Unearthing Literature: The Case of Hussein Barghouti

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Chapter 3: Death – Space and land

والمرض تماس مع الموت، والوعي بالموت عندها
يكشف الأشياء الكامنة خلف القوالب الذهنية والجاهز.[343]

Illness brings us in continguity with death.
Awareness of death reveals at that moment
the things that reside behind the cognitive
templates and what is ready-made.

3.1 Introduction

In chapter 2, the body in its beginnings; childhood, was taken as a premise for reading notions of language formation in Barghouti's texts. It was argued that it is through the interplay of familial, historical, and linguistic breaks and continuities that Barghouti contemplates literary and personal creativity. Focusing on another central corporeal phase in Barghouti's life, his experience with illness and death, this chapter reads the interaction between body and space. The aim of this chapter is to show how, meeting at the intersections of illness and estrangement, geographic movements in space reveal deeper levels of social, political, and literary interactions and individual-communal interrogations.

By March 2002, Barghouti's health started to deteriorate dramatically.[344] The second Intifada was at its pinnacle and the Palestinian uprising was confronted with an Israeli spoliation of land through the instalment of many permanent and flying checkpoints[345] and forced curfews.[346] The building of the illegal Separation Wall had already started. In order to relieve his pain, Barghouti needed medicine from Beirut, which would come via Jordan. The

[343] Barghouti, "al-Ḥadātha fī tajrubat al-shāʿir," 89.
[344] Al-Shaikh, "Beyond the Last Twilight," 11.
[345] Luisa Gandolfo, "Transactions, Space and Otherness: Borders and Boundaries in Palestine–Israel," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 33, no. 3 (September 1, 2016): 253–74.
[346] See Suad Amiry, *Sharon and My Mother-in-Law: Ramallah Diaries* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004). The book consists of personal anecdotes, diaries, and other kinds of social interactions, which (satirically) document stories from the daily life of the author through curfews (particularly the Ramallah curfew in March 2002), borders, checkpoints, and their effects on personal relations.

medicine was not allowed entry at the Karāma border between Jordan and Palestine.[347] Barghouti passed away on 1 May 2002.

I could not see a more fitting start for a chapter that takes the interaction between body and space for political, social, and literary exploration than this personal anecdote. The anecdote heightens the juxtaposition of the sickened body and the exploited land, a personal/national connection that has been largely explored in modern Arabic, specifically Palestinian literature.[348] Body and space are viewed as synonymous with the human body being approached as a space, and space equally being viewed as a body. The movements that unfold within and through body and space assert their ability to transform and change. It is through these movements that, for example, the analogy of the national body of the land and that of the human body is achieved.

This link between land and body is clear in the anecdote. Growing Israeli control over land and the occupation's power over the lives of Palestinians and their movements stand as a political and historical emblem of Barghouti's struggle against cancer, which spreads viciously in his body and impedes his ability to live.[349] Al-Shaikh provides examples of how Barghouti's personal struggle with cancer corresponded politically with the start of the second Intifada in 2000.[350] For example, he narrates how Barghouti used to see from his hospital bedroom the bodies of young Palestinians killed by the Israeli forces,[351] and how he

[347] Al-Shaikh, "Beyond the Last Twilight," 12.
[348] The trope of illness and its mirroring in the land or the nationalist struggle is a common line in modern Arabic writing. Some of the biggest names in the Arab literary scene, including Mahmoud Darwish, Amal Dunqul, Edward Said, and Radwa Ashour suffered from the agony of lengthy illness, treatments, and pain.
See, for example, Amal Dunqul, *Awrāq al-ghurfa 8*, (Cairo: al-Haiʾa al-Maṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li al-Kitāb, 1983), and Radwa Ashour, *Al-Ṣarkha* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2015).
[349] Stories of people in need of hospital care and women giving birth at checkpoints are immense. See, for example, Wendy Pearlman and Laura Junka, *Occupied Voices: Stories of Everyday Life from the Second Intifada*, First Edition (New York: Berkeley, Calif.: Nation Books, 2003). The author presents interviews conducted with Palestinians during the second Intifada. The interviews try to capture the injustices inflicted on these Palestinians, which led to political, social, and economic changes in their lives. The book, at the same time, conveys the different ways they resisted, for example by finding ways around the demolitions and atrocities of Israeli occupation and control.
[350] Al-Shaikh, "Beyond the Last Twilight," 11-13.
[351] Ibid.

decided to be buried in his village Kobar. These events form an inseparable relation between the human body and space, and consequently between the personal (his body) and the collective bodies and spaces of Palestine.

The similarity between cancer and occupation is their uncontrolled movements that they inflict upon the body (the human and the land). These movements can be understood along the line of what Eyal Weizmann calls "elastic geography."[352] In *Hollow Land*, Weizmann denotes that the borders created by Israeli occupation, such as the Wall, checkpoints, and road blocks, "are dynamic, constantly shifting, ebbing and flowing; they creep along, stealthily surrounding Palestinian villages and roads." Besides this "anarchic geography," which corresponds to larger political decisions and shifts, the movement of the occupation in Palestinian spaces has an "erratic and unpredictable nature."[353] Cancer, as an illness, similarly performs unpredictable and erratic movements of shifting, shrinking, and expanding at will. These movements occur unexpectedly in new places and create blockages in the body.

Cancer and its link to occupation in this example follow the general language used to describe the illness. As Sontag explains in her *Illness as Metaphor*, "the controlling metaphors in descriptions of cancer are, in fact, drawn….from the language of warfare"[354] such as colonisation, invasion, defence, etc. Writing in Barghouti's case can, thus, be seen as his 'resistance' against the invasion. As Daniel Punday argues in his *Narrative Bodies,* the links between body and space are central to the understanding of narratives, since changes in "kinetic space" entail a change of perception, and thus "a narrative change."[355] The movements in space and the human body produce different forms of literary expressions. The

[352] Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso, 2007), 6-7.
[353] Ibid., 8.
[354] Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*, 64.
[355] Daniel Punday, *Narrative Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Narratology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 117.

example of Barghouti illustrates the pertinence of literature, even at the confrontation with death. As al-Shaikh states "until two days before his death, [Barghouti] would engage in sophisticated conversations on the poetics of beauty, historical ironies, and the defeat of evil while reading Henry Miller's *Tropic of Capricorn*."[356] At his deathbed, excerpts from his favourite book *Ḥajar al-ward* were recited by family members and friends "in an attempt to pacify his soul and reduce his agony."[357] Literature stands as the emancipatory tool through which Barghouti resists both the brutality of occupation and the intensity of pain and illness. As seen in his narrations, Barghouti works at reconfiguring a set of movements and transformations that revolt against the imposed transformation of body and space. The body, in this case, is not an agent of reflection as much as it is an agent of action. Its brush with death and experience of illness and pain distort established metaphors and set modes of thought, as Barghouti explains in the opening quote of this chapter. The narration is constructed afresh as guided by the experience of the body and land and their transformations.

Starting from the physicality of pain, some of the main passages in this chapter are taken from Barghouti's last autobiography *Saʾakūn*. As explained in the previous chapter, the book follows Barghouti's return to his childhood village after his diagnosis with cancer. The passages chosen here delineate Barghouti's medical experience: the pain, losing his hair, and his trips to the hospitals. This chapter presents four main examples of movements in space. The first part of the chapter focuses on Barghouti's encounter with cancer, through his experience at the hospital, and his encounter with an Israeli settlement. The second part of the chapter venture out to include other expressions of pain and spatial exploration as they appear in Barghouti's works. The example of the 'crossing' in section 3.7, focuses on the interplay

[356] Al-Shaikh, "Beyond the Last Twilight," 12.
[357] Ibid., 13.

between estrangement as a painful experience and space as portrayed in Barghouti's novel *al-Ḍiffa al-thālitha li nahr al-Urdunn*. The other part in section 3.7 investigates the inner-outer dynamics of space and their connection to knowledge by looking at two depictions of enclosed spaces in a poem in Barghouti's first published literary work (the poetry collection *al-Ruʾyā*) and one of his last published works *Saʾakūn*. These examples delineate Barghouti's attention to both physical and literary movements, and exemplify the centrality of senuous and corporeal experiences in Barghouti's works.

3.2 Theoretical framework

This chapter lies at the crossroads between illness, space, and literature. Although many have written about the topic of space and its relation to the body, this chapter is mainly framed by some conceptions by Marc Augé. There are three main reasons for this choice. First, being an anthropologist and a literary author, Augé's writings have been described as "part-autobiographical, part-fictional, essayistic"[358] style, thus alluding to the import of narrative in the conception of spaces and bodies. Second, Augé's understanding of space questions the interplay between the space that is merely surrounding the person and that which is experienced. An "anthropological place," Augé notes, is a "place in the established and symbolized sense."[359] This link to the establishment of symbols is similarly echoed in his note on the individual versus collective approach to illness. Augé's work crosses paths with health studies (particularly applied in Africa). In his "Biological order, social order" he asserts the double-nature of illness which "is at one and the same time the most individual and the most social of things."[360] It is thus Augé's perception of the multi-dimensionality of

[358] Phil Hubbard, and Rob Kitchi eds., *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (London: SAGE, 2011): 27.
[359] Marc Augé, *Non-Places*: *Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (New York: Verso, 1995), 81.
[360] Marc Augé, "Biological order, Social order; illness, a primary form of event," in *The Meaning of Illness: Anthropology, History and Sociology*, ed. Marc Augé and Claudine Herzlich, trans. Katherine J. Durnin et. al. (Paris: Harwood Academic Publishers GmbH, 1995), 24.

both space and illness that enables a reading of Barghouti's approach towards space and the body through the prism of movements and transformations.

I start by raising some theoretical points regarding the relation between space and body and delineate some of Barghouti's conceptions of space. Then, I approach the link between space and body through the study of some movements in space that appear in Barghouti's works. Finally, I map these movements, gestures, and descriptions of space to show how geographical topologies engage in social, literary, and political networks. This way of approaching space exceeds visual and geographic coordinates and allows Barghouti to spatially situate the demise of his own body and his death.

3.3 Barghouti and space

This section highlights the centrality of space in Barghouti's conception, particularly in relation to the body, the individual's perception, and interaction with the land. The theoretical discussion in many fields in the humanities and the social sciences has been largely dominated by a "temporal din."[361] Bakhtin's theory of the "chronotope" has fixated the connectedness between time and space in the reading of the literary text. At the beginning of his essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics," Bakhtin provides a definition of the chronotope. He argues that "in the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole." This whole is composed by time which "thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible" and space, which "becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history."[362] While the two entities are seen as inseparable, time is portrayed as a lively matter that evolves and changes (as exemplified through the image of the growing of

[361] Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York: Verso, 1989), 13. For a comprehensive overview of the development and emergence of spatiality in social theory, see "History: Geography: Modernity," 1-9.

[362] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of The Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics." in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press Slavic Series, no. 1., 1981), 84.

time like a body). Space, on the other hand, is described as "responsive," a consequential and secondary entity to time. By choosing to focus on space in this chapter, I do not argue that space should be seen as superior to time. This is, instead, an attempt to mark the literary dynamics that emerge from setting space at the foreground of the discussion. The strong bond between space and time is essential to the discussion, as will be seen in the following pages. The fact that the heightened stage of Barghouti's cancer and his eventual death coincided with one of the most intense events in modern Palestinian history testifies to the connection and intertwinement of experiences and events.

Space in this chapter is used as the English translation of the Arabic word *makān,* which is extensively used in Barghouti's writings and constitutes the kernel of some of his most important works (for example in *al-Farāgh*). Restoring the word *makān*, in Arabic, to its root *k-w-n*, one can see that there is a link between *makān* and *kawn*, the word for universe, and to *kāʾin* 'being'.

In his definition of the word, however, Barghouti takes the word *makān* as derived from the root *m-k-n*. He writes:

في العربية كلمة "مكان" اشتقَّت من مادة "م.ك.ن"، من المصدر نفسه الذي جاءت منه كلمة "ممكن"، فالمكان هو "ممكناته"، أو "إمكانياته".[363]

> In the Arabic language, the word 'makān' (space) is derived from the root 'm.k.n', and from the same gerund of the word 'mumkin' (possible). *Makān*, thus, refers to its residing 'potentials' and 'capabilities.'

From this root, other words like *tamakkan* 'to be able to', and *tamakkun* 'stability'/ 'power' are derived.[364] This chapter adopts space as a field where, just as Barghouti argues, abilities, possibilities, power, and interactions take place.[365]

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[363] Barghouti, "'An al-makān," 90.
[364] For an overview of the many discussions on the meanings of the word, see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, vol. 13, 1997), 363-368.
[365] See Barghouti, "'An al-makān," 90.

As has been pointed out above, the word "space" will be used as an encompassing term for charting geographic and literary movements in Barghouti's works. However, it is important to point out that there are many spatial references that have different meanings. Place, location, position, and other words have their specific geographical and linguistic demarcations and different utilizations in theory.[366] Barghouti is attuned to these different words and their connotations. For example, he refers to the difference between the word *maḥall* and the word *mawqiʿ*. While the first refers to a space that one can exist in, it does not allude to a feeling of *tamakkun*, a feeling of belonging. Contrary, *mawqiʿ* refers to the relation and feeling of belonging between space and the individual.[367]

Besides these differences between spatial terms, Barghouti investigates the varied meanings and states evoked by the single term *makān*. Barghouti deploys a line by Darwish to assert the distinction between *makān* and *lā makān.* Darwish writes:

اللامكان هو المكان وقد نأى في الروح عن تاريخه.[368]

> the non-place is the place when its position in the soul becomes dislocated from its history.[369]

Using this quote, Barghouti argues that this *lā makān* is still a *makān*, but it is one that is "devoid of its history…far away from itself."[370]

What is constant in Barghouti's conceptions is his use of the word *makān* as an umbrella term under which all these spatial dynamics are played out. It is here that

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[366] Augé explains that, for him, space is an abstract term, while place, or what he calls the anthropological place, includes "the journeys made in it, the discourses uttered in it, and the language characterizing it." (*Non-Places,* 81). Place is where the lived and the experienced unfold (Augé, *Non-Places*, 81-83). Another similar term is *placelessness*, discussed in Lutwack's last chapter "Placelessness" in *The Concern of Twentieth-Century Literature.*" He notes that "the disappearance of familiar places and the proliferation of a more and more limited set of uniform places have caused a peculiarly modern malaise called *placelessness*." Leonard Lutwack, *The Role of Place in Literature* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 182.

[367] Barghouti, "ʿAn al-makān," 91.

[368] Qtd. in ibid.

[369] Mahmoud Darwish, "The Hoopoe," in *If I Were Another*, trans. Fady Joudah (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 49.

[370] "مكانٌ مجَّرد من تاريخه...ابتعد عن نفسه."
Barghouti, "ʿAn al-makān," 91.

Barghouti's distinctions and that of Augé come face to face. Augé's usage of place and non-place as his main constitutive spatial elements is not in opposition to the use of the term space in this chapter. For Augé, space and place are not opposites. Rather, space represents the abstract field in which events, moments, and narratives can take place.[371] A place, for Augé, is a space that is "relational, historical and concerned with identity."[372] Non-place, consequently, is a space that is, as Barghouti also reiterates, devoid of such connections. In other words, Barghouti's *makān* and Augé's space mirror each other. The place/non-place pair in Augé's conception is at play in Barghouti's through the latter's deployment of different spatial states (such as *al-makān al-zāḥif, al- lā makān, al-makān al-munqariḍ* as will be discussed).

Space, whether actual or imagined, is not a static entity. It is rather created by the different movements and acts that one performs through the body. In her reading of the semiotics of space, Ceza Qasim notes that a person's recognition of space happens through "a direct sensory recognition, that starts with the human's experience of their body: this body is 'a space'-… [it embodies] the psychological, cognitive, emotional, and animalistic powers of the living being (*al-kāʾin*)."[373] It is not only the existence of the body as space but the *awareness* of this existence in relation to the surroundings that informs one's position in life. Space becomes an 'anthropological place' when it is conceived through the lived and the experienced. This understanding of space as constructed and perceived through its relation to the body is found in Barghouti's writing. He writes in *al-Farāgh* about the time when he got lost on his way back to his village Kobar.

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[371] Augé, *Non-Places*, 85.
[372] Ibid., 77.
[373] "يدرك المكان ادراكا حسيا مباشرا، يبدأ بخبرة الانسان بجسده: هذا الجسد هو "مكان"-...- القوى النفسية والعقلية والعاطفية والحيوانية للكائن الحي."
Ceza Qasim, *al-Qāri' wa al-Naṣṣ: al-ʿalāma wa al-Dalāla* (Cairo: al-Majlis al-'aʿlā li al-Thaqāfa, 2002), 27-28.

فالمكان، أيها السادة، حرف ياء، رابطة. أولست "أنا" في جسدي؟ أعني أولست أنا ك"أم صفا"، مجرّد "مكان آخر"؟ وما يربط بين هذين المكانين، جسدي و "أم صفا" هو تفسيري أنا، أي رابطة الياء.[374]

> Space, gentlemen, is the letter *yāʾ*, a nexus. Am 'I' not in my body? I mean, am I not, like umm Ṣafā[375] just 'another space?' And what connects these two spaces, my body and umm Ṣafā, is my own interpretation, meaning the association of the *yāʾ*.

This passage exemplifies Barghouti's view of the body as space. It is through the connection the 'I' makes with these different spaces (the body, the village) that the perception of the space is conceived. In the Arabic language, the letter *yāʾ* is the sign that indicates possessiveness for the first-person singular. The argument that Barghouti advances here is that the recognition of space happens through relegating its positionality in relation to the 'I'. Familiar places are familiar and recognizable because they reside in the memory and the map of the 'I', since they have the *yāʾ* attached to them. This ability (*imkāniyya*) at connecting and disconnecting the *yāʾ* serves Barghouti's idea of metamorphosis (discussed in section 4.7), as well as his conception of defamiliarization (the disconnection of the *yāʾ*) as a way to creativity (for an example see section 1.4).

The anthropological place is concerned with more than the individual's perception of the space. Barghouti complicates this relation by exploring the multiplicity of spaces in Palestine that are related to political control (thus, *makān* as referential to *tamakkun* 'power').[376] The conceptual image of the physical space of Palestine (the land) and its loss led to the creation of imagined spaces in the memory of Palestinians. By highlighting the different spatial layers, Barghouti analyses the complex relation between the formation(s) of Palestinian identities and reality in the minds and lives of Palestinians. He writes:

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[374] Barghouti, "al-Anā wa al-makān," in *al-Farāgh al-ladhī raʾa al-tafāṣīl*, ed. Murād al-Sūdānī (Ramallah: Dār al-Bayraq al-ʿArabī, 2006), 75-76.
[375] Barghouti explains how, on attempting to return to his village, he confused Kobar with the nearby village of Umm Ṣafā.
[376] Barghouti, "'An al-makān," 90.

المكان المنقرض فيه محلُّ لنا ولكن ليس "موقعاً" إنَّه "المنفى"...وكلمة "المنفى" في العربية ترتبط ب"نفى" كنقيض لأكَّد...و يقابل المنفى مكان "حقٌّ" أصليٌّ وطن أم جنَّة ما أو بتعبير لمحمود درويش: "جغرافيا السحر الإلهي" و الحلم بالعودة من المنفى إلى "جغرافيا السحر الإلهي" هاجس أساس في الأمكنة الذهنية الفلسطينية...الجنَّة الضائعة الإلهية تعني فكرة "اللجوء" أي الطرد وبالقوَّة من "جغرافيا السحر الإلهي" إلى أرض أخرى "محلٌّ آخر" منفى-مخيماً، والإصرار على العودة، على الرحلة النقيض من "المحلّ" والمنفى إلى الجنَّة- الموقع- المكان الحقّ. أقول "الجنَّة" كإشارة إلى خطيئة أصلية ما، إلى لعنة ما وسقوط، إلى كارثة ماضية طردنا بها من "المكان الحق" إلى "الأرض-المنفى"-سميّت هذه ب"النكبة"...و "جغرافيا السحر الإلهي" تفسير آخر للمكان، و أسطورة" وظيفتها خلق فسحة من الأمل الحرِّ أي "مكاناً محارباً" للمكان المنقرض...حلم أصلب من "الوقائع"... [ويشكِّل هذا الحلم بالعودة] محور تعريف الذات القومي-الإنساني عندنا.[377]

> The extinct space [*al-makān al-munqariḍ*] has a position [*maḥall*] for us [Palestinians] but it is not a location [*mawqiʿ*], it is 'exile'…the word *manfā* [exile] in Arabic is linked to *nafā* [negated] as an antonym of *akkada* [confirmed].
> In contradistinction to this *manfā*, a space of 'actuality', an original space; a homeland, or some kind of paradise, or what Mahmoud Darwish terms "the geography of divine magic."[378] The dream to return from the *manfā* to the "the geography of divine magic"[379] is a compulsive foundational premise in the Palestinian cognitive cartography [of meaning]. This lost paradise refers to the forced expulsion out of the 'geography of divine magic' to another space, 'another position', a *manfā*- a refugee camp. [It also refers to] the persistence of the desire to return, [the persistence to go on] the opposite journey from the 'position' and *manfā* to paradise- the location [*mawqiʿ*]- the space of actuality.
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> I use the term 'paradise' to evoke a reference to an original sin, to a curse and a fall, to a past catastrophe in which we were expelled from 'the space of actuality' to 'the earth-*manfā*'"- this [sin] was called Nakba. The 'geography of divine magic' is an alternative interpretation of space. It is a myth whose job is to carve out and hold open a space of free hope. It signifies a 'fighting space' that opposes the extinct space. It is a dream more solid than the 'daily occurences' [*waqāʾiʿ*] (the dream is more real *wāqiʿiyya*). This dream to return represents the axis defining the nationalist-humanist individual for us.[380]

The image created in this quote by Barghouti retains an element of an almost apocalyptic setting (similar to what was presented in section 2.7). Barghouti differentiates between three spaces, or three layers of space that exist in the spatial cognition of Palestinians: a pre-fall (pre-Nakba) space, a post-Nakba space, and another post-Nakba phase in which an imagined pre-Nakba space is restored. Expulsion and return for Barghouti

[377] Barghouti, "'An al-makān," 92-93.
[378] Darwish, "The Tragedy of Narcissus, the Comedy of Silver," in *If I Were Another*, trans. Fady Joudah (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 23.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Meaning Palestinians.

become the two mechanisms through which the transformation of the actual and the imagined take shape. The expulsion has led the *mawqiʿ* to be stripped of its social, emotional, and material realness and stability. This dispossession has left the Palestinians with another reality, another space, namely a *maḥall* that is devoid of connections. This is not to say that the new *maḥall* does not, despite its lack of connection, affect the lives and aspirations of the exiles.

In his book *Catastrophe and Exile in the Modern Palestinian Imagination: Telling Memories,* Ihab Saloul adopts a reading of Palestinian narration of exile and the Nakba, which is characterized by a shift from "a nostalgic memory" to "a critical memory."[381] In this shift, the focus is not solely on the nostalgic memories of the past space (the first space in Barghouti's example), but also on the critical conditions of expulsion and loss, which stress how the present experiences of the exiles shape the construction of the homeland and thus situates the Nakba as a historical moment that continues to reveal itself in the present.[382] This new shocking reality has driven Palestinians to reformulate the actual *mawqiʿ* that is now lost into an image that resides in the otherworldly sphere. However, instead of just imagining this new realm, the imagined space becomes the motor that fuels the aim to realize or regain the previous *mawqiʿ*. As Barghouti explains here, actual life exists in two realms: the material space and the imagined. The very actual expulsion of the Palestinians and the reality of their struggle, which are portrayed in the image of the camp, are opposed to an ideal image about a lost paradisiacal space. What is interesting is that it is this imagined space, which Palestinians create, and not the reality of the camp that becomes the actual driving force and a motive to fight for achieving the return, and thus provides them with a sense of power and *tamakkun*. In the first phase, movement meant the destruction of stability, in the second phase, movement

[381] Ihab Saloul, *Catastrophe and Exile in the Modern Palestinian Imagination: Telling Memories* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 69.
[382] Ibid., 69-70.

(the return/the resistance/the fighting) means a movement towards stability.

There is thus a negotiation between actual life and imagination, a *manfā* (exile) and paradise. This engagement with these contradictions is what constitutes the essential dialectical question in the Palestinian case as Barghouti sees it. The word *manfā* in itself propels its taker, the exiled, to be in a state of negation and in a dialectical struggle between what existed, what exists, and what is hoped to exist. As Barghouti construes, this hope to return, fuelled by an imagined space, is what constitutes the literary and poetic representation of Palestine in modern Palestinian literature. I find this passage important because it disrupts this assumed knowledge about what constitutes reality and what does not, since as we see here, an imagined space in the future becomes more real as opposed to the realness of the actual space, in the past and present times. It, furthermore, asserts Barghouti's awareness of the different Palestinian expressions of identity and relation to the land.

3.4 Illness and pain

As this dissertation argues, these different perceptions of space take shape through the body. The topoi of illness and pain, as inspired by Barghouti's experience with cancer and occupation of the land, reveal this connection between space and body. Barghouti's experience with pain forces a confrontation with the position of the self in regard to the physical body. He says of the pain:

..أنا أرغب...أن أنزع الإبر من ظهر يدي، وأستفرغ كلَّ ما في باطني، وفي ذهني، وأحمل كتبي، وجلدي، وثيابي، وأغادر، إلى "الدير الجوَّاني"، وإلى جنائن اللوز. ذهني يشبه هذه القاعة، ويحتاج أمكنة واسعة، مقمرة، ومفتوحة على درب التبَّانات، على المعمار الإلهي نفسه...سأعود إلى الجنائن، سأعود، فجسمي ليس بالضبط أنا، مهما أمعنت في غيِّها الإبر.[383]

> …I desire…to pull the needles out from the back of my hand, to disgorge whatever is inside me, and inside my mind, and to carry my books, my skin, and clothes, and leave, to *al-dayr al-juwwānī* and to the almond gardens. My mind resembles this hall,

[383] Barghouti, *Saʾakūn*, 89.

> and it needs wide spaces that are moonlit, and overlooking the milky way, [overlooking] the divine architecture itself…I will return to the gardens, I will; for my body is not exactly me, regardless of how deeply the needles penetrate.

The quote above from Barghouti's *Saʾakūn* confronts us in a direct manner with the main themes in this section: the reality of illness and pain, the body-land bond, and the issue of embodiment. Barghouti describes the physical consequences of illness and pain as exemplified in the needles and the vomiting. These instances of illness and pain are activities that invade the space of the body. The pain of Barghouti is not a narrated experience. Rather "…[pain] is part of what creates the conditions of action and experience."[384] Action comes in the form of the imagination which transforms the "passive and helpless occurrence" into "self-[modification]."[385] Barghouti's declaration that his body is not him is not a negation of the role of the body in life. Rather, pain works as an active invitation for Barghouti to find new forms of embodiment. These forms are investigated through memories and imaginations, beyond his current decaying body.

Thus, Barghouti's reaction to these invasions of his body is to negate his existences as merely being in his body. And instead, he finds other spaces to be. As is portrayed in different parts of the book, he substitutes his physical body with that of the space of his village, which is possible because of his decision to return to it and be buried there. Although Barghouti hopes to abandon his physical body because of the spatial destructions that it suffers from cancer and invasive medical treatments, he is still in search of a substituting body, his village, which encompasses large spaces on earth and in the sky. Barghouti's loss of body allows him to come up with new ways to experience life *through* embodiment. In other words, the loss of materiality (his physical body) does not indicate a distancing from it but is rather strengthened by taking on a new and self-chosen embodiment. It is precisely this

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[384] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, (Stanford: Standford University Press, 2003), 85.
[385] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1985), 164.

that roots his post-diagnosis works, perhaps unexpectedly, in the lived, the experienced, and the observed sensations instead of the withdrawn and existentialist.

Augé is attuned to the importance of the body in relation to space (political/religious/social). As was mentioned above, "…[the] effect of spatial construction can be attributed without hesitation to the fact that the human body itself is perceived as a portion of space with frontiers and vital centres, defences and weaknesses, armour and defects."[386] It is not only that the body can be discussed in spatial terms, but also that the body represents a territory. The importance of the body comes from what Augé calls "a meeting of ancestral values," where "elements" exist before the "carnal envelope" of the body and "survive it."[387] Similarly, Barghouti's literary encounter with illness is compatible with his concept of the embroidered spaces and times that go into the making and conception of his own body. These spaces and times are social, historical, religious, political, and literary, and illness is a movement that enables their questioning.[388]

3.5 Movements

This chapter is interested in the shifts that take place within the different forms of space. The first two movements (section 3.6) look at how illness disrupts the body's landscape and is thus a form of movement. In turn, the imposed movement on the body yields active political and literary movements that reconfigure the role of Barghouti and his body in life. In her book *Agency and Embodiment,* Carrie Noland explains that she favours the use of

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[386] Augé, *Non-Places*, 60.
[387] Ibid., 62.
[388] Darwish's *Jidāriyya*, (*Mural*), for example, is a long poem that Darwish wrote after "a brush with death during heart surgery in 1999". Ferial Ghazoul, "Darwish's Mural: The Echo of an Epic Hymn." *Interventions* 14:1 (2012): 37.
See also ʿAbd al-Salām al-Masāwī, *Jamāliyyāt al-mawt fī shiʿr Maḥmūd Darwīsh* (Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī, 2009), 49-50.
"جدارية محمود درويش تمثّل [واجهة] للموت بسلاح الذاكرة الحية التي تختزن قدرا وفيرا من الاحداث والرموز الثقافية…"
"Mahmoud Darwish's 'Mural' represents a façade against death. It deploys living memory as a weapon which witholds a heavy artillery of events and cultural icons."

'gesture' in place of 'movement.'[389] Gesture, as she notes, is suitable for the study of agency, and by "[i]mplying *organized* kinesis, 'gesture' serves as a reminder that movement is not purely expressive but is culturally shaped at every turn."[390] Despite the compelling arguments, and although this chapter studies manifestations of agencies, I opted to use the term movement. This choice is because *ḥaraka* (movement) in Arabic seems to be the more generic term of the two, while *īmāʾa* (gesture) hints at a movement that holds within itself an intended meaning. Movement, instead, opens the space for more complex engagements that ascertain intentionality, but still allows for uncontrolled changes that take place thanks to an individual's agency and body. Barghouti writes:

في العربية، "الميل" حركةٌ ما...و "الميلُ إلى" فعل شيء يتضمَّن اتجاهاً للحركة، تماماً كالميل عن شيء والميلُ هادف، واعٍ...أي أنَّ له امتدادٌ في أعماق كينونة الأنا.[391]

> In Arabic, 'leaning [*al-mayl*] is a kind of movement… and an 'leaning [inclination] for' doing something entails a direction of movement, exactly like an inclination away from something. An inclination is purposeful, conscious; which means that it has an extension in the depths of the being of the 'I'.

In one of his poems Barghouti poetically delves into this harmony between the two entities of the physical movement and its effect on the perception of the 'I'. In deploying the *mayl* as an emblem of transformation, Barghouti situates his poetics not in terms of oppositions between the static and the moving, but rather in the dialectics between them and the ability to choose and transform from one state to the other. In "Mā qālath al-ghajariyyā" ("What the Gypsy Said"), the speaker narrates what a female gypsy has proposed for him to do in order to come back to her "standing, no stick in your hands, and no guide but yourself, purified of all what is other to yourself."[392] The gypsy assumes the position of a teacher and

[389] Noland, *Agency and Embodiment*, 6.
[390] Ibid., 7.
[391] Barghouti, "Wahm al-bidāya…Shabaḥ al-makān." In *al-Farāgh al-ladhī raʾa al-tafāṣīl*, ed. Murād al-Sūdānī (Ramallah: Dār al-Bayraq al-ʿArabī, 2006), 109.
[392] "وعُدْ لي واقفاً، لا عصاً في يديكَ، ولا دليلٌ خارجكْ، خالصاً مما عداكْ."
Barghouti, "Mā Qālath al-Ghajariyya." In *al-Āthār al-shiʿriyya* (Ramallah: Bayt al-Shiʿr, 2008), 243.

provides the speaker with advice on how to reach this state of self-knowledge. She tells the speaker:

الكونُ نهرٌ وهَرَمْ.
إنْ مِلتَ إلى تتبُّعِ النهرِ مع الموج رحتَ
وإن مِلتَ إلى جهةِ الأهراماتِ كنتَ مع الثباتْ.[393]

> The universe is a river and a pyramid.
> If you are leaning towards following the river, you are gone with the waves.
> And if you are leaning towards the direction of the pyramids, you are gone with persistence.

This example shows how Barghouti entangles the movement that the individual decides to take in relation to a specific space, and what this movement entails.[394] The key word here is the word *milt*, 'you leaned'.[395] This decision to lean, as the gypsy informs the speaker, yields new perspectives for him: [396]"قدر الروح ما تميل إليه" / "The fate of the soul [is formed] through what it is inclined to [leans towards]." If the speaker decides to go with the movement of the river, he will join the waves. If he decides to lean towards the pyramids, he will find stability. Barghouti compares the moving river to the fixed pyramid, and juxtaposes their consequent state (moving in the case of the river, and staying in the case of the pyramid). Despite these different states, in both cases leaning, *movement*, is required to reach them. In other words, Barghouti does not champion the flowing of the river over the stability of the pyramids. What he argues, nevertheless, is that even stability is achieved through

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[393] He deploys the same idea in his last autobiography:
"إن ملنا إلى النار صار كل ثبات وهماً، وإن ملنا إلى البتراء صارت كلُّ حركة وهماً. كلُّ الفنِّ التشكيلي، مثلاً، يتحرَّك بين حركة النار وبين ثبات الأهرامات، أو البتراء.
"If we learn towards fire, every static entity becomes an illusion. If we lean towards Petra, every movement becomes an illusion. All visual art, for example, moves between the movement of fire and the static state of the pyramids or Petra."
Barghouti, *Saʾakūn,* 104.

[394] As Soja explains: "space still tends to be treated as fixed, dead, undialectical; time as richness, life, dialectic, the revealing context for critical social theorization." (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, 11).

[395] Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1200) understands this leaning to be essential to one's life and survival. In his famous book on love *Dhamm al-hawā*, he writes that love is "the leaning of nature to what suits it."
"اعلم أنَّ الهوَى: مَيْلُ الطبع إلى ما يلائمه. /وهذا الميل قد خُلِقَ في الإنسان لضرورة بقائه، فإنّه لولا ميله إلى المَطعم ما أكل، وإلى المَشْرب ما شرب، وإلى المَنْكح ما نكح، وكذلك كل ما يشتهيه."
Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā,* ed. Khālid al-ʿAlamī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1998), 35.

[396] Barghouti, "Mā qālath al-ghajariyya," 244.

movement. In this vein, movement is an act that changes one's perspective. The gypsy advices the speaker:" فاعرفْ ميولكَ تعرفْ قَدَركْ! " / "So know your inclinations (your leanings), so know your fate!" [397] It is not the space itself, but the movement within it that is decisive in the formation of one's self and fate.

3.6 Geographic movements

This section directly relates to Barghouti's experience with illness and his reflections on his death as he witnesses the deteriorating political situation in Palestine during the second Intifada. There is a direct correlation between the invasion that occurs onto his body and that which is inflicted upon the land. The excerpt below explores how Barghouti's position in the hospital complicates his view of himself and his body, and of the social and political situation in Palestine. Illness enforces Barghouti's existence between life and death. At the same time, it reveals the tension between his individual experience of illness and pain and the collective social and political pain. He writes in the first few pages of *Saʾakūn:*

لم يعد لي من مكان في كلِّ هذه "الانتفاضة" إلَّا التردد، بشكل مملٍّ، أيضاً، على مستشفى رام الله...هناك متَّسع لي بين الولادات الجديدة في الطابق العلوي، وبين ثلاجة حفظ الموتى تحت...في باب غرفة الطوارىء تتدفَّق سيارات إسعاف عليها رسم هلال أحمر...جرحى وشهداء، وأنا تائه أسأل عن دكتور أمراض الدم. فتردُّ ممرضة متوترة: "نحن في حالة طوارئ، ألا ترى؟". فأدرك أنَّني شخص زائد عن الحاجة، مريض متطفِّل يمشي نحو مصيره وحده، بهواجس فردية، لست "زائراً"، ولا "معافى"، ولا جريحاً ولا على وشك الشهادة، بل "مريضاً عادياً: أي لفظة حائرة بين قاموسيِّ الموتى والأحياء.[398]

> I no longer have a place in this 'Intifada', but to frequent the Ramallah hospital, and that I do boringly too. There is room for me, in-between the wards for the newly born on the upper floor and the morgue downstairs. At the door of the emergency room, ambulances flood in bearing the sign of the red crescent, wounded people, and martyrs while I am lost asking for the haematologist. An anxious nurse answers: 'we are in a state of emergency, can't you see?' and I realize that I am nothing but an excess; an obtrusive patient walking alone towards his fate; carrying personal concerns. I am not a 'visitor' nor 'a recovering patient.' I am not a wounded person or on the verge of martyrdom. I am a 'regular patient,' meaning, a hesitant utterance hanging in-between the lexicon of the dead and the lexicon of living.

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[397] Ibid., 245.
[398] Barghouti, *Saʾakūn,* 35-36.

In this scene of limbo Barghouti hovers between the two states of life and death, and at the same time, between the vertical space of the upper and lower floors. It depicts a moment of high intensity in Palestinian history, while echoing the personal concerns of the sick Barghouti. Between the hope of life and new beginnings – the births on the upper floor – and its sad end – the morgue in the basement – and the wounded people and the martyrs, Barghouti finds himself wandering aimlessly in a state of in-betweenness, not belonging to any of these groups. All these different states and spaces of being crystalized in one contained space, the hospital. Although Barghouti's physical condition requires his stay in the hospital, what he discovers there is that he is unwelcomed. Giving birth, being treated for wounds, and dying are realities that perform themselves in action and immediacy on the bodies of people, while Barghouti's illness remains unseen to those around him and leaves him in a state of inertia. The supposedly enclosed space of relief becomes what Augé calls a non-place, which "creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude, and similitude."[399] The hospital has room for those whose bodies are experiencing the two realities of life: birth, death, visible wounds. Illness allows Barghouti in that space to witness the unfolding of the dialectics between life and death, but not to experience any of their realities.

Barghouti contrasts his own inertia as perceived by others and himself with the active movements around him. At the same time, the attacks of cancer and occupation continue to viciously expand, proclaiming a central position in the spaces of the body and the land. The power of the occupation and cancer does not reside in their mere presence, but rather in their ability to spread. Cancer, as Sontag explains, is "a disease or pathology of space [whose] principal metaphors refer to topography (cancer 'spreads' or 'proliferates' or is 'diffused'; tumors are surgically 'excised') and its most dreaded consequence, short of death, is the

[399] Augé, *Non-Places*, 103.

mutilation or amputation of part of the body."[400] These topographical changes that afflict the body are similarly apparent in the land of Palestine, particularly through the fences and walls that amputate pieces of land, as well as settlements that appear as alien bodies that invade the landscape at will.

Following his proposition of the textual reading of space, Barghouti argues that

الاستعمار حضور جغرافي يغيِّر طوبوغرافيا المكان...المستوطنة مسطَّح ممنوع، مبدئياً على السكان الأصليين...سطح حصري...قابع في ذاته ظاهرياً ولكنه في الخطاب المحلِّي يدعى بالزحف الاستيطاني: إنَّه مكان زاحف.[401]

> Colonialism is a geographic presence that changes the topography of space. A settlement is a surface. The indigenous inhabitants are barred from accessing it. It is an exclusive plane, [which] ostensibly resides within itself. However, in the local [Palestinian] discourse, it is called the crawling (sweeping) of settlements. A settlement is a space that sweeps up other spaces.

Barghouti distinguishes between two characteristics of a settlement. From the outside, a settlement appears to be a surface that "resides within itself"[402] and seems to indicate a static (settling) demarcation on the land. In reality, the settlement is an object that exports a movement, by spreading itself forcefully upon the topology of the space. The expanding nature of this "sweeping space" (*al-makān al-zāḥif*) happens through confiscations of land and sieges that endanger the lives of Palestinians. This contrasting reading between the occupation and cancer is foundational in the reading of the body as space. The infliction in both cases comes from an 'other', an outsider. The occupation is a force that comes from the outside to take over both the external (the actual land) and the internal (the social and linguistic relations that stem from this land). Cancer, although coming from the inside, is similarly treated as an 'other' as it constitutes an alien and a foreign element in the body.

Going against the metaphoric framework of the illness, Sontag argues that "illness is

[400] Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor,* 14-15.
[401] Barghouti, "'An al-Makān," 86.
[402] Ibid.

not a metaphor, and that the most truthful way of regarding illness—and the healthiest way of being ill—is one most purified of, most resistant to, metaphoric thinking."[403] While I agree with Sontag's predilection for the need to move beyond the metaphoric aspects surrounding illness, Barghouti's equation between the invasive nature of cancer and occupation, and my subsequent analysis, place both illness and metaphor in the realm of the imagined and literary as well as the lived and experienced. This, thereby, offers a more complex understanding of illness than one limited to its metaphoric meaning. At the same time, it unshackles the understanding of the metaphor as a pre-conceived and repeated image by placing it as an ever-constructed and lived experience.

The metaphor of illness in Barghouti's case is no longer an act of drawing likeness between two objects, and the link between cancer and land is not constructed from a "romantic agony"[404] nor from "punitive notions,"[405] but is rather reinvestigated through the narration as will be seen. The metaphor extends the realm of memory and remembrance (childhood-land), and the political grandiosity (martyr/*fidāʾī* (fighter)-land), into the realm of the intimate, the personal, and the ephemeral. The metaphor is not taken for granted, as Aḥmad Daḥbūr argues in his foreword. Although Barghouti returns to a land that is familiar, to him, his return is that of "an explorer"[406] who intertwines his memories of the space with his observations of its new realities and his imaginations of what could happen in it after his death. Thus, while the binarism of body-land/cancer-occupation has framed the metaphor, Barghouti's delineation of it is marked by discovery, somatic experiences, and visions about the future through spatial descriptions, recollections, and imaginations.

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[403] Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*, 3.
[404] This is in relation to how tuberculosis was often seen in the 19th century. Ibid. 29.
[405] Ibid., 57.
[406] "He returned...it was not the return of a lost and repentant son, but the return of a discoverer."
"عاد...ليس كعودة الابن الضال النادم، بل كعودة المكتشف."
Aḥmad Daḥbūr, "Ḥussayn al-Barghūthī kamā arād: Bayn al-lawz wa al-ruʾyā," in Hussein Barghouti, *Saʾakūn bayn al-lawz* (Ramallah: PING, 2004), 11.

If one were to follow the occupation-cancer analogy, settlements stand as an example of the occupation's "spatial mechanisms"[407] that proclaim domination. Eyal Weizmann's book *Hollow Land* presents an important step towards delineating architecture not as construction but as a constructing process, with layered notions of power, control, and domination at its core. In this vein, "…architecture [can be] employed as a conceptual way of understanding political issues as constructed realities."[408] A passage from *Saʾakūn* that presents a juxtaposition between Barghouti standing alone on the mountain of Kobar and facing the well-secured settlement poses questions regarding the dynamics of power and knowledge and their development through space.

Barghouti encounters an Israeli settlement during his stay in Kobar and narrates the episode in his last autobiography. He dissects the structures that interconnect power, knowledge, and the body in order to unveil the monstrosity of this architectural space. The episode is sensorially charted (particularly through descriptions of light). It shows how Barghouti's personal narration reveals multiple layers of political and legal engagements regarding the illegality of Israeli settlements according to International law,[409] and the issue of naming these settlements. The result is a confrontation between two spaces: the anthropological place and the non-place.

Light is a revealing source since it has both a physical essence that is linked to the body (vision through light) and space (light travels through space). Besides these bodily and physical elements, light and its absence (darkness) have been appropriated as symbols for

[407] Weizmann, *Hollow Land*, 6.
[408] Ibid.
[409] For more on this see the section on the illegality of the Israeli settlements in Pieter H. F. Bekker, "The World Court's Ruling regarding Israel's West Bank Barrier and the Primacy of International Law: An Insider's Perspective," *Cornell International Law Journal* 38, no. 2 (2005): 558- 560.

knowledge, inspiration, and power (or the lack of it).[410] Barghouti remarks in his autobiography that "the connection between power and light is yet to be studied."[411] While standing in the dark on the mountains of his village (Kobar), Barghouti looks towards the west at a settlement. By standing there, Barghouti is creating a literary and physical juxtaposition. He notes that:

في قمة جبل مغطًّى بغابات صنوبر وسرو وبلوط، تشعُّ أضواء النيون من مستعمرة إسرائيلية تدعى "حلميش"، عندهم، و"مستعمرة النبي صالح"، عندنا. أضواء باردة، وكاشفة، ومحاطة بأسلاك شائكة. وبدت المستعمرة معلقة في الفضاء، ربما بسبب الضوء، أيضاً، ولم تلمس الأرض، ولا التاريخ بعد.[412]

> Atop a mountain covered with forests of pines, cypresses, and oaks, neon lights shine from an Israeli settlement, which they call Ḥalmīsh, and we call al-Nabī Ṣāliḥ settlement. The lights are cold and revealing, and are engulfed by barbed wires. The settlement appears to be hanging in space/air [*faḍāʾ*], perhaps because of the light, but also because it is yet to touch the earth or history.

The first juxtaposition in space is physical, guided by striking contradiction between the two sources of light. In this episode, Barghouti stands under the moonlight, while the settlement falls under neon light. Barghouti stands alone, while the settlement is filled with people. He stands outside in nature, while the settlement is enclosed by barbed wire. While Barghouti is standing on the stable immovable mountain, the settlement looks, because of all the light coming out of it, as if it is hanging in the air. This seemingly outer instability in space is translated into a power-knowledge relation. The settlement, whose essence is the finding and settling on a piece of land, cannot attain the self-knowledge that places it in a historical context and thereby gives it a position in the historical narrative of the land of Palestine. Without the connection between the subject(s) (the settlement) and the object (the land), the people there have lost touch with the earth and thus their sense of place. This

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[410] For more on the dynamics of light and darkness, see Gerhard Böwering, "The Light Verse: Qur'ānic Text and Sūfī Interpretation," *Oriens* 36 (2001): 113-144. And Susanne Back, and Folkert Degenring, eds., *Dark Nights, Bright Lights: Night, Darkness, and Illumination in Literature* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

[411] "لم يدرس أحد، بعد، العلاقة بين القوة والضوء."
Barghouti, *Saʾakūn,* 39.

[412] Ibid., 38.

personal reflection and journey into Barghouti's intimate thoughts at a time of high threats to his body mirror the communal understanding of the settlement. Built in 1977 on land that is part of al-Nabī Ṣāliḥ and Deir Niẓām villages, Halamish is one of the illegally built settlements on the 1967-border territories.[413] The settlements, which remain and continue to grow in number, are deemed illegal by local as well as international legal and humanitarian institutions.[414] The illegality of these settlements as bodies that invade and expand upon the Palestinian territories is thus symbolic of Barghouti's own struggle with cancer.

What Barghouti is poetically expressing here resonates with Michel Foucault's 1978 lecture on bio-power. He defines bio-power as "the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power."[415] Foucault's coinage of the term explains how states subjugate the bodies of the individuals to control them and achieve power over them.[416] In other words, the state controls and manipulates the *senses* of individuals, which they use to understand the world. This notion of power of the senses and thus the means of knowledge is explored here through light. The existence of this neon light that is "orderly, dominant, strikingly white, and diffused even beyond the wires"[417] is justified by the illegal settlers as a measure of security and protection of this enclosed space from what surrounds it. However, it is more like an "'armed vision,' a visual occupation."[418] This subjugation is represented in another juxtaposition: Barghouti imagines how a settler, looking out his window, would perceive or

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[413] Natalie Tabar and Lauren Bari, "Repression on Non-violent Protest in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Case Study on the Village of al-Nabi Saleh," *al-Haq* (2011): 9-10. http://www.alhaq.org/publications/publications-index/item/repression-of-non-violent-protest-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-case-study-on-the-village-of-al-nabi-saleh.

[414] For more on the building of settlements see Weizman, *The Hollow Land*, 87-110.

[415] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collége de France,* 1977-78, trans. Graham Burchell, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 16.

[416] Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality* vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1998), 140.

[417] "كان [ضوء النيون في المستعمرة] مرتَّباً، ومهيمناً، حادَّ البياض، منتشراً حتى وراء الأسلاك الشائكة التي تعزل كلَّ مستوطنة عن محيطها." Barghouti, *Saʾakūn*, 39.

[418] "أشبه ما يكون بـ"رؤيا مسلَّحة"، باحتلال بصري."
Ibid.

see the mountains opposite him (where Barghouti is standing).

ماذا يرى...حين يفتح الآن شباكه، ويحدِّق في هذه الجبال التي تسبح في تاريخها وتبزغ منه؟ لن يرى، حتماً، الأفعى الملوَّنة التي تطير وتزغرد فوق الخرائب، ولن يسمع هذا الصوت الذي يبكي، ولا هذا السرَّ الذي يجعل حتى مصاباً بالسرطان يمشي فيها في الواحدة ليلاً! لن يلمس التاريخ، ولو كان عرَّافاً، ليس تاريخي أنا، على الأقل، ولو كان إلهاً.[419]

> What does he see, when he opens his window now and stares at these mountains that wade through their history and emerge from it? He definitely does not *see* the coloured snake that flies and ululates above the ruins. And he will not *hear* neither this crying voice, nor the secret that makes even a cancer patient walk here at one in the morning! He will not *touch* history even if he had been a seer, not my history at least, even if he was a god.

The neon light, which gives the settlement its proposed characteristic of safety and power, prevents, in reality, the residents from forming a knowledge of the surrounding space by utilizing their own senses. While Foucault studies power in relation to the nation state and the individual, Barghouti seems to pin all the focus on the individual (himself and the settler) as sites of the power struggle. Barghouti's example opposes Foucault's interpretation. Foucault writes that "[m]echanisms of power are an intrinsic part of all relations and, in a circular way, are both their effect and cause."[420] However, while the settler occupies a hegamonically higher place of biopolitics and its control on movement,[421] he exists as a body on a piece of land that is highly secured. Ironically, Barghouti, while losing his physical body to cancer, is empowered by bio-experiences (through the senses and memory). He is able to observe his surroundings and understand them better, and thereby occupy a higher position.

In other words, while the settler has "the mechanisms of power," Barghouti owns "the relations."[422] It is precisely because of the light that the settler cannot make use of his senses nor of his perception of history and memory, because of the architectural distance from the

[419] Ibid.
[420] Foucault, *Security,* 17.
[421] For more on Israeli biopolitics, see Nigel Parsons and Mark B. Salter, "Israeli Biopolitics: Closure, Territorialisation and Governmentality in the Occupied Palestinian Territories," *Geopolitics* 13:4 (December 2008): 701-723.
[422] Foucault, *Security,* 17.

actual land. He lives under siege, thinking that he is protected in a well-lit site, but the real knowledge, experience, memory, and bodily feelings lie within Barghouti. The moonlight leads Barghouti to walk alone on the mountain and allows him to see a site of remembrance and a place of new experiences. On the other hand, the artificiality of the neon light creates an artificiality of experience. Because the settler cannot engage in the physical and natural phenomena of this mountain, the mountain's history and the settler's memory of the mountain are absent. Light here is a source of power; the neon provides a fake image of protection while in reality it takes away perception, whereas moonlight illuminates the senses. Despite the frailty of Barghouti's body and the mountain of his village, which can be easily occupied by settlers (see example below), both spaces, as he argues, have a knowledge that makes them the holders of real power.

The metaphor of the hanging object emphasises the unsettled space of the settlement. The inability to connect to the land stems from the illegality of the place (the settlement). The term 'settlement,' consequently, loses its validity. The settler exists as a human but without any of the configurations that give him a validity to be in that space. The uncertainty of space as described at the beginning of Barghouti's autobiography is rediscovered here. The oppositional forces of life and death at the hospital and Barghouti's feeling of not belonging shift into oppositional forces between the settlement and the mountain. This time, however, Barghouti knows his place. It is a spatial description that reflects certainty. From feeling like an intruder who does not belong in the hospital, Barghouti is now secure and confident in his village, knowing for sure that he is in the proper space where he belongs, vis-à-vis the settlers whose position is invalidated.

Following a systematic plan at historic erasure and generating new spaces that comply with the settler-colonial discourse, much attention was paid to the naming (and renaming) of

occupied spaces. For that, committees like the "Israel Place-Name Committee" were established to assure the stamping of ancient names onto the different areas. Proper names of Israelis were similarly changed "to reflect the new relationship to nature, political geography, and tough masculinity."[423] The naming of the space "which they call Ḥalmīsh, and we call al-Nabī Ṣāliḥ settlement,"[424] points towards what Joseph Massad calls "naming as geography." By distinguishing the two names, Barghouti is aware of how naming "functions as locating in history, as temporalizing, and ultimately as asserting power as colonial domination or as anti-colonial resistance."[425] Naming becomes a tool for generating movements in space where "[t]opography [turns] into scenography and [forms] an exegetical landscape…The mountain region of the West Bank therefore [becomes] both a physical entity and an imagined, mythical geography."[426]

The act of naming new spaces after ancient places "present[ed] problems of authenticity and site appropriateness."[427] The name of Halamish, in a Biblical name which means flint in Hebrew, has been a site of dispute between the Israeli settlers in that area and the Israeli place-name committee.[428] The settlers opted to name the settlement Neveh Tzuf (Oasis of Nectar), while the Israeli place-name committee rejected the name on grounds that the name refers to a different historical location. The committee, on its part, preferred the name Halamish. The settlers had a similar argument about the lack of authenticity of the location, since Halamish referred to a Talmudic location near modern-day Syria.[429] Both

[423] Joseph A. Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 38.
[424] Barghouti, *Saʾakūn,* 39.
[425] Massad *The Persistence*, 14. "The very naming of this space is, in fact, a process of historicizing it. To call it Palestine is to refer to it as a colonized space in both the pre-1948 and the post-1948 periods and to signal its continued appellation as such for a postcolonial period still to come. To call it Israel is to refer to it in the post-1948 period after the coming to fruition of the Zionist project forestalling any notion of a post-Israel Palestine."
[426] Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 135.
[427] Ibid.
[428] Saul B. Cohen, Nurit Kliot, "Place-Names in Israel's Ideological Struggle over the Administered Territories," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 82, No. 4 (December 1992): 666.
[429] Michael Feige, Settling in the Hearts: Jewish Fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2009), 78.

names are, thus, argued to be geographically inaccurate. This discrepancy in naming[430] is an example of the sense of conflict in the name choice and of the lack of authentic connection to the land, which Barghouti is pointing out in his example. The name al-Nabī Ṣaliḥ similarly has its roots in the religious realm and refers to a place where a *maqām* (a monument) for the prophet Ṣāliḥ[431] was erected. Pilgrims from all walks of life used to come to the village to visit it.[432] The first name (Halamish) is situated in the realm of the historic, religious, and symbolic. The second is a name of a space that has its roots within the historic and the religious but extends to the lived and the social. While in the first case the name is stamped onto the space to create a certain political narrative, in the second, it is the space and the social, religious, and historic movements in it that give rise to the name.

What we have in this episode is a confrontation between two spaces: an anthropological place (according to Augé), the other a non-place.[433] Despite its apparent existence and its powerful location, in reality it is the settlement that occupies the position of a non-place. Augé distinguishes between the two places by saying that "place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten."[434] Similarly, in Barghouti's conception, the mountain as a place will not be erased from history while the non-place of the settlement cannot achieve a settling that makes its existence complete. Barghouti arrives at this realization by integrating historical and political relations and stressing the physiological inabilities of the settler to see because of the physical distinction between light and darkness. The dynamics between the

[430] For more on the disputes and agreements on names between the settlers and the place-name committee, see Cohen, "Place-Names," 662.
[431] A pre-Islamic prophet who is mentioned in the Quran.
[432] For more on the history and social importance of the place, see Johann Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem 1872-1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 124-125.
[433] Anthropological place: "these places have at least three characteristics in common. They want to be – people want them to be – places of identity, of relations and of history." Augé, *Non-Places,* 52.
[434] Ibid., 79.

two places are unpacked through the experiences of the body, triggered by cancer and portrayed through the ability/inability of a person to experience surroundings thanks to his/her spatial demarcations.

3.7 Literary movements

Besides the notions of bodily (dis)empowerment and knowledge, this chapter also investigates the interaction between spatial movements and literary shifts in Barghouti's texts. The following section takes Barghouti's novel *al-Ḍiffa* as a case for studying two crossings: one spatial, other literary. By analysing moments of crossing in the novel, I will show how Barghouti crosses into unknown literary genres, by contesting what it means to write a novel, and goes beyond political realities, by creating a third imagined bank to the well-known banks of the river Jordan. The aim is to highlight that Barghouti's utilization of space and its relation to the body precede his diagnosis and illness.

The Palestinian poet al-Mutawakkil Ṭāha notes that Barghouti

> كان من اوائل الروائيين الفلسطينيين الذين كتبوا باسلوب سردي حداثي، تداخلت فيه الاصوات والازمنة والامكنة، وغامر بتقديم شخصية لا تدعي البطولة ولا الاخلاق، وانما شخصا عاديا يواجه الكون منفردا...كان ذلك امرا غير معهود في الثمانينيات.[435]

> was one of the first Palestinian novelists to write in a modernist narrative style where voices, times, and spaces are intertwined. He ventured to present a character that does not make pretentious claims to heroism or ethics. The character is an average person who faces the world alone. This was uncommon in the eighties.

Looking at the Palestinian case, one can find two battling forces. On the one hand, the Palestinian literary scene has been dominated by a set of themes that were dictated by external and internal circumstances and historical decrees. On the other, it has offered some examples of literary experimentation that have carved the path for new forms and ways of writing and actively challenged long-rooted generic and stylistic formations in Arabic

[435] Al-Mutawakkil Ṭāha, *Wahm al-wuṣūl: Maqālāt fī al-adab wa al-fann wa al-thaqāfa,* (Ramallah: al-Markaz al-Filasṭīnī li al-Dirāsāt wa al-Mashr wa al-Iʿlām, 2007), 33.

writing. In short, Palestinian literature oscillates between clearly defined borders and transgressions thereof. One of the main problems of studying Palestinian novels is the "confusion between the popular resistance movement on the one hand and the novel as a literary form on the other. The latter reshapes and remodels reality within the contour of novelistic form itself."[436] One can understand this mix up in light of what Wen-chin Ouyang calls "genre ideology." Ouyang defines the term as "the paradigm of knowledge implicit in a genre of storytelling which often manifests itself in the text as generic expectations."[437] The mix up in the case of Palestinian novelistic writing has happened between two ideologies; on the one hand, external political ideologies and on the other internal artistic ideologies regarding novelistic characteristics. Barghouti's novel (and other writings, such as his poetry collection *Marāyā sāʾila*) aims at challenging these ideologies by contesting "the generic expectations" of political reality and narrative elements such as characterizations and time and space.[438]

Barghouti's novel does not belong to the body of novelistic works that grew from "the womb of resistance" (*raḥm al-muqāwama*),[439] which many contemporary authors took as their guiding torch. Yet, the text is exemplary for experimental writing and innovation and deserves more attention and study.[440] In writing the novel, Barghouti was influenced by the

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[436] "هذا الواقع "واقع الرواية تحت الاحتلال" يوقع الدارس في إشكالية الخلط بين حركة المقاومة الشعبية، والرواية كجنس أدبي يعيد تشكيل هذا الواقع وتركيبه ضمن اطار الجنس الروائي."
Fakhrī Ṣālih, "Ishkāliyyat al-riwāya al-Filasṭīniyya taḥt al-iḥtilāl," *al-Aqlām*, no. 7 (1 July 1981): 56.

[437] Wen-Chin Ouyang, "Genres, ideologies, genre ideologies and narrative transformation", *Middle Eastern Literatures*, 7:2 (2004): 128.

[438] Ouyang introduces the term of "genre ideology" as part of a project (Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) (2001–2004)) on Genre Ideology and Narrative Transformation. The project mainly identifies four moments of transformations that happen when stories are transformed into different genres during the same time period and culture, when stories are transformed across cultures, when stories are transformed across time periods, and when stories are transformed across mediums (see Ibid., 129).

[439] Taysīr Mashāriqa, "Tajrīb Filasṭīnī mubakkir fī riwāyat *al-Ḍiffa al-thālitha li nahr al-Urdunn*," *Dunia al-Waṭan* (3 May 2005).

[440] Ibid. Mashāriqa gives the examples of Saḥar Khalīfa, Yaḥya Yakhlif, ʿIzzat al-Ghazzāwī, and Aḥmad Ḥarb. https://pulpit.alwatanvoice.com/articles/2005/05/03/21060.html
" فالخطاب الروائي عند يحيى يخلف أو عزت الغزاوي أو أحمد حرب أو سحر خليفة كان مُتجهاً أو صاعداً بالنفْس (أو الهوية) الفلسطينية إلى رائحة البارود وسياج الوطن أو عتمة السجن. بينما الخطاب الروائي عند البرغوثي كان مُختلفاً ومُختصراً المراحل، مُتجها نحو رائحة الجنس والحب والخمْرة والجمال. وكانت بذلك رواية خارج السياق."

sense of estrangement that he faced when leaving the countryside of Palestine to go to the city (Budapest) in Hungary, as well as João Guimarães Rosa's short story "The Third Bank of the River" (1962)- hence the title.[441] Thus, Barghouti's aim was to highlight the theme of estrangement while giving more attention to the "colouring," and the movement of the text from one image to the other.[442] Similar to the people who appear in his *al-Ḍaw'*, Barghouti's characters in the novel belong to the realm of marginality; ex-lovers, young revolutionaries[443] (like Bilāl), and dead people, including references to Ghassan Kanafani (d. 1972) and Attila József (d. 1937).[444] Rather than depicting a confrontation with those in the centre of society and those who are in power (border control officers, for example), the novel moves beyond them and is created out of the stories and experiences of these marginal people. Even in the second part where the protagonist is tortured by the Israeli soldiers and imprisoned, the light is put on the protagonist's intimate experience and that of the other prisoners.

In the acknowledgements as well as on the cover of the book, Barghouti calls his text a 'novel.' By doing so, Barghouti is striking two chords at the same time. He presents his knowledge and his acceptance of the genre of the novel as representative of his text.

"The novelistic discourse of authors such as Yaḥya Yakhlif, Izzat al-Ghazzawi, Ahmad Harb, or Saḥar Khalīfa was equating Palestinian identity to the [representation] of gunpowder, the borders of the homeland, or the darkness of the prison cell. Barghouti's novelistic discourse, on the other hand, was different and it moved beyond the different Palestinian historical phases. It moved towards depicting sex, love, wine, and beauty. His novel was thus, an out-of-context novel."

[441] As al-Shaikh notes, Rosa's work provided Barghouti with an insight on how to approach alienation and how to "manage the crisis between his 'pastoral, countryside memory' and 'modern, liberal intellect'." ("Beyond the Last Twilight," 41-42).

[442] Barghouti, "Min usus," 119.
"...إعطاء أولوية في دلالات اللغة ليس "للفكرة"، بل "للتلوين"، بحيث ينتقل النصُّ من لوحة إلى لوحةٍ أُخرى، ومن جهة، على هذه اللغة أن تكون "موسيقى"...وأن ندمج مع ذلك الحوار المسرحي والقصَّة القصيرة و "السيرة الذاتية"."

[443] See, for example, his conversations with one of the young revolutionaries who left the fighting, Bilāl (*al-Ḍiffa,* 23-31 and 48-49). Other marginal characters include a Yemeni student whose name the protagonist cannot clearly remember but thinks is Muhammad (ibid., 51). Another is a Kurdish gambler (ibid., 60-61), and a Palestinian who is originally from Haifa but lived in Damascus (Abdullah al-Nājī) (ibid., 61).

[444] Ibid., 81-82. See Anna Zambelli-Sessona's book chapter for examples of the representation of marginalized characters in Palestinian literature. analyses works by the Palestinian authors Imil Habibi and Tawfiq Fayyad which depict marginalized characters, which hold a "symbolic value" in representing the Palestinian experience after the *Nakba* and the *Naksa* (255). Explains a journey from non-marginalization, to marginalization, and an escape from marginalization in two of the authors' texts (236). On the contrary, Barghouti's novel flourishes through rather than beyond the position of marginalization. Anna Zambelli-Sessona, "Marginalities in Palestinian Literature Two Case Studies: Imil Habibi and Tawfiq Fayyad", in *Sensibilities of the Islamic Mediterranean: Self Expression in a Muslim Culture from Post-Classical Times to the Present Day,* ed. Robin Ostle (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 211- 244.

However, the reader soon realizes that it does not adhere to what the novel (as a genre) claims to be. By writing an experimental piece yet placing it in the novelistic form, Barghouti is contesting the frames of what constitutes a genre (the container). The text, thus, becomes more determinant of the container (the genre) than the other way around. This is another example of the engagement of the reader in the conceptualization of the text, as was discussed in the previous chapter. The reader is invited to experience the novel, not solely its plotline, but also the questioning of its genre. As Sabry Hafez comments on the novels of the 1990s, "the inter-connection" (*al-tarābuṭ*) of the novelistic tropes, which was essential for narrative build-up, was replaced with "the adjacency of unconnected things" (*al-tajāwur bayn ashyāʾ ghayr mutarābiṭa*).[445] Barghouti's text, and those of the emerging writers of the 1990s, take disjointed surroundings as an inspiration for the seemingly unstructured narrative line.[446]

Barghouti's novel can be divided into two parts (the pre-return and the post-return through the river Jordan). The first part is more surrealist, the second more rooted in the actuality of living. The surrealist first part is characterised by geographical travels from one place to another (from sitting by the Danube, to suddenly walking in Beirut). I use the word 'surrealist' according to Barghouti's definition of the term. In the introduction to his PhD

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[445] Sabry Hafez, "Jamāliyyāt al-riwāya al-jadīda: al-Qaṭīʿa al-maʿrifiyya wa al-nazʿa al-muḍādda li al-ghināʿiyya," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 21(2001): 197.
This same idea of adjacency rather than succession was discussed in chapter 1 as part of Barghouti's conception of the embroidered space.

[446] The example of *al-Ḍiffa* and that of the two autobiographies *al-Ḍawʾ* and *Saʾakūn,* pose another important question that deserves more attention, namely the link between autobiographical writing and novelistic writing. Richard van Leeuwen discusses this issue by analyzing the representation of space in the 1986 novel, *Ḥabbat al-Naftalīn*, by the Iraqi writer ʿĀliya Mamdūḥ. One of the arguments that van Leeuwen gives is that an author's choice of genre is influenced by his/her outlook of the external surroundings He argues that "if this attitude is marked by conflict and animosity, this will possibly increase the tendency towards subjective descriptions and distortions" (67) as has been the case in Barghouti's autobiographies and novel. This issue is pointed out in the previous chapter (see section 2.3). It stresses the role that memory plays in (re)creating moments in life. Furthermore, the generic hybridity of an 'autobiographical novel' gives the author the freedom to mix aspects of historicity with fictionality (66). This line of thought can also be applied to Barghouti's three texts, where the distinction between the two genres is not clear-cut. For more on the topic see: Richard van Leeuwen, "Representations of space and the autobiographical novel: the case of Alia Mamduh's *Habbat al-naftalin*," in Autobiografía y literatura árabe, ed. Miguel Hernando de Larrimendi, Gonzalo Fernández Parrilla and Bárbara Azoala Piazza (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2002), 57-69. See particularly pages 65-68.

dissertation, he writes that he has used a surrealist technique in writing where he "[relies] on rapid thought transitions with a dazzling speed. It is a subterranean logic, that is, a logic in which the most crucial lines of arguments and categorical consequences are pushed to the margins, and a thin thread of quasi-logical argument is tossed to the foreground."[447] The second part starts after an 'impossible' crossing through the Danube and the Mediterranean in the novel, and can be termed the 'Haifa-based' narrative in Palestinian writing, such as that of Kanafani and Habiby (as will be shown below). This section describes the protagonist's visit to the city of Haifa, his capture by Israeli police, and his experience with torture and hallucinations in prison. The experienced, physical torture and humiliation by Israeli soldiers, which the protagonist undergoes in a prison cell brings him from dreams and desires into the here and now. It is all these discrepancies between the desired space and the actual space (prison cell), and between the inside (prison cell) and the outside (the road) that highlight the heightened sense of alienation.

The third bank that Barghouti creates in his move through this impossible crossing of waters is often read as representative of this sense of alienation and loss (similar to how the third bank in Rosa's book has been interpreted). However, beyond the portrayal of alienation, it is possible to add a reading of this third space as the space through which the impossible is *enabled* (*mumakkan*, again, sharing the root with *makān*). In other words, the third bank operates as a space that represents the link between the surrealist and the realist. While the spaces are real, the movement between them is not and is as such 'impossible.' Barghouti experiments with the melange of genres and the entanglement of the real and the imagined.

It is thus the crossing section that ties these two parts that will be discussed. The argument is that, by imagining a third bank, the text functions within what can be called 'the impossible space.' Each word in the title is spatially constructed. The first *Ḍiffa* has become

[447] Barghouti, "The Other Voice," 24.

the demarcation of political identification of the Palestinians (the West Bank). The *Ḍiffa* is situated in the West in relation to Jordan, which controlled that area from 1948-1967. To be more specific, the main separating mark or location between the West bank and Jordan is the river Jordan. After crossing the river to Jordan, the rest of the world can be accessed. This spatial movement through the river Jordan has been the Palestinians' sole way of leaving Palestine to travel to other countries. This is what Barghouti must have done many times. It is thus a movement from the constrained into the open and free space.

The return to Palestine is introduced abruptly and in the last twenty pages of the novel. The abruptness takes place in light of an unfinished experience. This literary return in the novel is mirrored in Barghouti's actual return to Palestine from Budapest before finishing his studies. Barghouti's return "to his homeland became comprable to the forced return of a warrior. It was a sudden return, before his scene of estrangement could be concluded, and prior to the end of his days of anarchy"[448] While saying the final goodbyes to his lover Dana in the novel, the protagonist is still not over the relationship. Thus, his move back to Palestine happens before the relationship ends and before his state of emotional alienation is over. This incomplete state of being sparks an unusual return that does not follow the usual crossing of the banks from Jordan to Palestine.

At the end of the first section, the protagonist tells his lover:

...فلنتودع الان![449]

Let us say our goodbyes now!

وغطاء من الدمع الشفاف نزل فوق عيني مثل الستارة بعد نهاية المسرحية.. لم اردها ان تلاحظ ذلك..منحتها قبلتين على الجبين واستدرت ذاهبا. وصلت الى غابة تقف غامضة والافق يشتعل مثل غبار الذهب المصحون، والضباب اخضر في جوانبه. اسراب طيور مهاجرة تتماوج فوق مسافات لا يعرفها الا المجانين والانبياء. ودخلت في الغابة الزرقاء والاقدار مظلمة خلفي. ووصلت الى نهر الدانوب وحدقت في نقطة واحدة لا قرار لها...نزلت للماء ومشيت فيه ببطء حتى لم اعد ابصر الا المياه تمتد حتى اللانهاية...[الماء] يبتعد ويتسع ولكنه

[448] "أصبح رجوع حسين إلى وطنه شبيهاً بالعودة القسرية للمحارب، عودة مفاجئة، قبل أن يكتمل مشهد الاغتراب لديه، قبل أن تنتهي الصعلكة." Mashāriqa, "Tajrīb."
[449] Barghouti, *al-Ḍiffa*, 85.

الطريق الوحيدة. عبرت الدانوب لم يصل الماء الا لركبتي، وعبرت غابات لا اعرفها بخطى واسعة حتى وصلت البحر الأبيض المتوسط ودخلت فيه. الماء يبتعد ويتسع ولكنه الطريق الوحيدة..يد في جيب معطفي ويد تدخن السيجار. ومشيت.. اسماك القرش تبتعد رفوفا خائفة مني، وضعت يدي على رأس قرش عجوز فابتعد وهو ينظر نحوي بقلق مثل طفل البحر.[450]

> and a veil of transparent tears came over my eyes like a curtain at the end of a play. I didn't want her to notice that. I gave her two kisses on the forehead and turned away. I reached a forest that stood there covered in mystery while the horizon was ablaze like dust from grounded gold, with green fog on its sides. Flocks of migrating birds undulating at distances that only the mad and the prophets understand. I entered the blue forest, and the fates behind me were dark. I reached the Danube River and I stared at one bottom-less point. I descended into the water and I walked slowly until I could only see the water extending infinitely from everyside… The water was receding and widening but it was the only path. I crossed the Danube, and the water did not reach beyond my knees. I crossed forests that I do not know, with long strides until I reached the Mediterranean Sea, and I entered it. The water was receding and widening but it was the only path… I had a hand in the pocket of my coat while the other was smoking a cigar. And I walked. The sharks were escaping me in fear. I put my hand on the head of an old shark, and it pulled away, looking at me worriedly like a child of the sea.

The excerpt above presents spatial descriptions of an impossible space. They are creating through actual spaces: the forest, the Danube River, and the Mediterranean Sea. The movements within these spaces are, however, surrealist. This happens first through a manipulation of colour, where the forest is blue, and the horizon is green and gold. Secondly, the physical typologies and proportions are changed with the water of the Danube River not reaching beyond the knee. Finally, the impossible space is also portrayed through the ability to move within the forest without any knowledge of it, by echoing the religious in the image of the opening sea, and by overcoming the threatening power of the sharks because of their movement away from the protagonist in fear.

It is, thus, not only that the space is impossible; the movements that are performed in these spaces are equally impossible. Barghouti sculpts distances that, as he mentions, only mad people and prophets can perceive, thus raising these created spaces into the realm of the

[450] Ibid.

unattainable. The crossing of the waters of the Danube and the Mediterranean are described as "the only way" to return home, from Budapest to Palestine. And yet, Barghouti manages to complete the crossing and finds himself at the edge of his lost homeland.[451] While borders, checkpoints, and other marks of restrictions are at the core of many Palestinian texts, Barghouti's imaginary, impossible space allows him to move beyond these realities. But is this impossible space and its crossing to be understood as Barghouti's escape from "the womb of resistance"[452]? The crossing is metaphorical for the literary experimentation that Barghouti had intended for his text. Stylistically, he achieves that through the defamiliarizing rupture between space and colour (the forest is blue, the fog is green, for example). The painted literary image, in other words, becomes distorted, and invites the reader to become part of the new process of familiarization; i.e. part of this unfamiliar and impossible crossing. Barghouti admits that he is treading into unknown spaces "…I crossed forests that I do not know." The manner in which he approaches these unknown spaces, however, is "with long strides."

While the image of the crossing is created with a mix of the imaginary and actual geographic spaces, the practices in these spaces are performed through the body. The entrance into the dark forest, the descent into the water, the nonchalant hand in the pocket and one hand holding a cigar, and finally the petting of the old shark, are all spatial operations in which the body acts and which exuberate a sense of knowledge, confidence, and strength. The novel in general can be seen as an exercise in the unattainable and the incomplete, and as a reflection of the sense of personal loss. However, the example of the impossible space, as portrayed in this crossing scene of the Danube and Mediterranean, asserts that it is not a space where alienation is heightened, or estrangement is widened.

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[451] The return section (or what has been referred to here as the Haifa section) starts with:
"And finally, the lost borders of the homeland appeared."
"وأخيرا لاحت حدود الوطن الضائعة"
Ibid., 87.

[452] Mashāriqa, "Tajrīb Filasṭīnī."

Rather, it represents the ability of the imaginary and the bodily to go through an active crossing that finds new paths in political life and literary writing.

The crossing section is at the same time the bridge that allows for the exploration of multiple emotions: from the movement from one city to the other in the first part coupled with a feeling of estrangement, to that of the confined space of the prison cell in the second part of the novel and the process of losing the ability to recognize oneself. The prison portion highlights Barghouti's usage of the corporeal and the sensory in order to deliver the emotional pain of being horrified. He draws a painting of what he calls "the yellow terror" (*al-ruʿb al-aṣfar*) in which the physical space (the walls of the prison) and time (the nights and minutes) are coloured in yellow. Somatic reactions like feeling sick and vomiting are also conveyed in yellow.[453] The different experienced scenes are painted in 'impossible' colours: from the unmatched multi-coloured painting of the crossing scene to the sonorous single-coloured scene in the prison.

In answer to the previously posed question regarding the place of this text in relation to Palestinian novelistic writing, *al-Ḍiffa* does not operate outside of the Palestinian context, but rather through a different form of expression. Palestinian prose is heavily concerned with documenting the historical and referencing the political, to the point where such representation became to be understood as realist, contextual, and true to the Palestinian struggle.[454] Such historical and political references can be traced in Barghouti's texts, for

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[453] "في سقف الزنزانة الجديدة ضوء صامت يغمر الوجه واليدين والشعر بلون شبحي كالح الاصفرار تمتصه جدران عارية مطلية بالكلس الأصفر. إحساس بالغثيان والقرف والمرض. ليل اصفر ودقائق صفراء وجدار اصفر وحتى تنكة البول بقربي صفراء. عالم اصفر ومغلق. زمن ثقيل سرعان ما فقدت الإحساس به وأنا أجلس محدقا في السقف أو بقع الدم فوق الاوڤرهول... وتمنيت الموت أو بداية التحقيق لكي يتغير شيء ما في هذا الرعب الأصفر ولكن عبثا."

"On the ceiling of the new cell rests a silent light that submerges the face, the hands, and hair with a ghostly, worn-out yellowish colour. The light is absorbed by high walls plated with yellow lime. A feeling of nausea, disgust, and illness permeates. A yellow night, yellow minutes, and a yellow wall, and even the urine tank near me is yellow. It is a yellow closed world. The time is heavy. I soon became desentisized to it as I sit staring at the ceiling or at drops of blood on the overall. I wanted either to die or for the interrogations to start so that something may change about this yellow terror. But alas!"

Barghouti, *al-Ḍiffa*, 97-98.

[454] Two of the most seminal Palestinian novels of that time are Saḥar Khalīfa's *al-Ṣabbār* (1976) and *ʿAbbād al-Shams* (1980). As Abu-Manneh argues, Khalifeh presents an image of "a realism from below," and provides a

example the reference to the civil war in Beirut. However, the historical and the political do not occupy the crux of the text and are rather explored as complementary tropes (i.e. part of the reading and writing assumptions upon which other *essences* are built, see section 1.3). Barghouti's impossible space should not be read as a move away from political reality.

Barghouti presents the relation between the reality of living and imagination through the medium of the intimate, the worldly, the emotional, and the bodily. In his interview with Abū-Sayf, Barghouti explains that a*l-Ḍiffa*'s different and co-existing times, characters, colours, and memories make the novel "a gallery of novels." In other words, the literary form itself complements the incompletion of the content and the formation of the characters in it. This should not be seen as a point of failure, but rather as an amalgam and a charting of unexplored territories. According to Barghouti, this is representative of life, where "the novel is a gallery withholding numerous novels…the reality that we inhabit is a text composed of many texts. The novel is one of them."[455]

The final point that I would like to discuss concerns the entanglement of novelistic writing and genre, the representation of political reality in Palestinian life and literature, and space. The last twenty pages of Barghouti's novel describe the narrator's harsh experience in Israeli prisons and the effects of that time on his mind, body, and psyche. Before being taken to prison the narrator explains that he reached Haifa, a city that he remembers although he has not visited it before. This confusion between memory and actually being in the space is explained by the narrator: "In my memory, things pass...images, which are not inter-connected by anything."[456] This remembered image of Haifa can be read in relation to other

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critique of the political situation in Palestine and the resistance "from the vantage point of a rooted, everyday, feminsit-workerist perspective." Abu-Manneh, *The Palestinian Novel*, 124. While both Khalifeh and Barghouti take the 'marginal' as their primary character in order to question notions of resistance in Palestine, Khalifeh's are based in the 'real' and everyday life and represent a recognizable section in Palestinian society - the Palestinian workers in the occupied territories, or women for example. Barghouti's characters are positioned in the 'real' (in actual places like Beirut, Haifa, Poland) but move and explore these places in a surrealist manner.

[455] "الرواية جاليري من الروايات...الواقع الذي نعيشه هو نص من عدة نصوص، تكون الرواية أحدها." Barghouti, "Ḥussayn al-Barghūthī", 208.

[456] "في ذاكرتي تعبر أشياء..صور..لا يربطها شيء."

literary works that similarly take Haifa, as a space, as their focal point. The two works that I refer to are Ghassan Kanafani's *ʿĀʾid ilā Ḥaifā*[457] (*Returning to Haifa*) and Emile Habiby's *al-Waqāʾiʿ* (*The Secret Life of Saeed: the Pessoptimist*).[458]

The first similarity between the books is an interrogation of the actual and the remembered. The two protagonists in Barghouti's and Kanafani's[459] texts share the same kind of overwhelming memories of the city. While the memories that attack Saeed S. in *ʿĀʾid* are based on his actual existence in the space before 1948,[460] the narrator of *al-Ḍiffa*'s knowledge of the space is not based on actuality but rather on a memory that has been created through other mediums, such as literature. Secondly, the prison scenes bring to mind the famous (or infamous) Saeed the pessoptimist. The two protagonists (Saeed from *al-Waqāʾiʿ* and the narrator in *al-Ḍiffa*) can be characterized as anti-heroes.[461] However, while Saeed's life starts in fantasy and ends with it, the protagonist in *al-Ḍiffa* has the philosophical apparatus to analyse his imprisonment, its physical and personal effects, and its social implications. Even while personally experiencing imprisonment, he can look at it as an outsider.[462] What is most notable about the three authors is that they have rendered their innovative experiments in a novel. Kanafani's approach to realism elevated the role of literature from the representative

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Barghouti, *al-Ḍiffa,* 100.

[457] First published in 1969. Ghassan Kanafani, *ʿĀʾid ilā Ḥaifā*, (Cyprus: Dār al-Rimāl, 2015).

[458] First published in 1974. Emile Habiby, *al-Waqāʾiʿ al-gharība fī ikhtifāʾ Saʿīd abī al-naḥs al-mutashāʾil* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Khaldūn, 1989).

[459] Barghouti makes a direct reference to Kanafani in his novel (*al-Ḍiffa*, 17).

[460] "حين وصل "سعيد س." الى مشارف حيفا، قادماً اليها بسيارته عن طريق القدس، أحس ان شيئاً ما ربط لسانه، فالتزم الصمت، وشعر بالأسى وفجأة جاء صوت البحر، تماماً كما كان. كلا، لم تعد اليه الذاكرة شيئاً فشيئاً. بل انهالت في داخل رأسه، كما يتساقط جدار من الحجارة ويتراكم بعضه فوق بعض. لقد جادت الأمور والأحداث فجأة، واخذت تتساقط فوق بعضها وتملأ جسده." يتسلقه من الداخل...

Kanafani, *ʿĀʾid,* 5.

[461] As compared to the figure of Bilal in Barghouti's text, and Saeed's son in *al-Waqāʾiʿ*.

[462] Prison is one of the most explored spaces in Arabic literature. See for example Medhat al-Jayyar, "Jamāliyyāt al-makān fī masraḥ Ṣalāḥ Abdul-Ṣabūr," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics,* no. 6, Poetics of Place (Spring, 1986), 26-44. The article explores the Egyptian playwright's utilization of prison as a theme. For Abdel-Sabur, enclosed spaces like "the train compartment" (35) and "the cave" (36) are equivalent to imprisonment. The binarism between prison and home is utilized as a tool for dramatization, where the first place "يحتضن ويؤمن، في حين أن الثاني يبتلع و يخيف"(36).

Stylistically, both Habiby's and Barghouti's novels use epistolary writing as their frame narrative. Habibi writes that he is narrating what Saeed (the protagonist) has told him in a letter that he sent from outer space. Barghouti's texts starts with the usual letter greeting "Dana, my love" ("*ḥabībatī Dana*"), and follows Barghouti's narration of moments from his life in Europe and in Palestine. (Barghouti, *al-Ḍiffa*, 5).

to the activist.[463] Habiby's magical realism[464] combines the satirical with the epic. Barghouti's novel teases out the different dynamics of space, where the impossible and the actual spaces are equally present.

The crossing section functions beyond a representation of estrangement and loss. It is, in fact, a space that provides a possibility *(yumakkin*) for the melange of geographic spaces (Europe/Palestine - the Danube/the Mediterranean), and attests to the abilities of literary images to caper between the different artistic registers of sounds and colours. The section bridges the different moods of surrealist and realist depictions. This multi-dimensionality of personal, political, historical, and emotional layers forecasts Barghouti's search for new techniques to depict individual as well as collective concerns. The ways in which Barghouti experiences these spaces and expreses them in narration is through the utilization of corporeal devices.

As has been mentioned above, space, for Barghouti, is not solely its geographical positioning, but rather the acts and movements that are preformed within it. This section takes the dialectics of inside-outside to read two depictions of an enclosed space. The first is Barghouti's portrayal of *al-dayr al-juwwānī* (the inner convent)[465] in his final autobiography as a place where many narrated anecdotes take place, and where he chooses to be buried. The second is his deployment of the enclosed space of the cave in a poem from his first published poetry collection *al-Ruʾyā*. The examples of the *dayr* and the cave link the personal and the collective, the meaning of knowledge, the relation between the physicality of the space, and its generative metaphoric nature.

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[463] See Abu Manneh's chapter on Kanafani in The Palestinian Novel: From 1948 to the Present.

[464] See Maher Jarrar, "The Arabian Nights and Contemporary Arabic Novel," in The Arabian Nights in Historical Context: Between East and West, ed. Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 297-315.

[465] The dayr refers to the area where the remains of an old convent stood. It is where his mother lived with the family of the uncle that adopted her (see Barghouti, Saʾakūn, 36-38).

Figure 2: The area of *al-dayr al-juwwānī* (Source: by author, Palestine, March 2019)

Barghouti's return to his childhood village was in particular a return to a specific place in the mountains called *al-dayr al-juwwānī.* Barghouti's return functions as an actual entrance into the place and literal and figurative exits from the shackles of the occupation's settling powers over the land and the demise of his body and upcoming death. For one, his return to the physical space resurrects stories that took place there. In addition, returning with his wife and son entails the creation of new memories and stories.[466] By positioning the physical existence and entrance into the *dayr* within a literary existence in the narration, Barghouti asserts that his return and death do not represent an end to his life, but rather a continuation.[467] The *dayr* is, thus, transformed, in Augé's understanding, into a monument which "is an attempt at the tangible expression of permanence or, at the very least, duration…[and it enables] people to think in terms of continuity through the generations."[468] Besides this personal-collective continuity that Barghouti's evocation of *al-dayr* brings, the

[466] For example, Barghouti and his wife tell their son that this was Aladin's cave.
[467] "وكان من المؤكَّد أننَّا جميعاً، أنا وآثر وبترا، سنرجع إلى "الدير الجوَّاني"، يوماً ما، لا لكي "تكتمل"، بل لكي "تستمر"، "خريفية" الجبل هذه."
Barghouti, *Saʾakūn*, 67.
[468] Augé, *Non-Places*, 60.

space is constructed and thought of through imagination. His narration, thus, becomes an intersection of past stories and present constructions. He writes:

حينما أمشي، ليلاً، ويكون القمر كاملاً، في خرائب "الدير الجوَّاني"، أشعر إلى أيِّ مدى كان الدير مكاناً قصياً، في البراري...وله جلالة الخراب والقدم. وأراه في خيالي ينهض من خرائبه ويعود مضاء بسراج من الفخَّار فيه فتيل مبتلٌ بزيت الزيتون، وحوله ساحة مرصوفة بحجارة ملساء، مكعبة، وصغيرة، تفيض بخطى رهبان وتراتيل، وضوء نجوم خافت... وحوله، خارج السور، ثعالب، وضباع، وجنٌّ، وكثرة من كائنات لا ترى. مكان "برَّاني" تماماً، ومع ذلك سمَّاه أهلي القدماء: "الجوَّاني"، وكأنَّه كان أقرب إليهم من "حبل الوريد". فاسمه نفسه ساحر، لمن يتأمَّله، ويشبه معبداً يضيء على رأس جبل في أغوار روحهم هم. برَّانية الموقع، وجوَّانية الدير، في اسم واحد. سحر![469]

> When I walk at night among the ruins *al-dayr al-juwwānī,* and the moon happens to be full, I can sense how far off in the wilderness *al-dayr* was. It possesses the solemness of ruins and antiquity. I see it, in my imagination, rising from its ruinous state—restored. It is lit again with an oil lamp made of clay with a wick wet with olive oil. Around it, there is a patio paved with small and smooth cubic rocks that overflow with the steps of priests, chants, and the soft light of stars. Around it - outside the wall - there are foxes, hyenas, jinns, and many creatures that cannot be seen. A completely 'outside' space, and still, my ancestors called it *al-juwwānī* [the inside]. It is as if it was closer to them than the jugular vein. Its name itself is magical, if one observes it, and it resembles a lit temple on the top of a mountain in the valleys of their souls. The 'outerness' of the location, and the 'innerness' of *al-dayr*, in one name. Magic!

Barghouti walks towards the ruins of *al-dayr*, his imagination bringing the space back from the past. The space of *al-dayr* exists on two levels: an inner space that retains the enclosed characteristics of a convent, and an outer space that places it in an open-ended and exterior surrounding (nature). The calm and the wilderness are portrayed through lights, sounds, and movements within the space. The stars and the oil lamps, the imagined movements of the priests, and the sound of recitations paint the sense of calmness of the inner space. The existence of the foxes, hyenas and jinns plot the intimate space within a far-away and wild location. The name of the space thus holds within itself a spatial contradiction: despite its outer location, the people view it, as Barghouti notes, as an "inner" space. The location and its description are thus not necessarily mirroring. The contrast between the *dayr*

[469] Barghouti, *Saʾakūn*, 79-80.

and its surroundings makes it into a space that is turned onto itself, i.e. inner space. This feeling of the innerness of the space is similar to the jugular vein inside the body.[470] It is thus the experience of the location that gives the place its name.

Inside-outside dialectics is poetically utilized in Barghouti's poem "Tawahhujāt" ("Illuminations") from his first poetry collection, *al-Ruʾyā*. The poem revolves around a speaker who is leading people into a cave. The different allusions and imageries echo Plato's famous analogy of the cave narrated by Socrates in *The Republic*.[471] The cave is an analogy for the ignorance of humans who refuse to see the light and decide, instead, to remain inside the cave, believing that the shadows they see are the reality of the world. The analogy, thus, plays on the juxtaposition of light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, and outside and inside. In his poem, Barghouti employs the same components of this cave analogy, but rearranges them in a way that reverses the spatial significance of inside-outside, and thus of the expected opposition of light and darkness and knowledge and ignorance (similar to the example of the settlement above). Knowledge, according to Barghouti's example, is found inside rather than outside the cave. Delving into deeper layers of the earth such as a cave echoes Barghouti attempts to find new depths in life, knowledge, and writing (see section 1.3).

It is fitting that the title of the poem is "Tawahhujāt." The poem is constructed with

[470] Similar to the Quranic verse: "We created man—We know what his soul whispers to him: We are closer to him than his jugular vein" the 'jugular vein' in Barghouti's quote is used as a reference to closeness. In the verse, God explains that he has created humans and is thus closer to them than their own organs. He knows their thoughts and beliefs. "Qaf," verse 16, in *The Qurʾan,* trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 340.

[471] Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 514a-518b.
Socrates paints an image of the world in order to cast a light on the state of education. In the analogy, a group of human prisoners are shackled inside a cave their whole life. With their backs turned from a fire, they can only see the shadows of stone or wood statues reflecting on the walls in front of them. The shadows and echoes that they see and hear seem to them, as Socrates comes to learn through his dialectics with Glaucon, as if coming from shadows and nothing else. Socrates then describes the incident in which a prisoner is freed and taken to look at the fire, then dragged out into the sun. Despite the initial pain of not seeing, the prisoner gradually gets used to the light and starts perceiving the shadows and reflections of things, the things themselves, and eventually the sun. The return of the free prisoner convinces the others that, because of his ill-adjusted eyes, leaving the cave leads to nothing. They then, as the conversation concludes, refuse to go outside.

the same components of the cave: fire, statues of wood and stone, shadows and sounds, prisoners, reflections, and the moon and stars. The poem starts with the speaker describing how he lit a row of candles and sat to look at the dancing of his own shadow:

أوقُد صفَّ الشموعِ فوقَ مائدةِ الليل، وأرقبُ،
...
رقصةَ ظلِّي فوقِ الجدرانِ، وأصغي
لعواءِ كلابٍ قربَ سجنٍ بعيدٍ، يستبيحُ حياةَ الحقولِ العواءُ.[472]

I light a row of candles on top of the table of the night, and I observe
…
the dance of my shadow on the wall, and I listen
to the barking of the dogs near a far-away prison, as it invades the life of the fields.

Although the shadow, the prison, and the sounds are echoes of the cave's myth, they are used here in a different manner. It is the speaker himself who lights the candles. He knows the existence of the dogs (as beings and not merely shadows) in the far-away fields, and realizes that he is seeing his own shadow in front of him. The speaker is thus, unlike the prisoners in Plato's cave, aware of the outside world and knowledge.

In a reversal of places, the poem alludes to the acts that happen outside the cave. Socrates explains that the prisoners in Plato's cave see the shadows of statues made of wood and stone. In Barghouti's poem, it is the speaker who is turned into a statue.

أحملُ وجهاً من خشبٍ يعرقُ،
ثمَّ ينزُّ العرقُ البارِدُ من بينِ خلايا الخشبْ.
ويدٌ من حجرٍ تحفرُ ظهريَ، مثلَ جذوعِ البلوطِ، وتُخرجُ تمثالَ حصانٍ تحتَ حوافرِهِ
بحرٌ من خشبٍ، وفي فمهِ قطفُ العنبْ.[473]

I hold a sweating face of wood
and the cold sweat seeps from the cells of the wood
and there is a hand of stone that is carving on my back, like an oak's roots. It releases a statue of a horse, under its hooves lies
a sea of wood, and in his mouth, it holds a bunch of grape.

[472] Hussein Barghouti, "Tawahhujāt," in *al-Āthār al-shiʿriyya* (Ramallah: Bayt al-Shiʿr, 2008), 68.
[473] Ibid.

The speaker gives a portrayal of the outside world. Instead of alluding to the shadows that the prisoners see, the reader witnesses the actual transformation of the speaker into a wooden or stone statue. His face is made of wood, and his body is turned into a stone statue of a horse. Against the backdrop of the journey away from the cave, the speaker ("the words of the faithful" penetrate through me[474]- a reference to those who preceded him) invites people to walk *towards* the cave. He tells people:

فاتبعوني نحو هذا الكهفِ، لا تأكلوا خبزاً من الطينِ،
تخبزه نارٌ مطفأةٌ.[475]

Follow me towards the cave, don't eat the bread made out of clay,
Baked by a put-out fire.

The speaker calls for people to follow him inside the cave. He warns them of falling for the illusions of the outside word. The fire in Plato's analogy, a symbol of knowledge and that which reveals reality as it is, is dead. For the speaker in the poem, life outside the cave is the unreal, it is where one eats bread made of clay. What seems to be the answer to avoid the illusion is a movement opposite to Plato's, namely towards, rather than exiting, the enclosed space. The speaker continues by giving his reason for going from the outside space into the inside one:

مهما اتسعَ البرُّ، إذا اتسعتْ خطوتنا، لا تضيقُ بنا الأرض،
إنَّ الطريقَ إلى داخل الكهفِ واسعةٌ.[476]

No matter how spread the land is, if our steps are spread, earth will not be too small for us.
The path to the inside of the cave is vast.

While the cave is often perceived as a small dark space, Barghouti enlarges it by saying that as long as one's aim is to move, spaces will move and become more spread.

[474] "تعبرني كلمات الأوفياء."
Ibid.
[475] Ibid., 69.
[476] Ibid.

Beyond the reality versus illusion dichotomy and their representation in the outside and inside spaces, Barghouti puts the focus on the act of movement within these spaces. It is this movement that becomes the source of knowledge. The outside space becomes enclosed in the first example as a symbol for intimacy. In this example, knowledge is achieved by travelling through the enclosed space, which makes it boundless.

He continues to break down the analogy using the moon and the stars, rather than the sun, as the guiding light on the journey towards the cave.

وحدنا نسقطُ بين الحجارةِ،
من عطشٍ أو رصاصٍ،
وفي فمنا الشوكُ، والكلماتُ التي لا يعبِّرُ عنها الكلامُ،
وفي يدنا حزمةٌ من ضياءِ النجومِ،
فإن فقدتْ ضوءَها فحمولتنا،
كلُّها،
عتمةٌ وضياءُ.[477]

Alone, we fall between the rocks
from thirst or by bullets.
In our mouths, there are thorns, and words that speech cannot express
in our hands, we hold a handful of the stars' lights.
If they lose their light, then our baggage
is all darkness and light.

Barghouti deploys the light/darkness motif as a way of intertwining the real within the poetic as well as challenging its assumed attribute in regard to guidance and knowledge. The words "rocks," "bullets," and "thorns" echo the political atmosphere of the time in which the poem was written. Barghouti brings together the celestial with the worldly and positions it within the Palestinian reality of that period. The stars have been the source of guidance precisely because of their shiny essence. However, even if they lose this attribute, the speaker and his followers will still have their own enlightened state to illuminate the path. It is again the path that the individuals take that leads them to the light (knowledge) as they do not need

[477] Ibid., 69-70.

an external source of light. Barghouti in the first example of the settlement and the speaker and followers in this one do not need the strong source of light (the neon light or the stars). Instead, Barghouti points to a sense of self-generation of light through their relation to the space and their movement in it.

The speaker continues to redeploy reflection and acoustic elements in the analogy.

نمشي إلى الكهفَ يا قمراً لا يغيبُ،
ونقطعُ نهراً واسعاً، واسعاً، وأعزُّ أحبَّتنا يسبحون على موجه،
كلُّهم شهداءُ.
ويهدأ ماءٌ ليصخبَ ماءُ
وأينَ سيذهبُ صوتُ المياهِ، فنحنُ الضفافُ، ونحنُ الفضاءُ.[478]

We walk towards the cave, O you moon that does not set
and we pass a wide, wide river, and our most beloved people are swimming in its waves.
They are all martyrs.
The water calms down only to erupt again.
Where will the sound of water go? We are the [river's] beds, and we are the void space.

The reflection on the water, which constitutes one of the first steps that the freed prisoner takes in his discovery of the real beings in life, is substituted with the bodies of martyrs. The sounds of water that diminish and erupt again do not leave the speaker and his followers. Knowledge is thus restored to them who represent "the river's beds" and "the void space" unlike the prisoners who do not recognize the source of the sounds. The change of places challenges perceptions of knowledge and ignorance, fiction and reality. At the same time, this example provides a prelude to the final chapter in this dissertation, which explores the notion of myth both as a thematic trope in Barghouti's writing and a theoretical lens for studying his literary production.

It is not the geographical marks of the space itself, but rather the movements within it that construct its significance. Moving on the path (*al-ṭarīq*)[479] is what gives the cave its depth and openness. Similarly, although there is light outside the cave, it is moving inside it

[478] Ibid., 70.
[479] Ibid.

(with the allusion to the moon and its light) that seems to give knowledge to the speaker and the people with him. The same motif of the moonlight giving power and knowledge is used in Barghouti's encounter in the mountains around his village with the settlement many years later. The allusion to Plato's cave and Barghouti's own experience with *al-dayr* show how the literary and the personal can intersect. This lends space, whether actual or metaphorical, a transformative attribute and renders it a formative entity.

3.8 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to investigate notions of transformation and movement, which are central to Barghouti's literary production, through the prism of space. Space is not solely understood in terms of geographic demarcations, but also as a stage for social, political, literary, and personal interactions. Movements within and between spaces, as was shown in the examples above, reveal some of Barghouti's insights into power relations, knowledge, literary genres, and poetic allusions. Space has been understood as a place of possibilities and a place that "is composed of intersections of mobile elements."[480] Barghouti's experience with illness and pain and his impending death provided the impetus for exploring space, especially the invasion, erosion, and blocking of space. In the first part (geographic movements) Barghouti's illness and pain allow him to reflect upon the personal-collective experiences in Palestine. Furthermore, Barghouti manages to frame the complex political and legal matter of illegal settlement building through the intimate and personal sensory experience of light and space. Though at the threshold of death, Barghouti engages with the reality of Palestinian life by honing in on the strengths and connections that he and his body have with the land. The decaying body is thus enabled (from *tamakkun*) against the backdrop of physiological and settler-colonial restrictions.

[480] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117.

In the second section (literary movements) space is examined beyond its geographic demarcations. Looking at the text as space, Barghouti builds up *al-Ḍiffa* by bringing together multiple fragmented elements such as locations, characters, and colours. Crossing between these elements is explored through the body and its movements across spaces and between the inside of a prison cell and the outside world. The inside-outside relation is also a movement that reveals Barghouti's conception on knowledge, innovation, and connection to the land. The analogy of the cave is reversed in Barghouti's poem, in which going deeper into the cave is his way of encouraging the exploration of new layers of knowledge. *Al-dayr* joins the two acts of physical and literary movements. Barghouti describes his nocturnal walks to the ruins of *al-dayr*, where he brings back memories that revive the place in the present.

As the examples from Barghouti's novel and his poetry show, the dynamics of space constitute a focal point in his production in general. For example, the interplay between the inside-outside is apparent in his first published poetry collection and his last (posthumously) published autobiography. Barghouti's personal experiences and his poetic aspirations and convictions reflect his perception of space as ever-changing in location and form, and as a realm that yields literary and political commentaries beyond its geographic demarcations. The dynamic relations that Barghouti creates between spaces are based on integrating historical and actual spaces with surrealist movements. The utilization of surrealist and mythic elements is central in Barghouti's writings and has prompted a mythic reading of Barghouti's stance as a thinker and an author. The next chapter takes this centrality as its premise but moves on to question its construction. It argues that Barghouti's writing techniques are *ritualistic* in nature, as they invite literary explorations that go beyond mythic writing.