. According to Paul Gready (1993) , prisoners "seek empowerment in an oppositional 'power of writing' by writing against the official text of imprisonment" (p. 489). Adayfi status as an indefinite detainee makes his existence that of a walking dead man. Additionally, Adayfi's choice to take on the role of the author leads to his metaphorical death. Jacques Derrida argues that an author is "dead insofar as his [or her] text has a structure of survival even if he [or she] is living" (Derrida J. , 1998, p. 183). However, becoming an author guarantees that his narrative will continue on even when the camp is demolished. And Adayfi becomes immortal because "the author cannot die precisely because, as we've been suggesting, the author is – always has been and always will be – a ghost" (Bennett & Royle, 2023, p. 44). As long as his book continues to exist with his name written on the cover, Adayfi's presence in the world and his voice, cannot be murdered or suppressed. What dies though is "a particular concept of the Author that is at stake" (Bennett & Royle, 2023, p. 45). In this case the identity forced upon him by the camp is dismantled and vanquished, and he emerges as the final winner of this ordeal. Adayfi asserts that writing becomes a means for him to process and reclaim agency, granting him the ability to shape his own narrative, he explains that writing provides him with, "the power to tell the world who I was in my own words, not the interrogators. They could control my life, but I wouldn't allow them to define it" (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, p. 255). This quote reflects Adayfi's determination to assert his humanity and resist being defined solely by the actions and perceptions imposed upon him by the

camp administrators. It highlights the impact that reclaiming one's voice can have in maintaining a sense of dignity and autonomy.

Furthermore, the detainees' tireless strive to learn business in addition to English (Adayfi & Aiello, 2021, pp. 244-245), reflects a strong conviction in the success of their resistance and their impending freedom. This thirst to plan a future for themselves presents the detainees with a spark of hope that they will one day leave Guantanamo behind and build a new life for themselves. Adayfi informs his readers that these new experiences marks "entering a new golden age at Guantánamo" (p. 246) where they are "all starting to look forward to our futures (p. 246). An example would be the fact that Adayfi and some of his comrades' business plan was reported in an article headlined "Gitmo Inc.: 5 'Forever Prisoners' Have Business Plan for When They're Free Again" (Rosenberg, 2016). Articles like these provide the world with an image of the detainees that combats the official camp narrative. It presents the humanity of these detainees to world showcasing their intellect and their dreams.

Chapter Three
Transformation and Hope in Angola Prison

3.1 Introduction

This chapter studies Albert Woodfox's memoir, *Solitary: Unbroken by four decades in solitary confinement. My story of transformation and hope* (2019). It examines the discrimination and subjugation American minorities, most specifically African Americans face in the American penal system. The American prison system employs dehumanizing tactics to subdue these prisoners to silence their voices and render them bodies enslaved by the state. These strategies include both psychological and physical attacks, targeting the prisoners' bodies and minds. However, my focus will be on how the detainees resist these oppressive measures, striving to regain control over their bodies and reclaim their voices.

This chapter utilizes Wacquant's theories regarding the American prison system as a means of segregation against racial and social minorities, particularly Black Americans, alongside Foucault's concept of prisons as a modern form of slavery, which showcases the vulnerability of the American prisoners' position, especially minorities, isolated and separated behind the prison walls completely under the prison's control. In addition, it employs Althusser's concept of interpellation to trace the terms of address that the American penal system uses in relation to Black American prisoners. Building on Giorgio Agamben's theory of the "homo sacer," this chapter explores the relationship between the penal system and the incarcerated, illustrating how prisoners are reduced to bare life behind prison walls, stripped of their political and human rights. This reduction leaves them in a state of exception, defenseless against both state power and societal rejection. This renders them targets for physical and mental torture. Scarry's notions of torture and violence indicate that prison identity torture is an aim in itself, used to destroy prisoners' voices and identities, as seen in the prisons' attempts to create informants who parrot the institution's narrative while punishing those who refuse to comply. However, these humiliating and violent methods do not always manage to demolish prisoners' sense of self. Prisoners rely on the construction of a collective identity to protect their individual identities, using education and writing as bonding strategies to bond together and form a unified consciousness. This shared identity allows them to perform unified counter

actions using their bodies to take back control from the prison system and proclaim their subjectivity and agency, these measures include fighting back and hunger strikes. Similar to Adayfi, writing also becomes a tool to proclaim their voices, it allows them to speak the words prison is determined to suppress and silence. It is the prisoners' weapon of choice to struggle against the prisons narrative. It provides them with the power to present themselves the way the view themselves not the way prison wants the public to perceive them.

3.2 Prisons in America

While, Adayfi (2021) is detained without any legal representation or a trial, Woodfox has been tried for his crimes in a legal court, in front of his family and peers. Still, he affirms that prisons in America are a modern form of slavery. He explains that "For more than 100 years state and federal judges refused to adjudicate prisoner abuses at all in their courts because legally, according to the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, prisoners are slaves of the state" (p. 123). Foucault (1977) confirms this notion saying that, but "are not our prisoners sold like the slaves, by entrepreneurs and bought by manufacturers" (p. 267). Woodfox (2019) explains that government entities and private corporations contract prisons to manufacture their products, capitalizing on the cheap and often unpaid labor of inmates. Wages for working prisoners are kept well below the poverty level, and in certain states, prisoners receive no compensation at all. These incarcerated workers are denied basic labor rights and benefits, unable to form unions or negotiate their work conditions (p. 412). These exploitative labor practices within the U.S. prison system have drawn alarming comparisons to historical slavery, which makes these practices a form of legalized slavery. In fact this form of slavery is documented in the 13th Amendment which reads, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction". According to this Amendment upon being convicted with a crime, the prisoners, most specifically African Americans, become a slave of the state. This enables "states like Texas to force incarcerated people, mostly Black men, to pick cotton – even at a net loss to the state, because cruelty is the point" (Tatro, 2023), transforming these prisoners in to legal slaves.

Woodfox (2019) reveals that the color of his skin influenced his mistreatment by the judicial and penal system. In his memoir, he shares his experience of enduring

institutionalized racism, which he perceives as the very “foundation for all-white police departments, all-white juries,” (p. 55). He argues that this racial bias is not accidental but rather a “purposeful and deliberate” choice (p.65). In his memoir, Woodfox notes that “Though African Americans and Latinos combined make up approximately 32 percent of the U.S. population, they make up 52 percent of all incarcerated people” (p. 355). This reality is echoed in Wendy Sawyer’s study which concluded that Black people comprise about 13% of the U.S. population but make up for over 40% of those incarcerated. In contrast, White people account for 57% of the general population yet represent only 39% of the prison population (Sawyer, 2020). This means that Black men are nearly six times as likely as White men to be incarcerated (Sawyer, 2020). These facts highlight the deep-rooted racial disparities persisted in law enforcement, judicial proceedings, and sentencing (Woodfox, 2019, p. 355) revealing a troubling pattern of systemic injustices that disproportionately impact marginalized communities. Woodfox's realization, years after his sentencing, that his repetitive arrests were not a result of mere bad luck but rather “[he] was targeted because (he is) black” (p. 89) exposes a deeply ingrained bias within the criminal justice system that transforms these prisoners into what Agamben designate as bare lives.

3.3 Oppressive Practices in Angola Prison

3.3.1 Demeaning terms of address

Woodfox experiences verbal attacks throughout his contact with the judicial system, similar to the ones Adayfi faces in Guantanamo. However, while Adayfi is targeted because of his religion, Woodfox is discriminated against due to his race and minority status. In fact Wacquant believes that “the sudden growth of the prison relates to the crumbling of the urban ghetto as physical container for undesirable dark bodies” (Wacquant, 2009, p. 61). This manifests itself in the degrading terms of address used to refer to him. Woodfox’s recounts a judge using “derogatory names” (Woodfox, 2019, p. 48). They refer to him as “an animal” (p. 48) before sentencing him “to 50 years” (p. 48) in prison. The judge's inclination to address Woodfox using such derogatory names reveals that the judge harbors a preconceived bias against the color of Woodfox's skin. This bias diminishes Woodfox in the judge's eyes, portraying him as less than human. Althusser (2014) explains, “the fact of calling you by your name, the fact of knowing that you 'have' a name of your own thanks to which you are recognized as a unique subject"

(p. 190). By refusing to use Woodfox's name to address him, the judge denies him subjectivity.

The use of these demeaning terms to refer to prisoners extends beyond the courtroom and translates in to the prison environment. Prison staff contributes to the criminalization of inmates like Woodfox. Woodfox explains that they (Woodfox and his close comrades Herman and king) are used in the academy for prison gauds as examples "of the "worst of the worst"" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 172), to reinforce a narrative that vilifies and dehumanizes them. Woodfox laments the fact that he "never got used to the verbal disrespect out in the fields: being called a nigger and constantly told to "hurry up, boy" (p. 30). He explicates that having to endure these terms is a constant in prison because "White guards on horseback rode up and down the lines of working prisoners, … constantly yelling at the men who were working, saying, 'Work faster, old thing' or, 'Nigger" (p. 20). The guards deliberate choice to refer to the prisoners solely by their cell numbers is meant to dehumanize them and erase their identity and individuality, thus reducing them to mere objects. Branding prisoners with such derogatory terms is a deliberate attempt to strip away their humanity, transforming them from fellow human beings with equal rights into objects to be controlled and subdued. This dehumanization allows those addressing them to mistreat them and deny them basic human rights. This can be observed in Woodfox (2019) being informed that his classification as a "high-priority" prisoner, deemed "dangerous to self or others," (p. 203) is the reason to refuse him access to general population and keep him in solitary confinement. This is a clear example of the power terms of address has on the way prisoners are perceived and treated.

3.3.2 Physical punishment

Prisoner in the American prison system endure a multitude of physical torture techniques designed to interpellate these prisoners and exert dominance and control over them. According to Woodfox this violence against prisoners is "largely directed against black and Puerto Rican prisoners, by officers wielding "blackjacks, nightsticks, fist, and feet," who beat prisoners to unconsciousness" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 64). Althusser (2014) argues that the state employs repressive means in places like prisons to ensure interpellation and assimilation (p. 132). These mechanisms function through threats of punishment or through the explicit display of power. Woodfox's depiction of the brutal force and excessive violence employed by the guards against the prisoners is evident: "One by one

we were called out by our cell number and ordered to the day room. As each prisoner was forced into the hall, he was beaten and poked in the genitals with nightsticks; bats and clubs rained down on him" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 65). This exemplifies the severity of the force used by the guards to impose compliance upon these inmates, and the guards' willingness to "cause as much pain as possible" and to be "willing to break some part of [the prisoner's] bodies if possible" (p. 101) points out to their lack of empathy towards these prisoners.

The infliction of immense pain on the prisoner's body, Scarry argues, results in the content of his world to disintegrate. This is because, as he loses autonomy over his own body he begins to lose the ability to use language, consequently the prisoner's "self - disintegrates" (Scarry, 1985, p. 37). This means that through inflicting pain "[t]he goal of the torturer is to make the one, the body, emphatically and crushingly present by destroying it, and to make the other, the voice, absent by destroying it" (Scarry, 1985, p. 66), systematically eroding prisoners' identity and individuality.

Woodfox's accounts reveal the devastating toll torture has on men within the prison system. He describes how under such extreme torment, these individuals break down emotionally, reduced to pleading and begging for mercy from their captors. Woodfox recounts witnessing prisoners calling some guards "boss," desperately trying to avoid further harm, pleading with them using phrases such as ""Please don't hit me," "Please, man, have mercy on me," or "I'm going to be good"" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 66). While the prisoners use the subjective position embodied in the "I", their use of "I" reveals the loss of their as they internalize the superiority of the guards and subjugate their submissive bodies to them. Meanwhile, their pleas for mercy are not heard and are utterly ignored as the guards do not acknowledge their voice as a sign of their humanity. In contrast to his fellow prisoners, Woodfox (2019) finds the act of begging for mercy from the guards to be "so degrading. It was humiliating" (p. 66). He refuses to compromise his self-worth declaring that "I was not going to plead. I was not going to ask for anything. Even while being screamed at, poked with nightsticks, with blood rushing out of my head, I didn't say a thing" (p. 66), reveals his unwavering sense of self and dignity. His decision to utilize his silence as a form of silence in the face of his tormentors is an assertion of his subjectivity and a rejection of the guard's position of superiority as the dealers of pain and mercy.

Torture compels prisoners to internalize the violence inflicted upon them to the extent that they become instruments of torture used by prison staff to attack other inmates. Despite the judicial system in the U.S. bias against Black people and other minorities, the prison guards' power over inmates is still constrained. This means that guards cannot freely attack prisoners as they do in Guantanamo. As a result prison encourages prisoners' to perform violent actions against each other. According to Foucault (1977), "The prison also produces delinquents by imposing violent constraints on its inmates" (p. 166). Woodfox informs his readers that many of the prisoners he meets on his incarceration in Angola and New York are "violent and depraved", yet he refuses to harbor hatred for these prisoners despite their violent actions (Woodfox, 2019, p. 66). Woodfox (2019) explains that the prisoner's lack of education and constant exposure to racism and corruption within the prison system is the main factors that lead to their viciousness. Woodfox declares that the prisoners "Treated like animals they became subhuman" (p. 66). Prisoners find themselves constantly threatened and victimized by violence due to their race, subjected to grueling labor and trying living conditions, deprived of basic necessities like proper food, they respond by victimizing other prisoners to regain a shadow of the power they lose. The continual exposure to such demeaning conditions and the denial of their fundamental human rights can result in the prisoners feeling numb and empty, devoid of any emotions, Gilligan argues that "they themselves had died- meaning that their personalities had died- long before they began killing other people" (Gilligan, 2003, p. 1152). This leads some prisoners who are incapable of facing the prison guards to target other prisoners whom they perceive as weaker in order to maintain a form of self-esteem.

Prison authorities intentionally foster an atmosphere of fear and abuse among prisoners to exert control and dominance over them. Woodfox explains their objective, stating that "They wanted prisoners who had no spirit. They wanted prisoners to fear one another and abuse one another; it made them easier to control" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 22). By breaking their spirit and fostering fear and division among them, the prison aims to weaken any sense of resistance in the prisoners by destroying their solidarity. This method ensures that prisoners remain subdued and easier to manage, whereas unity among prisoners makes it more difficult for the system to oppress them.

One manifestation of this violence is the facilitation of homosexual rape, Woodfox (2019) witnesses prison guards turn a blind eye to the sexual abuse prisoners inflict on other prisoners (p. 21). He explains that: “Sexual slavery was the culture at Angola. The administration condoned it” (p. 37). The guards use this master/ slave relationships to manipulate and control the most violent prisoners by threatening to remove their slaves, “gal-boys” (p. 38), and “a prison pimp would do almost anything to keep his gal-boy” (p. 38). This makes maintaining the status quo in prison beneficial to these prison pimps and rapist, which leads them to be less likely to struggle against the prison system. The prison officials not only permit but actively plan and employ rape as a tool of punishment, using violent rapists to harm other prisoners deliberately. Woodfox explains,

> Freemen also used violent rapists to intentionally hurt other prisoners, placing them in cells with a prisoner they wanted to punish or putting them in situations when they wanted to start lethal fights. Those prisoners were called “rape artists.” Some orderlies, inmate guards, and freeman who worked at RC sold the names of young and weak new arrivals to sexual predators in the prison population (p. 22).

The act of rape is intended to target not only individuals but the broader social and political fabric of the prison community. The true goal of such violence is to exert control and power over the whole prison population by inflicting a fear and mistrust between prisoners and a crippling trauma in the raped prisoners. Nordstrom, writing about rape in conflicted zones, points out that rape “is not exclusively an attack on the body- it is an attack on the ‘body-politic’. Its goal is not to maim or kill one person but to control an entire socio-political process by crippling it. It is an attack directed equally against personal identity and cultural integrity” (Nordstrom as cited in Clifford 2008). Identifying rape as an assault on the "body-politic” shows that these atrocious acts are intended to dismantle not just personal identities but also cultural integrity. Woodfox concludes that “rape went way beyond a physical act. Rape brought about the complete destruction of another human being” (Woodfox, 2019, p. 81). Rape is an assault on a person's sense of self; it strips the individual of his/ her ownership over their own body. Within the prison system, this form of torture is used to break inmates, rendering them powerless and voiceless, making them easier to exploit and manipulate.

The prison system not only employs violence to suppress individuality and silence prisoners' voices, but it also often colonizes those voices, forcing them to conform to its narratives. This is clear in the fact the torture is often intertwined with the act of interrogation. Scarry (1985) insists that the role of interrogation is “not to elicit needed information but visibly to deconstruct the prisoner’s voice” (p. 20). This is evident in the case where a co-defendant testified “that he only picked King out of a mug shot lineup because he’d been tortured by police into making a false statement” (Woodfox, 2019, p. 176). This means that the prison system uses force and torture to control and influence the testimonies and accounts of prisoners.

To maintain control over inmates' voices, the prison employs a system that rewards those who trade their autonomy for the prison's agenda, creating informants who are willing to submit to the authorities the information it desires to control other inmates. Alexandra Natapoff, law professor at Loyola University, notes that “The use of criminal informants in the U.S. justice system, has become a flourishing socio-legal institution unto itself” as cited in (Brown, 2007, p. 20). Woodfox provides an example of informants who feed “free people false and fabricated information about other condemned inmates just to receive extra coffee and food” (Woodfox, 2019, p. 113). They “bartered information for personal gain” (p. 113). These inmates betray their fellow prisoners, creating a cage within a cage, collecting information about other prisoners to entrap them further. Thus they submit their will to the will of the guards in exchange of material thing. On the other hand, the prison harshly punishes those who refuse to compromise their identity and dignity. Woodfox recounts how prisoners who came forward during his trial to testify in his defense “were immediately moved to harsher, more restrictive housing after they gave their statements. One of them was put in the dungeon” (p. 117) - the dungeon is a dark, isolated cage used to break inmates psychologically. It is cold, damp, and often windowless, with concrete walls and a bare floor. Cells are tiny and confining, with minimal furnishings. Inmates are held in near-constant isolation, surrounded by silence and despair, or they are overcrowded without enough mattresses, food and water. about his experience in the dungeon, Woodfox says,

> the experience of being in the dungeon was pure misery. There were roaches, rats. There was no room. We were completely isolated. We couldn’t call home. It got painful sitting and lying on that concrete. Hips, knees, back—all that would

> be hurting at one time or another. The dungeon could destroy every fragment of a man's dignity and self-respect. The harsh conditions were so hurtful that strong men would cry. They broke (p. 31).

This vindictive response by the prison system to the prisoners' choice to reject the prison's narrative and speak the truth reflects the prisons determination to suppress prisoners' voices and appropriate them as its own. Being forced into an isolated space that is only shared with roaches and rats create an environment that is best described in Kristeva's terms as abject. This is not only physically unbearable but it is also deeply dehumanizing, because it strips the prisoners of their dignity, reduces them into a state of abjection. The fact that these prisoners are forced to share a space with these pests represents the prisoners' complete degradation in their jailer's eyes.

3.3.3 Nakedness and humiliation

Similar to Guantanamo, the prison guards in Angola employ tactics like forcing prisoners to strip of their clothes to humiliate and degrade them. The practice of strip search and cavity search - an inspection or examination of the inside of the prisoner's anus, vagina or genitals for the intention of searching for evidence of a criminal offense, a weapon, or a controlled substance the prisoner might be concealing- is an example of practices that are made legal by the penal system that in any other context would be "considered sexualized torture" (Canning, 2023). Rivera describes cavity searches as "not comfortable experiences, and should only be performed by law enforcement personnel with the proper training and only under the proper legal circumstances" (Rivera, 2020). These practices are deeply distressing and traumatizing for the prisoner. Woodfox's insists that "the visual anal cavity inspections were humiliating and stressful. They made [him] feel hopeless and helpless" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 326). He explains that: "Having to bend over so a security officer can look at your anus gives you a terrible sense of being violated" (p. 309). Being subjected to cavity searches forces Woodfox to be a witness to his own lack of control over his body, and the loss of his autonomy. The repeated nature of these daily inspections intensifies the trauma the prisoner is subjected to. Woodfox informs his readers that "Anytime we were taken off the tier, even if we were moving just outside the door to the bridge, we were forced to strip, bend over, and spread our buttocks for a "visual cavity search," then after we got dressed we were put in full restraints. When we got back to the cell we were strip-searched again when the restraints came off" (p. 96). Each instance of

these searches reinforces his feelings of powerlessness and objectification, stripping away his dignity and reminds him of his subordinate status.

The prisoners' constant oppression at the hand of the guards leads prisoners to internalize their objectification. This is evidenced in Woodfox's account of the guards forcing inmates to undress, after which they are "herded us like animals and forced us to lie on top of each other while guards made cruel and racist remarks" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 65). Woodfox's use of words, such as "herd" and "animals," to describe his ordeal, reflects his awareness of the guards' dehumanization of him. In the eyes of the guards, his humanity is disregarded, and his dignity holds no significance. The guards deliberately foster an atmosphere of continuous humiliation for the prisoners. Even receiving something as basic as food, a fundamental right, becomes a degrading ordeal. Woodfox and his comrade King express their frustration over the guard "sliding the food across the dirt to [them] like [they]'re dogs" (p. 142). This "degrading and dehumanizing" (p. 142) treatment leads them to feel as though they are being treated like "animals in the zoo" (p. 142). Woodfox's strongly rejects of such treatment declaring that "I'm not a goddamn animal, I'm a man" (p. 142), urging his companion to take actions "to demand to be treated like men" (p. 142).

However, the prison system is relentless in its pursuit to subdue the prisoners' humanity and autonomy; those who dared to resist "were beaten mercilessly" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 65). Prison guards respond with extreme brutality to prisoners who refused to accept oppression. Woodfox recounts that "Gassing prisoners was the number one response by security to deal with any prisoner at Angola who demanded to be treated with dignity. Gas incapacitates the prisoner so the guards can easily get into the cell and beat the hell out of him" (p. 101). The use of gas directly affects their breathing, which renders them weak and immobile unable to speak or move, transforming the prisoner in to an inanimate body.

Similar to the detainees in Guantanamo, prisoners in Angola often resort to physical resistance to face the humiliation and degradation they are subjected to. Woodfox (2019) explains that: there "were a thousand reasons a prisoner would be pushed to the brink and erupt in rage, revenge, and violence against a freeman at Angola" (p. 88). In addition to being forced to work "in the fields without gloves, being beaten in restraints, earning 32

cents a day for 16 hours of work", these poisoners are "forced to bow their heads and endure constant disrespect, name-calling, threats, and physical violence from prison officials and security guards" (p. 88). Prisoners in Angola are continuously and relentlessly physically exploited for cheap labor while being psychologically tormented. This results in some prisoners to reach the breaking point of committing acts of extreme violence against their tormentors. This is evidenced in Woodfox's recounting that the murder of a security guards at the hands of a prisoner "surprised nobody" (p. 88), explaining that is almost natural for even the most oppressed prisoner to eventually resist when pushed too far, he says: "You can only kick a dog so many times before he turns around and bites" (p. 88). Woodfox's words highlight the reality that the systemic abuse, violence and humiliation prisoners face leads them to claim their dehumanization as form of desperate, reactive self-defense.

However, despite the prejudice they face in the judicial system, Angola prisoners have been tried in American courts, where the presence of their families and the media grants them rights that detainees in Guantanamo lack. One of the most important rights they are offered is their ability to contact the outside world to seek support in order to legally sue Angola prison and its personnel for some of their degrading treatments, Woodfox recalls that he "wrote to an organization called New Orleans Legal Assistance (NOLA) asking for help in filing a lawsuit" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 152). Prisoners, then, are permitted by law to prosecute prisons for extreme mistreatment and they might even win these lawsuits. Woodfox (2019) provides examples of law suits he files against Angola prison, an example of these cases is when "a federal appeals court ruled that King, Herman, and [Woodfox] had the right to sue Warden Cain and Richard Stalder, secretary of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, alleging we suffered cruel and unusual punishment in CCR" (p. 252). This provides prisoners with a legal route to fight prison in order to regain their autonomy. This is evident in the case of Woodfox and his companions who successfully sued Angola over its strip search practices. Despite winning the case, the ruling, which recognizes that "Visual body cavity searches were a humiliating procedure" and "should only be used rarely" (p. 309), does not completely abolish stop strip searches. Instead "he put limits on when the guards could conduct strip searches and conditions on how visual cavity searches could be carried out" (p.152). This outcome shows that while the court might rules for prisoners in some cases, the prison

system still maintains complete power over prisoner's bodies, and the court does not intend to challenge prison's ownership over its prisoner.

3.3.4 Solitary Confinement

Prison officials enforce the most isolating form of torture: solitary confinement to silence inmates whose voices become too loud and challenge the prison's agenda with opposing narratives. Foucault (1977) claims that "Isolation provides an intimate exchange between the convict and the power that is exercised over him" (p. 137). Isolating inmates stripes them of social interaction and leaves them to grapple with their thoughts and emotions in solitude. In such a state, the inmate's voice loses all significance, as there is no addressee. This situation creates a unique exchange between the prisoners and those wielding power over them, which evokes in those prisoners feelings dependence on the authorities for any form of human contact or interaction.

Solitary confinement is the chosen method of control favored by repressive states due to its effectiveness, administrative convenience, and minimal public outcry (Haney, 2018). The psychological harm inflicted on prisoners' mental health is immense. Woodfox confirms that solitary confinement is a punitive measure used to break prisoners, subjecting them to relentless isolation and instilling fear of losing control over their sanity (Woodfox, 2019, p. 155). Solitary confinement can affect different prisoners in diverse ways. Grassian attests that when subjected to solitary confinement all prisoner will "experience a degree of stupor, difficulties with thinking and concentration, obsessional thinking, agitation, irritability, and difficulty tolerating external stimuli (especially noxious stimuli)" (Grassian, 2006, p. 332). Woodfox explains, "The pressure of the cell changed most men. Some got depressed and went into themselves, isolated themselves, never speaking, never leaving their cells. Others talked constantly, were confused, irrational" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 155). Still even the most resilient prisoners will not leave unscathed, Woodfox recounts his personal experiences of helplessness triggered by the claustrophobia he developed within the first month of being in solitary confinement (Woodfox, 2019, p. 100). To preserve their identity and sanity, it becomes crucial for prisoners to uphold their resistance; Woodfox (2019) insists that "Our resistance gave us an identity. Our identity gave us strength. Our strength gave us an unbreakable will. My determination not to be broken was stronger than any other part of me stronger than anything they did to me" (p. 101). This means that by refusing to submit to the pressures

imposed upon them by the prison system and maintaining resistance, prisoners assert their individuality and maintain their sense of self. Through resistance, prisoners define who they are separate from the conditions imposed upon them. This is reflected in the prison official's conspiracy to frame Woodfox for the murder of Brent Miller, a white guard, as a result of his active involvement the Black Panther Party. This can be observed in Warden Burl Cain's statement, in which he admits under oath that Woodfox and Herman are kept in solitary confinement because of their affiliation with the Black Panther Party, declaring that even if he believes Woodfox to be innocent of the murder, he would still keep him isolated to prevent him from organizing and influencing other inmates specially the young black prisoners (Woodfox, 2019, p. 171). This blatant act of injustice against Woodfox highlights the prisons intentions to suppress any form of activism and resistance that challenges their authority and seeks to bring about self- awareness in prisoners.

3.4 Resisting the dehumanizing system

3.4.1 Crafting a Collective Identity

Woodfox and his comrades resist the isolation and separation imposed by Angola staff through the use of the same strategy Adayfi and the other detainees in Guantanamo employ— cultivating a sense of unity and solidarity among the prisoners. Prisoners, who are objectified by the prison system, are in danger of losing their identity. However, there is a strong association between prisoners creating a strong sense of bond and forging a solid group identity and their ability to survive within the prison walls and maintain their agency (Levi, 1987). Woodfox describes his deep connection with fellow prisoners King and Herman, stating, "I loved and cherished their friendship. I didn't know how so much loyalty and devotion could exist between three men" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 179). This bond significantly reinforced Woodfox's resilience against the prison's oppression. Even when separated—whether in different cells, tiers, or even prisons—the trust and support they provide each other is an anchoring force. Woodfox (2019) insists that this support comes "Not physically, but instantly," which emphasizes that this relationship allows him to maintain his belief in the strength of the human spirit (p. 290). The Stanford prison experiment (1973), conducted by the psychology professor Philip Zimbardo and his colleagues Craig Haney, and Curtis Banks aiming to study the power dynamic between guards and prisoners, leads Zimbardo (2007) to conclude that resistance is at strongest when prisoners "combine to give [them] a new collective identity as something more than

a collection of individuals trying to survive on their own" (p. 51). The shared pain and the constant attempts to struggle against it connects the prisoners and heightens Woodfox's and his companions' sense of identity: "We had been through so much brutality, so much pain and suffering that we had every right to be hard, bitter, and hateful toward almost everyone and everything in life. But instead, we did not allow prison to shape us. We defined ourselves" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 179). This connection permits the prisoners to form their own personal identity, and reject being objectified by the prison system. This is reflected in Woodfox, Herman, and King's choice to rename themselves in names they deemed "freedom names" (p. 153). Their decision to use African names which to them "represented freedom" and the ability "to be born again, to take back [their] African heritage" (p. 153) highlights their desire to transcend the enslaving shackles of prison in to a state of consciousness where they are the owners of their own bodies and minds.

Woodfox (2019) joining the Black Panther Party speaks of his desire to be a part of a collective identity. The Black Panther Party, an African American revolutionary party, is founded in 1966 in Oakland, California, by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale (Duncan, 2024). The party's was originally created to protect African Americans from acts of police brutality. They later developed a Marxist approach that encouraged arming all African Americans, and demanded to exempt African Americans from the draft and all sanctions of so-called white America, calling for the release of all African Americans from jail and for African Americans to be compensated monetary for the centuries of exploitation at the hands of white Americans. Being a part of this movement allows Woodfox to re-examine his identity, for the Party's principles teaches "morals, dignity, and duty" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 264). Woodfox (2019) admits that that being accepted by the members of the Party who taught him these values "saved [his] life" (p. 364). Becoming a member of the Panthers gives Woodfox's life a purpose, it is his "duty to protect other prisoners, to teach them how to stay focused on life outside prison, to show them that they belonged in this world" (p. 187), this means that his life and identity gain a purpose beyond his existence as a mere prisoner. This leads him to strive to educate himself to be able to educate others. He insists that reading becomes a beacon of hope and a source of strength during his years of incarceration. He informs his readers that: "Reading was a bright spot for me. Reading was my salvation" (p.144). He contends that educating

himself through reading law books (p. 189), about the struggles of other political prisoners such as Mandela (p. 188), and watching the news, helps him transform his cell from a space of destruction and punishment in to something positive. He informs his readers: "I used that space to educate myself, I used that space to build strong moral character" (p. 184). Educating other detainees becomes a source of power for Woodfox, because it allows taking control of his surroundings, "[he] used that space to develop principles and a code of conduct, [he] used that space for everything other than what my captors intended it to be" (p. 186). By using the limited space of the cell as a platform for education, and establishing principles and values, he manages to keep his identity intact. In fact in a chapter titled My Greatest Achievement Woodfox recounts how his "proudest achievement in all my years in solitary was teaching a man how to read. His name was Charles" (p. 146). Teaching allows Woodfox the power to help prisoners reform their identities which the prison system actively strives to deform.

Teaching the other prisoners the Black Panther principles creates a sense of unity and comradeship amongst them, which helps birth a collective identity. According to Haslam & Reicher "collective activities provided prisoners with a range of fora in which they could envision, and work toward the creation of, an alternative order that moved beyond both the structure of the prison and the forms of organization that had existed on their entry into it (Haslam & Reicher, 2012, p. 164). This notion is reflected in The Panthers advising Woodfox to perform his duty towards the other prisoner, to always "Educate. Agitate. Be strong. Stay strong" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 64). Woodfox (2019) realizes the importance of educating the other inmates about the fact that "they had value as human beings, that they were worth something" (p. 187), because these prisoners have "never before been told that they were anything good" (p. 82). According to Freire (2000) "one can realize the importance of education for decision, for rupture, for choice, for ethics at last" (p. 44). Education, then, holds significant importance to a prisoner's ability to retain his/ her sense of self amidst the challenging environment of the prison. Woodfox (2019) emphasizes that educating fellow prisoners about their circumstances and the manipulative strategies employed by the prison system is vital in the fight for their human rights (p. 75). Education is essential for prisoners' liberation because "When people lack a critical understanding of their reality, apprehending it in fragments which they do not perceive as interacting constituent elements of the whole, they cannot truly know that

reality" (Freire, 1996, p. 105). Through realizing and understanding the prison system's methods to separate and isolate prisoners to keep them powerless and subdued, prisoners recognize the need to form a unity that provides them with the power to accomplish what individually seems impossible, which is changing the circumstances of their captivity, through taking collective actions against the status quo. This means that together prisoners can make choices that individually the can not. Woodfox's declaration that: "The need to be treated with human dignity touches everyone. And the key to resistance is unity" (p. 80) reflects his determination to work with the other prisoners in order to force change in Angola.

Furthermore, education grants prisoners the ability to expand their imagination, which enables them to surpass the physical confines of their incarceration and explore the outside world silently within their minds. Through this newfound mental space, prisoners can create a realm where they are free to express their individuality, turning their imposed silence into a tool of resistance. Frankl (1984) illustrates how humans might resort to the use of their imagination to give themselves the ability to survive their immediate reality. He calls this the attitudinal mindset of meaning in which he notes that the power of choice cannot be taken from an individual even when everything else is. He insists that even when individuals are forced into situations, they still have the freedom to make the choice on the way they react and think about these situations. Woodfox recounts his use of his imagination to escape the physical boundaries of prison. Woodfox envisions himself in the free world doing every day activates like eating dinner with his family, driving a car, going to the store, and fantasizing about vacations to places he saw on T.V. He immerses himself in minute details like giving himself a job and writing budgets for day-to-day living which according to him is "a way to reinforce my belief that one day I would be free" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 162). He elucidates that through these daydreams he "learned that dreams and fantasies are not bound by physical limitations, because there are no limitations of the mind or the imagination" (p. 162). Dreams and fantasies, then, become a source of mental respite for prisoners, providing hope and comfort in a restrictive environment. Woodfox (2019) exemplifies the impact of education in surviving decades of solitary confinement, enduring 23 hours of isolation daily. By turning his cell into what he calls a "university, a hall of debate, a law school" (p. 1), education allows him to explore and embrace his true self, defying the forced identity imposed by the prison

system. Most importantly, education preserves his faith in humanity, affirming his belief in its inherent worth, despite the prevailing hopelessness, claustrophobia, brutality, and fear that surround him (p. 1). Through education, Woodfox and his fellow prisoners find the strength to struggle, to retain their sense of self, and to assert their humanity, even in the darkest of circumstances through the use of collective resistance.

3.4.2 The Power of the Body

Prisoners' collective choice to reject guard's orders demonstrates a desire to transcend being reduced to passive objects within the confines of their incarceration. In doing so, they confront the dehumanizing nature of prisons and assert their right to be treated with dignity and respect. This can be observed through Woodfox's admiration for King, his fellow prisoner and companion, who constantly tries to defy the guards' oppression not only towards himself but also towards other inmates. King's decision to talk back to the guards whenever they disrespect a fellow inmate, refusing to enter his cell as a protest against the prison conditions, and rejecting orders to "shut up," or be quiet In the face of attacks from security (Woodfox, 2019, p. 133) serves as an example of a prisoners' struggle to force the staff to acknowledge them and listen to them. Through these acts of defiance, "the prisoners did not simply oppose the power of the guards but also created an alternative identity based power structure of their own" (Scott, 1990; Turner, 2005). This rebelliousness, though they always lead to grave punishment, do not only benefit the prisoners who perform them. They are also a reminder to the other prisoners to maintain resistance against the dehumanizing tactics of the prison. Woodfox confirms that, "The prisoners around us saw how Herman, King, and I talked back to inmate guards and freemen who trash-talked us, how we refused to go into our cells if we wanted to talk to a supervisor" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 101). Witnessing instances where other prisoners affirm their sense of self "influenced other prisoners" (p. 133) to fight for their own identity.

Hunger strikes one of the most powerful form of collective resistance, Woodfox (2019) believes that "The most effective way of protesting was the hunger strike" (p. 103). By voluntarily refusing to eat, prisoners subject their own bodies to pain and suffering to maintain their identity, as hunger strikes comes with "deep physical and emotional suffering" (Miller, 2016, p. 2). Woodfox confirms that going on a hunger strike is not an easy decision, for it is extremely painful, and hard on their bodies. "When the body doesn't get nourishment, it starts to feed on itself, at least that's what it felt like"

(Woodfox, 2019, p. 141). However, Prisoners resort to use their own bodies as a canvas to convey their demands and grievances in a “bleak and limited, form of political agency” (Bargu, 2013, p. 805). Through their voluntary act of depriving themselves of sustenance, prisoners rise above being passive objects of torture and become subjects willing to inflict pain upon their own bodies to maintain a form of control over it. This act allows them to protect their agency from the prison’s attempts to annihilate it.

In addition, hunger striker is a statement that transcends language, “it speaks louder than words, without using words, through the suffering of the body’ (Miller, 2016, p. 14). The fact that the prisoners’ demands to speak with the warden are utterly ignored until they decide “to go on a hunger strike (Woodfox, 2019, p. 140), proves that the choice to go on a hunger strike magnifies the prisoners silent voices enough to force the prison staff to listen. This is evident in the aftermath of the hunger strike when the very warden who once disregarded their voices becomes desperate to listen to their demands, asking the prisoners “what it would take to call off the hunger strike” (p. 141). The power of their protest lies not only in the act of self-sacrifice through the hunger strike but also in the resonance it creates. It compels those in authority to acknowledge humanity and engage in a meaningful dialogue with them as individuals, which leads to the restoration of prisoners’ voices and agency.

3.4.3 The Power of the Written Word

In prison, speaking for prisoners in not permitted, and if they do speak they are not heard, thus the impact of the prison system on these skills is immense. In the face of this forced silence, prisoners turn to reading and writing as outlets to preserve their voice and identity, which helps break the silence and maintain their humanity. In other words, “it is notable that while silence within the prison denotes stasis, the breaking of that silence is indicative of human action, of the real people who remain alive within the ‘deathly silence’ of this ‘living crypt’” Pankratov as cited in (Young, 2021, p. 41). Writing, then, becomes the ultimate tool for preserving a prisoner's voice and identity. Writing “challenges the system designed to render prisoners voiceless and powerless” (Green, 2008, p. 1). Woodfox informs his readers that Sometimes “at night I wrote in my cell. I don’t consider myself a poet but when strong emotions ran through me I would sometimes put them in a poem. It was a way I could express what was inside me” (Woodfox, 2019, p. 152). This showcases the fact that writing empowers Woodfox to break through his

confinement by connecting with his emotions in a deeply meaningful way. This indicates that the power of self-expression in important to the prisoner's ability to maintain a self. The written word can preserve the prisoners' voice which the prison attempts to silence. Woodfox also utilizes writing as a method to connect with other prisoners to maintain human connections even when he is separated and isolated. He says that "[he] stayed in close touch with Herman at Hunt and Zulu at Angola through letters, writing often" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 299). These notions are clear in the poem Herman wrote in camp J, the most restrictive and dehumanizing camp in Angola prison,

They removed my whisper from general population.

To maximum security.

I gained a voice.

They removed my voice from maximum security.

To administrative segregation.

My voice gave hope.

They removed my voice from administrative segregation.

To solitary confinement.

My voice became vibration for unity.

They removed my voice from solitary confinement.

To the Supermax of Camp J.

And now they wish to destroy me.

The louder my voice the deeper they bury me.

I SAID, THE LOUDER MY VOICE THE DEEPER THEY BURY ME!

Power to the People!

Free all political prisoners, prisoners of war, prisoners of conscience! (Woodfox, 2019, p. 247).

The poem reflects Herman's determination to speak despite the prison's attempts to silence him and bury his voice where it cannot be heard. They isolate him, separating him from the rest of the prisoners and his friends, exiling him into a more restrictive

confinement. Still, Herman's voice grows stronger and louder every time the prison tries to muffle it; it continues to transform, gaining momentum and significance. The more he is separated, the louder his voice becomes, and his message of unity only grows stronger, leading him to be a part of the collective voice of the prisoners. The repetition of the line "THE LOUDER MY VOICE, THE DEEPER THEY BURY ME," along with the choice of all capital letters, reflects Herman's unwavering will to be heard and to advocate for justice and freedom. The call for "Power to the People!" and the plea to "Free all political prisoners, prisoners of war, prisoners of conscience" illustrate that his struggle is not aimed solely at his own freedom; it shows that he fights for the broader ideals of justice and liberation. Herman's use of poetry points out an artistic spirit that refuses to be diminished by the prison's oppression.

In addition, writing provides the prisoners with a medium to break through the prison walls and address those from whom the prison otherwise deprives them. In the words of H. Bruce Franklin, "Writers scribbling away in their cells or in limited prison libraries tell us most of what we know about these dark fortresses of gloom and terror. They disclose the nasty, brutish details of the life within" (Franklin, 1998, p. xi). Writing serves as a powerful form of resistance, turning prisoners' silenced voices into a resounding echo that speaks louder than the spoken words, challenging the official narrative, and serving as a source of support for the prisoner "because they can provide the imprisoned or formerly imprisoned person with an alternative forum for truth-telling –alternative, that is, to the courtroom" (Davis L. , 1990, p. 85). Because "the writing of autobiographical accounts, provid[e] a way of regaining control" (Gready, 1993, p. 492), Woodfox's choice to write an account of his life story is an act of re-owning his identity. Writing his life in prison allows him present to the public a true image of himself the way he perceives it, rejecting the portrait painted of him by the official narrative of the justice system. Through the written form, and offering an authentic depiction of his experiences, he manages to forge a meaningful connection with a group of supporters who later stand in solidarity with him: "People were fighting for us. They didn't believe the district attorney's office. They didn't believe the courts. They didn't believe the prison officials. They believed us and they believed in us. They trusted us and offered us their friendship" (Woodfox, 2019, p. 233). This form of support creates a powerful bond in which his voice is heard and valued, providing him with encouragement to persevere in his struggle and maintain his

resistance. Woodfox expresses his gratitude to his supporters, acknowledging the strength and courage they have provided during his darkest moments. The countless letters he receives from his supporters reaching out to him in solidarity, inspire him to remain strong and hopeful. In his memoir Woodfox (2019) expresses his heartfelt appreciation and declares, "All Power to the People" (p. 325)! This exchange reflects the power writing holds as a medium for fostering a meaningful connection between prisoners and their society.

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Chapter Four
Conclusion

I have argued that this thesis examines the experiences of prisoners and detainees as depicted in Mansoor Adayfi's memoir *Don't Forget Us Here: Lost and Found at Guantánamo* (2021) and Albert Woodfox's *Solitary* (2019). I have pointed out that these texts reveal the systematic mechanisms of dehumanization, torture, and identity erasure employed by Guantánamo Bay and Angola prison, as well as the resilience and resistance strategies adopted by detainees to reclaim their humanity and agency.

The analysis drew on Michel Foucault's theories of disciplinary power and surveillance to explore the ways in which prisons exert control over incarcerated individuals. Judith Butler's concepts of precarity and vulnerability illuminated the fragile existence imposed on detainees, while Giorgio Agamben's notion of "bare life" and Louis Althusser's theory of interpellation provided insights into how prisoners are stripped of political and human rights. Furthermore, Jacques Lacan's exploration of the gaze and Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection were critical in understanding the psychological dimensions of shame and humiliation experienced by prisoners. Elaine Scarry's and Adriana Cavarero's analyses of torture and violence elucidated the profound physical and psychological impacts inflicted on detainees.

I have analyzed how the language of American politics perpetuates the demonization of detainees like Adayfi, who was only 19 when abducted and labeled a terrorist solely because of his religion and ethnicity. The "War on Terror" narrative uses such language to justify the denial of basic human rights to Muslim and Arab detainees. Similarly, Woodfox's experiences as a Black American reflect how the U.S. penal system employs racialized discourse to render him an inferior being. Both memoirs highlight how systemic racism and xenophobia underpin the practices of incarceration in the United States.

The memoirs detail the brutal methods employed to transform prisoners into docile, compliant bodies. At Guantánamo, detainees are subjected to interrogation tactics designed to extract confessions, while Angola prison exploits prisoners as a source of virtually unpaid labor. In both contexts, prisoners endure constant surveillance, physical

and psychological violence, and systematic humiliation, such as forced nudity, which deeply violates their dignity. For Muslim detainees like Adayfi, these practices clash profoundly with their religious beliefs, intensifying the sense of degradation.

I have highlighted the ways in which prisons use isolation, silence, and violence to maintain control. At Guantánamo, detainees are prohibited from speaking to one another, often punished with severe beatings for attempting to communicate. Sonic torture and sleep deprivation further erode their mental well-being, severing their connection to their sense of self. In contrast, Woodfox's legal status as a convicted prisoner provides him limited access to external connections and recourse through the courts, though violence and psychological manipulation remain pervasive. Angola prison fosters mistrust among inmates by encouraging informants and facilitating rape culture, using these as tools of control and subjugation.

Despite these oppressive conditions, both memoirs narrate acts of resistance and resilience. Prisoners form solidarity through education, art, and mutual support, rejecting the dehumanizing identities imposed on them. At Guantánamo, detainees create a communal society to reclaim their agency, while at Angola, Woodfox and his comrades raise awareness of systemic racism through Black Panther teachings. These acts of collective defiance, including hunger strikes, demonstrate their determination to reclaim their humanity and resist the status of "bare life" enforced upon them.

Writing itself becomes a powerful form of resistance for Adayfi and Woodfox, allowing them to reclaim their voices and identities. By documenting their experiences, they compel acknowledgment of their humanity and expose the injustices of the systems that imprisoned them. Adayfi's memoir sheds light on the human rights violations at Guantánamo, while Woodfox's testimony addresses the racial injustices endemic to the American penal system.

This thesis exposes the realities of incarceration and calls for greater scrutiny of prison practices, particularly in the United States and its allied systems. The parallels between Guantánamo and Israeli treatment of Palestinian prisoners warrant further exploration, as many Palestinians liken their experiences to those described by Adayfi. While this thesis intended to incorporate a Palestinian memoir, the glorification of Palestinian prisoners as

national heroes seems to deter detailed autobiographical accounts, often replacing them with fictionalized narratives. I hope future Palestinian memoirs will emerge to bring these hidden atrocities to light and deepen our understanding of the horrors faced by imprisoned Palestinians.

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جامعة النجاح الوطنية
كليَّة الدّراسات العليا

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الملخص

استناداً إلى كتابات فوكو حول السجون، ومفاهيم جوديث باتلر حول الهشاشة، والضعف والقدرة على التحمل كما هو مسلط عليه الضوء في كتاباتها حول "المحتجزين غير المحددين" في غوانتانامو، ومفهوم كريستيفا عن البشاعة، وعقيدة لاكان بشأن النظر، ومفهوم أغامبين عن "الحياة العارية"، بالإضافة إلى الأطر النظرية لإلين سكارى، تستكشف هذه الرسالة تجريد إنسانية السجناء والبشاعة التي يتعرضون لها، وآليات الدفاع التي يتبنونها لمقاومة الهويات البشعة المفروضة عليهم من قبل الحكومة الأمريكية في مذكرات منصور عدايفي، أحد المعتقلين السابقين في غوانتانامو، "لا تنسونا هنا: الضياع والعثور في غوانتانامو" (2021)، وهي مذكرات توثّق سجن منصور في غوانتانامو والاستراتيجيات الوحشية التي استخدمتها الحكومة الأمريكية لإرهاب معتقلي غوانتانامو. بالإضافة إلى مذكرات عدايفي، تدرس هذه الرسالة كتاب ألبرت وودفوك "العزلة" حيث يروي تجربته كأقلية، الأمريكيون السود، ضمن النظام العقابي الأمريكي، والطرق التي يستخدمها نظام السجون للسيطرة على صمت هؤلاء خلف جدرانه. كما تسلط الذكريات الضوء على أن الحكومة الأمريكية تستخدم مصطلحات استجوابية مقيتة تُنَزِّه وتُجَرِّد السجناء من حقوقهم، أو، في كلمات أغامبن، تُقللهم إلى حياة عارية. بالإضافة إلى هذه العنف اللفظي، تستخدم الحكومة التعذيب من أجل تجريدهم من ذاتهم ووكالتهم. في مثل هذا السياق، تسلط الذكريات الضوء على الاضطراب في الاستجابة الأخلاقية للحراس تجاه السجناء، الذين يتم استيعابهم كجزء من الذات السجنية التي تتوطد من خلال إذلال

وتجريد الآخر، أي السـجناء. ومع ذلك، كما يقول فوكو، فإن القوة والاضـطهاد يفسـحان المجال للمقاومة. بعبارة أخرى، فإن السـجناء، كما تؤكد هذه الأعمال الأدبية، مدركون لمعاملة الحراس المهينة لهم، ويعتمدون على مجموعة من الاستراتيجيات الدفاعية والجسدية – الإضراب عن الطعام، الكتابة، الاحتجاجات – من أجل المطالبة بالسلطة والذاتية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإنحطاط؛ الذاتية؛ الأمريكيون السود؛ العنف اللغوي