Palestinian Narratives of Silence and Consciousness Raising: A Critical Study of Mourid Barghouti's Autobiographies

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Abstract

Giving voice to suppressed stories and experiences becomes significantly instrumental in defining and shaping the identity and history of the oppressed. In this article, therefore, we study Mourid Barghouti autobiographical narratives, *I Saw Ramallah* (2005) and *I was Born There, I was Born Here* (2011), to present and examine the suppression of Palestinians living within Palestine as well as in exile. Our study attempts to give voice to the Palestinians' daily struggle by documenting their lived stories and experiences. Instead of focusing only on the autobiographer's excursion, we also explore the characters' trajectories into consciousness. In order to study how autobiographical narratives have the power to change the self and others, we premise our discussion on the theoretical nexus provided by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (2001) and Ken Plummer (1995). With our focus on the producer of the autobiographies, these theorists help us examine how Barghouti actively engages in registering his protest against the silencing of Palestinians in Israel and raising his and his people's consciousness (together) with that of the rest of the world through the act of reading his life narratives.

Keywords: *autobiographical narratives, lived stories, consciousness raising*

Rationale of the Study

Autobiographical narratives, commonly understood as a form of "written self-analysis" (Lopicic, 2008, p. 128) aim at imposing order on the "experiences, memories, intentions, hopes, desires, fears and concerns" (Brockmeier, 2000, p. 53). A narrator uses storytelling to explore questions about self and the social and political forces that affect it. Autobiography is not only a "retrospective account of one's life" but it also involves the "interplay between the past, the present and the future", and assembles comprehensible life histories so that a secure future could be visualized (Pascal, 1960, p. 11; Brockmeier, 2000, p. 56).

Using autobiographical narratives as a plane to voice Palestinians' experienced histories, in this article, we examine not only the autobiographical subject but also the consciousness of society as well. We intend to combine autobiographical investigation of how Palestinian space under Israeli

Occupation is viewed by Mourid Barghouti as well as the characters in his two autobiographies and how a sense of self is shaped in this process. As an "autobiographical self" (Damasio, 2010), Barghouti becomes conscious of complicated nature of personal and political changes upon recalling his history as well as his life stories so that instead of "I-then and I-now", "multiple I's" i.e. "the narrating I, the narrated I and the ideological I" are generated that help in the organization of his life events and shed light on the surrounding reality as well (Smith & Watson, 2001, p. 59).

Instead of only focusing on the journey of the narrator i.e. Autobiographical I, we also explore the journey of other characters from naivety to consciousness through "joint actions" where the producer of these autobiographies also performs the role of 'coaxer' and 'consumer' 'in the interactions which emerge around story telling' (Plummer, 1995, p. 20-21). Again, as Plummer (1995) advocates, an autobiographer assumes the roles of 'producer', 'coaxer' and 'consumer' where all the people concerned are engaged in fitting together lines of activity around stories; they are engaged in *story actions* (p. 20). These I's, along with the story actions explained by Plummer, are analyzed with the aim to bring forth the lived stories of Palestinians.

Autobiographical Producer

Under forced displacements and occupation, the Palestinians attempt to develop meaning within their monotonous lives by recounting their life narratives. An individual engages with his experiences gained in the past as well as in the present through "personal story telling" in which he develops a dialogue with his "personal experiences" and the "archives of [his] memory" (Smith & Watson, 2001, p. 14). This helps in imparting meaning to his life and enables him to inspect the socio-political and cultural processes that manipulate the reality. Barghouti (2011) comments on the situation in Palestine in words:

> We, the Palestinian people, are narrated by our enemies, in keeping with their presence and our absence. They label us as it suits them. The weaker party in any conflict is allowed to scream, allowed to complain, allowed to weep, but never allowed to tell his own story. The conflict over the land becomes the conflict over the story.... (p. 144)

This is particularly why Barghouti becomes a "producer" (Plummer, 1995, p. 21) of his autobiographies in which he not only explores his inner nature but also tries to present a panoramic view of the harsh reality of Palestine. This enables them to develop an active consciousness that is needed to pave way for a secure future. He maps minute details of returning to Palestine with his son, Tamim, and the reality experienced upon coming back to his homeland in such depth that he becomes "an emotionally charged bod[y] in action" (Plummer, 1995, p. 21). He believes that "each person has his own experiences of life, however simple" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 84). He shares his poetry with Palestinians in the village square of Deir Ghassanah with the purpose of stirring their consciousness. This in turn stimulates the indigenes to voice

their side of the stories. This aspect of "coaxing" the stories from the Palestinians is further discussed later in this article.

The autobiographical narrative for the producer becomes a means to organize his past, his present and his future by "teasing out" multiple versions of the "I" presented through his story (Smith and Watson, 2001, p. 64). Instead of the "I -then" and "I- now" aspect, the multiple I's that come forth through personal story telling, according to Smith and Watson (2001), are the *narrating I, narrated I* and the *ideological I* (p. 64). This brings to the forefront socio-political and ideological aspects of reality represented through the recollection of personal experiences. The multiple I's of the subject, when examined, make the producer an "object of investigation" (Smith & Watson, 2001, p.1).

The *narrating I,* according to Smith and Watson (2001), is the 'I' who recounts his own life stories for the others by bringing only that fragment of the "experiential history" that is associated with the story he is telling (p. 59-60). Barghouti, being an exiled Palestinian, recounts his life story of not only returning to Palestine but also of living in Egypt and getting deported from Egypt as well. Associated with two cultures and histories, he is "split" and "fragmented", therefore his *narrating I* is neither "unified nor stable" (Smith & Watson, 2001, p. 60). He highlights his instability upon returning to his homeland (Palestine) after thirty years by saying that "moving images appear and disappear without coherence" making him question whether he is "A visitor? A refugee? A citizen? A guest?" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 10-11). Suffering from displacement, he tries to find stability by arranging his autobiographical memories according to his "scales of need"[1] but he soon realizes that those scales will remain unbalanced forever because he cannot determine his past, present and future alone. That is why he says, "I am wailing: one long, continuous wail" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 17).

Talking about the impact of frequent displacements and interrogations, not only on his personal life but also on his homeland, he speaks of the "accumulation of 'historical pain' in [his] country [Palestine], a pain that chases away peace of mind, logic, responsibility, tranquility, imagination, truth and poetry" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 189). He tries to minimize the historical pain by recollecting his life histories through his poems. Various excerpts included in both the autobiographies highlight the attitude of the *narrating I* towards past experiences of the self. The poems written in both the autobiographies are "Qasidat al- Shahawat",Poem of appetites, (Barghouti, 2005, p. 78), "Bab al- Amud" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 82), "It's also Fine" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 113), "Interpretations" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 140), "Midnight" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 191), a poem on olive trees of Palestine, elegies for the dead ones and the wedding poem of Abu al-Afu. All these "lyrical recollections" not only "identify" but also elaborate the "experiences of the earlier self" (Davis, 1988, p. 126). In all these poems, Barghouti recalls his childhood and recounts the entire scenario of everyone rejoicing and dancing at the wedding of Abu al-Afu, and the times when they were independent and happy. The poems also document the scenes of Israeli Occupation and the way it has changed Palestine and everyone living in it. The poems act as elegies for all those

Palestinians massacred by Israeli soldiers. The *narrating I* presents a general picture of the reality of Palestine in all the poems and tries to expand the experiences. It is at this point that the *narrating I* shifts to the *narrated I* of the subject.

The *narrated I*, according to Smith and Watson (2001), is the "version of the self" that the *narrating I* chooses to establish through "recollection" (p. 60). It is the protagonist of the narrative or, according to Harry Davis (1988), an "experiencing I" which brings forth personal experiences through specific descriptions instead of a general overview (p.120). While the *narrating I* recalls the past histories and life stories, the *narrated I* is the one who experiences those incidents. In the latter, the focus is on the experiences undergone by the subject that produces "action and reaction" causing "doubts, conflicts and emotional upheaval" within him (Davis, 2001, p. 121).

Being a subject of history, Barghouti documents his feeling of being a stranger not only in his homeland but also in his second home Egypt. He was made to leave Palestine for seeking higher education as his mother Sakina strongly believed that "knowledge deserves every sacrifice" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 99). He was also deported from Egypt to Amman as a suspect for political activism which he was later absolved of. He documents his feeling of being a stranger by saying, "[a] person gets 'displacement' as he gets asthma and there is not cure for either" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 4). While talking about the changes he experienced on his return to Egypt after seventeen years of deportation in Amman, Barghouti (2005) explains:

> In Cairo the world had sorted itself out without [him] in [his] long absence. Friendships had gone their own, improvised way. Some landmarks remained in place, but not in exactly the same place... Positions, ambitions and loyalties had been realigned. People's daily schedules had been designed and it was difficult for the newcomer to find a place in them. (p. 74-75)

He understands that the two times now cannot be stitched together, thus, he must find ways to cope up with this reality.

Registering his troubled thoughts and impressions, Barghouti blames the Israeli forces for preventing his "body, voice, steps and memory" from "reaching" his homeland (2011, p. 74). He realizes that Israel will never allow Palestinians to voice their thoughts and will not allow them to demand their rights nor Egypt will grant him the authority to speak on the Palestinian issue. So it is up to the indigenous Palestinians and himself to stand against Israel, and anyone against Palestine, and counter the views by narrating their stories. He talks about his anxiety upon returning to Palestine with his son Tamim. He tries to understand the reality of his Palestinian brothers living in Palestine and questions himself by stating, "Can this trivial anxiety of mine be compared with the demolition of a house over the heads of those inside it in Jenin or Gaza? So what am I complaining about here?" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 45). He tries to relate himself with his indigenous Palestinian fellows in order to understand the real meaning of anxiety. He, then, recounts his memories by conjuring up

his dead family relatives, Hussain Murawwa, Mounif (his elder brother), his grandmother, his father and reimagines the perception of his childhood experiences. He remembers the way he used to desperately listen to his grandmother's prayers at dawn, the way his brother Mounif was his inspiration and continuous support. Unfolding of his life events, he claims:

> [T]his window I am looking out of is some thirty years away; thirty years and nine volumes of verse. It is the distance of an eye from its tears under the willow of a distant graveyard. I look out of the window at my life, the only life that my mother gave me, at the life of those absent to the farthest point of absence. (Barghouti, 2005, p. 37)

Yet he understands at the same time that the dead cannot be retrieved, nor the naivetés of his childhood could come back, and the reality is that their homeland has been occupied due to their "ignorance and historic shortsightedness" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 59). He only tries to recreate those experiences in order to regain something from the past that could illuminate the present in order to secure the future. He remarks:

> I used to long for the past… as a child longs for precious, lost things. But when I saw that the past was still there, squatting in the sunshine in the village square, like a dog forgotten by its owners- or like a toy dog- I wanted to take hold of it, to kick it forward, to its coming days, to a better future, to tell it: 'Run'. (Barghouti, 2011, p. 70)

Associating himself with the rest of indigenous Palestinians, culturally and historically, he situates himself with the rest in order to bring forward a collective view that could mobilize the rest of his society as well. It is at this point that the *narrated I* shifts to the *ideological I* of the subject yielding a collective understanding between the subject and the others.

Past knowledge and the experiences of the subject get "disembodied" and become a "quality or feature" of the subject due to the historical and ideological notions in which he resides (Smith, 1988, p. 101). The "I" that gets to the forefront, Paul Smith (1988) says, becomes a "third-person pronoun" having complete objective control of that which it views (p. 105). This "I", according to Paul Smith and Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson is the *ideological I* (p. 105; p. 62). It is "culturally and historically situated", providing ways of understanding the "relationship of the subject with the others", "the nature of time and life course", "the importance of social locations", "the motivations for human actions" and "the presence of evil, violent and self-destructive forces and acts" (Smith & Watson, 2011, p. 62).

Barghouti, being a displaced stranger, tries "to sew the times together, want[s] to attach one moment to another, to attach childhood to age, to attach the present to the absent and all presents to all absents. To attach exiles to the homeland and to attach what [he] has imagined to what [he] see(s) now" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 163). He wants to put an end to "displacement" which has engulfed lives of individuals living in Palestine as well as in exile. He claims that ever since Israeli Occupation, Palestinians living within Palestine and in

exile are faced with frequent interrogations and dislocations which have destroyed their lives. He asserts in *I Was born There, I Was Born Here* (2011):

The Palestinian is forbidden to enter his own country by land, sea or air, even in coffin. It is not a matter of romantic attachment to a place but of external exclusion from it. The Palestinian stripped of an original identity is a palm tree broken in the middle. My foreign friends have control over the details of their lives but a single Israeli soldier can control the details of the life of any Palestinian. This is the difference. This is the story. (p. 81)

He highlights the role of politics and the way it has dismantled the lives of all individuals living in Palestine as well as in exile. They are interpellated by the political leaders into thinking that the situation one day will be in Palestine's favor and that they are doing their best to reach that day. However, the *ideological I* brings forth the real picture of the methodological systems adopted by the political forces to disable the will of Palestinians.

Barghouti criticizes his "moderate leaders" and claims that they are cowards and make no efforts to achieve victory (2011, p. 34). They are scared and their fear gives the impression that no matter what the cost is, Israel will always remain victorious. He asserts that the leaders try to seek the approval of Israel despite knowing that they will never get it. When he was interrogated by Israeli soldiers about the peace process and the appointment of Abu Mazen as a prime minister, he says "Neither Abu Mazen nor anyone else will achieve anything because you will never give him anything" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 50). He claims that peace and freedom cannot be achieved under their oppressive control and the interpellation practised by them has made people fall into small dreams. They wait for orders from Israel to even proceed with their normal lives. He observes that "[t]he Occupation has created generations of us that have to adore an unknown beloved: distant, difficult, surrounded by guards, by walls, by nuclear missiles, by sheer terror" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 62).

Countering the prevailing ideology of oppression, he poses a view of "regain(ing) the future" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 147). He claims to break their state of denial by not staying silent and telling "personal histories one by one" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 59) so that they are able to build themselves up on "the dust of reality [and] not on the mirage of preconceived ideas" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 148). The *ideological I,* thus, enables the subject to "occupy, contest, revise and mobilize" (Smith & Watson, 2001, p. 63) not only himself but also the others involved in the historical moments. The ability to project the three I's while continuously analyzing and reflecting on the socio-political and historical moments make the subject transgressive. His positioning with respect to the ideological, cultural and historical circumstances enables him to question the binaries of oppressor/oppressed by creating a "space for agency" (Lenzo, 1992, p. 21).

Barghouti transgresses by steering his Palestinian-Egyptian 'I' into the position of a "secure cultural insider" (Marren, 1993, p. 95). He declares that he does not have the support of the government but has a powerful weapon, his pen, to write everything about Palestine. He believes that, being a poet and

the writer, it is his job to document the reality of Palestine by writing about everything that touches his heart. Interrogating the binaryy of oppressor/oppressed, he claims that Israel is the one that is afraid and not the Palestinians. He proves this by saying in *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* (2011) that Israel as a state

> possesses more than two hundred nuclear warheads, six hundred barriers and checkpoints, has built around us a wall 780 km long, detains more than eleven thousand prisoners, controls all borders and crossing points leading to our country by land, sea, and air, and frames its laws with reference to a permanent philosophy that its victories do not change, a philosophy whose core is this mighty state's fear... of us. (p. 33)

He clearly questions Israeli motive behind this oppression and says that Palestinians did not make them their enemy nor hated them even when Europe (Ferdinand, Isabella and Hitler) hated them. But it was Israel who disrupted the "law of equality" by occupying and monopolizing their entire space and banishing the original owners from their homeland.

He claims that socio-political conflicts and Occupation have affected the lives of Palestinians in such minuteness that it manifests itself in conflicting personality of every child under Occupation. He says that the child of Occupation is a complex personality as he questions the binaries by combining "a certain transparency of the emotions with pushiness. Fear and boldness, fragility and insensitivity" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 160). Barghouti believes that the only way to restore the dignity of Palestinians is to motivate them to vocalize their experiences and their life stories so that a collective understanding develops. This makes Barghouti not only a "producer" of his own story but also a "coaxer" for the rest of indigenous Palestinians as he holds the power to provoke stories from them to be documented in the pages of their history (Plummer, 1995, p. 21).

Uncovering Palestinians' Life Histories

The coaxer or coercer, according to Plummer (1995) is "any person, institution or cultural imperatives" (p.21) that provoke(s) people into telling their side of the stories. Due to the suppression and violence, Palestinians are "called upon" by Barghouti, and also by their culture which is being erased by the Israeli authorities, to tell their stories. Barghouti, being a poet and a writer becomes, to use Plummer's words (1995), a "listener and a questioner" (p. 21), probing, interviewing and cross-examining them to express their life histories.

Coaxing the life stories from the individuals, according to Smith and Watson (2001), occurs at particular sites i.e. "occasional" (associated with any occasion), "locational" (associated with location) and "a moment in history" (socio-political and cultural context) (p. 56). These sites of narration are always "personal, institutional, or geographical" in which overlapping occurs (Smith & Watson, 2011, p. 56). These sites of narration help the characters to

re-imagine and re-construct their lives in order to make their consciousness active and build a secure future.

"Friend's School for Girls in Ramallah" encapsulates a number of stories of female students (Fawziya, Sakina, Umm Mounif) who were denied right to education. They were forced to stay at home by the male members of the village as they believed that women "should be 'stored' in their homes to wait for marriage" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 96). Fawziya left school and went back to village whereas Sakina became "a free spirit, rebelling against every restrictive social convention" and continued her struggle for knowledge (Barghouti, 2005, p. 102). At the age of 50, she joined adult education classes to satisfy her thirst. She kept herself busy by working at her home and in her little garden where she planted various trees and keenly looked after them. She kept herself engaged in projects like these and thus imparted meaning to her life. Through stories of Fawziya and Sakina, Barghouti brings forward two perspectives i.e. fighting for the right or running away from the harsh reality.

Crossing the bridge to Jericho and then to Ramallah, in a taxi driven by Mahmoud and in the company of few other inhabitants, becomes a site of story-telling for Barghouti that sheds light on Israeli Occupation and the socio-political conditions. The talks between the passengers, as he notes, were about Occupation and the reality they face daily. At this point, Barghouti silently sits amidst them and listens to each of their views. On being informed by Mahmoud about the closure of bridge due to Israeli attack, they were not upset but rather commented, "stupidity is trying what's already been tried and expecting different results" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 2). Mahmoud remarks, "They want us paralyzed and terrified. They don't realize we've got used to it" (Barghouti, 2011, 10). Palestinians have devised various ways to go on living within their homeland despite the killings, checkpoints and frequent interrogations. They have established Bir Zeit University, Schools, Cultural center, Qasaba theatre to make their future safe and secure because they know that "Palestine's progress in the natural paths of its future was deliberately impeded, as though Israel wished to make of the whole Palestinian community a country side for the city of Israel" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 147).

The locational sites of narration, like School or bridge, are consumed together with occasional as well as historical sites of narration. The geographical locations become a reminder of their life histories and signify Palestinians' personal struggles against Occupation, displacement, and killing that continue to shape their lives. Highlighting the life histories through the locational and occasional sites of narration become records of "acts of interpretation by subjects" within the socio-political and historical time (Smith & Watson, 2001, p. 24). Each individual then becomes a "consumer" (Plummer, 1995, p. 21) of those stories because, in their telling of those incidents, they are interpreting and making sense of their reality.

The consumers are mainly "viewers/audience" (Plummer, 1995, p. 21) who try to understand the story and then develop meanings. Already a producer and a coaxer, Barghouti also becomes a consumer of life histories as

he not only tries to listen to their stories but tries to understand their reality as well. He tries to expose their life stories for the world to hear and understand.

Accustomed to the same atrocities, indigenes or exiled recount their personal life histories to understand their reality and make it meaningful. Barghouti asserts: "The whole of history is now 'today' and 'today' has become a reduction of every 'yesterday' that has passed over the face of this earth, a reduction of all history" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 184). Therefore, he claims that he is "trying to understand our story" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 67) so that the rest of the world could hear and understand it too. However, their life histories are not interpreted in the same manner by the world and, even, by Israelis. He explains in *I Saw Ramallah* (2005) that Israelis do not feel pity on "our cause" and "our story" and their compassion always sides with the victorious (p. 156). Whenever Palestinians stand up for their rights, Israel presents it to the world as violence and a threat to its security and manipulates their stories to portray an image contrary to what is true. Plummer's view (1995), supported by Smith and Watson (2001), aptly documents that the meanings of the stories cannot be "fixed" and are always "changed" through the "shifting contexts" (p. 21-22; p. 80). The context of interaction is manipulated by those in power, Israeli political leaders, and presented to the world in a twisted way that they "occupy [their] homes as victims and present [Palestinians] to the world as killers" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 128). Instead of reaching a better understanding of thelife histories of Palestinians, the consumers, Israel and the world, react in "great indifference" (Plummer, 1995, p. 21).[2] Barghouti believes that this way truth gets taken out from stories of Palestinians.

Commenting upon the situation in Palestine, Barghouti as a consumer interprets life histories of his fellow Palestinians and deconstructs the meaning of exile by saying "injustice is a form of exile, just as stereotyping is exile and misunderstanding is exile. In this sense, the entire Palestinian people is exiled through the absence of its story" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 144). This enables him to assert that the only way to overcome injustices is through the understanding of "detailed knowledge of life and of the human maturity" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 160). He aspires to make the world conscious by stating that their history will only not record "great events", life of "kings and officers", also but "what happened to [them] personally and the life stories of [their] bodies and [their] senses" (Barghouti, 2011, p. 59). This makes Barghouti a "control agent" (Plummer, 1995, p. 21) of their history. He interprets life histories of Palestinians by filling the gaps within their history and tries to project a better understanding of their life stories onto the World.

Together the "producer, coaxer and consumer" assemble the life story around "lives, events and happenings" (Plummer, 1995, p. 22) and reveal a "pattern of explanation[s]" which make the self "come into consciousness" (Deane quoted in Regan, 2009, p. 156). This highlights the use of autobiographical narrative as an effective means to not only analyze the self but also to bring the self into consciousness. Documentation of Palestinian life

histories (past and present) in an autobiographical narrative help shape conscious selves and impart meaning to life.

Observing the working of the world and media, this article reveals that the real-life histories and stories of Palestinians are not projected onto the world. Far from the truth, the life of a Palestinian is often constructed by the media and powerful forces as violent and aggressive. Through these strategies, they are silenced. Barghouti explains in his autobiographies how they are painted black when their reaction is given full attention whereas the Israeli aggression, that led to retaliation, is not mentioned anywhere. In this article, we study autobiographical account and the life stories of Palestinians living within Palestine as well as in exile and expose the "recycled imagery" (M. Barghouti, 2017, n.p) implicating Palestinians for being violent and aggressive, and thus suppressed.

Barghouti, as a producer of his autobiographical narratives, exquisitely presents a holistic and reliable accounts of Palestinians' real-life experiences. The *narrated I*, *narrating I* and the *ideological I* lend the producer of life stories authenticity as these I's not only highlight the past and present memories but also bring the socio-political, cultural and historical background of stories to the forefront. Barghouti, the producer, becomes the coaxer as well as consumer of those stories in order to make them visible and tangible not only for the individuals concerned but also for the world. He displays the richness of Palestinians' experiences and their life stories by bringing multifocal viewpoints i.e. of exiled, indigene and traveler into proximity. This article therefore underscores the potential life histories and examines Barghouti's personal stories to nullify the stereotypes generated against the Palestinian.

Note: This paper has been extracted from Mavra Ahmed's M Phil Thesis, entitled "Spatial Cartographies under Occupation: A Critical Study of Diasporic Palestinian Autobiographies *I Saw Ramallah* and *I Was Born Here, I was Born There* by Mourid Barghouti."

Notes

[1] Barghouti's scale of needs is the harmonization of his past memories, his present life with his wife and son and the future where he wants his family to be together and not divided by geographical boundaries. (Barghouti, 2005, p. 73)

[2] Barghouti explains that everyone talks about atrocities innocent Palestinians are subjected to but takes no measures in genuinely helping them out. He elaborates it through his meeting with Israeli lawyer Felicia Langer who specializes in defending Palestinian detainees. When Barghouti asked whether she would accept him and other Palestinian refugees in her country, he was shocked to hear her reply: "I wish! But the laws of our government would not permit it" (Barghouti, 2005, p. 156). The killing of a paramedic Razan Al Najjar at the besieged Gaza strip on June 3, 2018 is a case in point. Her killing was

justified by the Israeli authorities under the pretext that they fire only when the protestors damage the fence or any infrastructure, and that the killing might be because of "misaimed shot" or "ricochet" (*The Times of Israel* June 5, 2018). Al-Najjar's mother, holding the blood-soaked vest, claimed that "this was her daughter's weapon with which she was fighting Zionists" (*Gulf News: Palestine* June 3, 2018). Instead of speaking for Palestinian cause, the officials condone these acts by saying that Israel has every right to defend its borders.

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