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**Staying Tuned to Umm Kulthum: On the Voyage with the Sinbad and
Ulysses in Jabra's *The Ship***

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Abstract:

By drawing on recent approaches to music listening, spatial and postcolonial theories, this paper examines the significance of various instances of intertextuality in Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's *The Ship*. It argues that intertextuality in the novel enables the characters to sustain a sense of community and national solidarity immune to closure and disintegration in exile. This paper shows that the intertexts in the novel are resources of power, strength and agency necessary to fend off alienation and loss, and the intertextual fabric functions as a transformational space from denial into presence, from helplessness into determination. The paper concludes that (inter)textuality in the novel reflects a creative mode of resistance in Palestinian culture.

Keywords: Alienation, determination, helplessness, intertextuality, loss, national solidarity.

الإبقاء على موسيقى أم كلثوم في الرحلة مع السندباد وأوليسيس في سفينة جيرا إبراهيم جيرا
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الملخص:

بالإعتماد على نظريات التحليل الحديثة للاستماع إلى الموسيقى، والنظريات المكانية، وما بعد الاستعمار، تبحث هذه الورقة في أهمية حالات التناسخ في رواية جيرا إبراهيم جيرا (السفينة). تجادل هذه الورقة في أن التناسخ في الرواية يمكن الشخصيات من الحفاظ على شعور الحس المجتمعي، والتضامن الوطني الذي يحمي من الانغلاق والتفكك في المنفى، وتوضح هذه الورقة أن التناسخ في الرواية يشكل موارد القوة والفاعلية اللازمة لدرء الاغتراب والخسارة، وأن النسيج بين النصوص يعمل بوصفه مساحة تحويلية من الإنكار إلى الوجود، ومن العجز إلى الإرادة. وتخلص الورقة إلى أن التناسخ في الرواية يعكس نمطاً إبداعياً للمقاومة في الثقافة الفلسطينية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التناسخ، التضامن الوطني، الاغتراب، الفقدان، العجز، الإرادة

The Ship, which was originally published in Arabic in 1970 as *al-Safina* and tells the stories of many voyagers on a cruise in the Mediterranean, has been the subject of analysis by many critics due to its representation of a plethora of topics including loss, displacement, existentialism, exile and expatriation, nationalism, rootedness and sexuality. Qabaha (2018) explores the distinction between the notions of exile and expatriation as represented in the novel, arguing that the exile seeks centripetal movement towards the homeland while the expatriate seeks centrifugal movement as a means of resistance to restrictions at home. Zakarriya (2017) uses eco-feminist theory to study ways in which women in the novel struggle for their freedom from the forces that position them as inferior to men and restrict them economically and intellectually. Al-Mousa (2015) argues that obsession with the land in the novel is a means of resistance to the negation of the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland from exile. Saloul (2009) argues that the nostalgic memory of the Palestinian character is a counter-force to forgetfulness.

This is the first paper, to the best of my knowledge, that is totally devoted to the study of intertextuality in *The Ship*. Intertextuality is generally defined as a network of connections between various texts and their influence in the construction of the present one; therefore, the study of intertextuality in a certain work suggests the necessity of examining the relations between the texts quoted or alluded to in this work so as to understand and appreciate its central theme. The term intertextuality was coined by Kristeva who argues that texts are necessarily intertexts because they allude to, reproduce or parody other texts that preceded them. Kristeva (1980) has stated that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (p. 66). *The Ship* is replete with quotations and allusions to other literary texts and artistic pieces that make it necessary to study their significance to be able to appreciate its central theme. This paper argues that intertextuality in the novel enables the characters to sustain a sense of community and national solidarity immune to closure and disintegration in exile. The intertexts in the novel are resources of power, strength and agency necessary to fend off alienation and loss,

and the intertextual fabric functions as a transformational space from denial into presence, from helplessness into determination. (Inter) textuality therefore becomes a creative mode of resistance in Palestinian culture.

The first section builds on the theoretical contribution to the relationship between music and collectivity to argue that music in *The Ship* serves as a ritualistic attitude through which the imagination of the protagonist is intended to inspire nationalist aura informed by the hope of returning home from exile. The second section draws on Said's *Orientalism* to suggest that Jabra alludes to the story of Sindbad to politicize travel discourse and the expatriation of the western explorers in the Orient/Palestine. The last section makes use of Rleph's notions of placelessness and existential outsidership/insiderness while arguing that the allusion to the story of Ulysses in the novel serves to illustrate the determination of the Palestinian character to resist the lures of placelessness and stay determined to return home from exile.

Music and National Identity:

The question why the characters in the novel intensively listen to music remains relatively unanswered. Hajj (2016) has solely argued that music in *The Ship* helps us understand "the feelings of the characters and their situations" (p. 86). While his argument sounds interesting, it remains general and the study does not show ways in which allusions to music in the novel are linked to the politics of identity and alienation. This paper argues that the intensive use of music throughout the novel is central to the theme of national identity and alienation. It demonstrates that music in conjunction with audience participation and reflection functions as a means of resistance to loss and denial, especially in the case of Wadi Assaf, provided that music has been understood in Palestinian culture as an attempt to shape "the very survival of Palestinian subjectivity in exile" (McDonald, 2013, p. 4).

The characters on board the *Hercules* are exiled either physically or spiritually, therefore the bond the characters have with music is a ritualistic attitude through which imagination is intended to recall the memories of

homeland. The best example of this is when Wadi was listening to music and dancing with Jacqueline. He recalled the memory of his friend Fayiz who was shot by Israeli soldiers after the Nakba: “when the music became more intense and wild, she threw herself on to my chest as if she wanted to squeeze herself between my bones. I remembered Fayiz, I remembered the rocks” (1970, p. 64–65). Music triggers Wadi’s childhood memories in Jerusalem, which are associated with the death of his friend Fayiz. According to Frith (1996), music can be associated with escapism and transcendence since it can “take us ‘out of ourselves’, and put us somewhere else” (p. 275). Music in this context is connected to a psychic journey into the past, a journey that leads to a cornerstone in one’s own history. A great amount of space in the novel is devoted to recalling the memories of Wadi in Palestine. Therefore music inspires Wadi’s memory of the rocks, which stand for rootedness (Parmenter, 1994). While music triggers a romantic attitude and sexual fantasies of the characters on board the ship, Wadi’s nationalist feelings come to the fore, which suggests his commitment to the Palestinian trauma. These traumatic memories “serve as a form of resistance against the erasure of the personal and collective memories of Palestinians” (Salim & Mahfouz, 2020, p. 2). Jabra seems to suggest that no matter how pleasurable life in exile is, one remains faithful to his national cause. Wadi Assaf’s experience in exile and his memory of the Nakba serves to buttress the novel’s central theme about the Palestinian experience of placelessness and loss. The Palestinian characters in the novel refuse to replace placelessness with rootedness in exile, and that is why the space in which they are moving is the sea, which suggests “abstraction, temporariness and lack of place” (Qabaha, 2018, p.83).

This is to say that music in the novel is associated with the formation of a sense of community and national solidarity. Wadi narrates that:

My emotions are stirred by church music: chants that rise wounded, agonized, from the throats of choirs, organ music that thunders in the lofty ceilings, and all those humble supplications to God, God of gods, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Lamb of God who carries the sins of the world. All these overwhelm

me, sometimes almost hysterically. For then I feel torn to pieces in joy and sorrow. Perhaps more in sorrow. Because beauty is sad. The most beautiful things in life are sad, like my homeland ... I see my life. I see my land, my country (1970, pp. 21-22).

Jabra focuses on collective performance and response to music. Music instigates his internal feelings, and it induces an emotional state that reflects his own sorrow and pleasure, however his sad feelings predominate as far as his national loss persists. According to Schafer (2013), “music contributes to social cohesion and thereby increases the effectiveness of group action. Work and war songs, lullabies, and national anthems have bound together families, groups, or whole nations” (p. 2). Music in the novel gathers the Arab voyagers and binds them around the shared feelings of loss. Jabra further suggests that church music especially has the power to engage the emotions. This resonates with the role of music as represented in the Bible. According to the Old Testament, music has played a role in the memorization of God’s truth. Music as represented in the Bible and the novel, as the above quotation suggests, reminds God’s people of their sorrow. Wadi associates his personal feeling with the national and collective pathos, which is typical of Palestinian exiles who merge the personal with the collective.

The allusion to Umm Kulthum, who is an Egyptian singer, songwriter and film actress, also suggests national solidarity. The characters insist on staying tuned to the voice of this singer who was given the honorific title *Kawkab al-Sharq* (Star of the East) because it reminds them of their memories in their homeland. According to the “Uses-and-Gratifications” approach to the study of music listening, listeners consciously select their musical pieces in certain contexts to serve their needs and concerns, which might be identity preservation or culture identification (Arnett, 1995). The selection of the songs of Umm Kulthum onboard the ship in exile serves the purposes of preserving the national identity of the Arab characters and the celebration of their culture. Wadi narrates that:

Every time he found an Arabic station, they were playing Umm Kulthum. When it's midnight in the Arabic world, the voice of Umm Kulthum fills the air everywhere, even in Greek waters. Even though Fernando was looking for some other kind of music, we kept insisting that he leave the radio turned in on Umm Kulthum (1970, p. 85).

In the 1970s onwards, which is the time when the novel was published, Umm Kulthum was seen as a national symbol and icon in the Arab world. Her music played a huge role in defining the Arab nation and national subjects during the times of crisis; therefore, "criticizing her became tantamount to slandering the nation itself" (Lohman, 2010, p. 21). Umm Kulthum established the foundation for her reception as a nation's hero and icon of Arab unity in its times of crisis. The characters on board the ship are the legacies of the Arab defeat in 1967 war, and they are wailing their national loss. For Example, Um Kulthum sang in 1969 Nizar Qabbani's poem "Āṣḩaḩa 'andi ālān bonḩoqeya" "Now I Have a Gun", a poem that mourns the Israeli occupation of entire Palestine in 1967, yet gives hope that Arab armies will fight against Israel until Palestine is returned back to Arabs. Staying tuned to the music of Umm Kulthum therefore forms a community of passengers who share condemnation of loss of national honor but keep hope that one day Palestinians will restore their occupied land.

Even when western music is alluded to, it is associated with the hope of returning home. Wadi narrates that "As soon as I return home ... I shall buy a thousand records and listen to Vivaldi, Bach, Telemann, Josquin des Prez, Brahms, Sibelius, Stravinsky and modern electronic music" (1970, pp. 76-77). Wadi refers to a number of western music masters that he wants to carry their records with him when he gets back to Jerusalem and plays them every day. These western musicians refer to the cultural background of Wadi Assaf in the novel, which mainly represents Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's knowledge and passion for western music. While attachment to western music reflects multiplicity, this music is connected with Wadi's determination to return to Palestine. Music therefore alleviates the feeling of alienation. Wadi is attached to music, which he

calls “my Hashish”, to ease his alienation from his homeland and keep the hope of returning home alive (1970, p. 77).

The Sindbad; the Orientalist, and/or the Expatriate

Jabra draws on the story of the Sindbad to politicize expatriation and the travel discourse in the Orient. Sindbad is the hero of *The Thousand and One Nights* who tells his adventures on seven voyages. This story reflects on the experiences of travelers and merchants from Iraq trading under great risks with the East Indies and China during ‘Abbāsīd period (750–c. 850). Sindbad survives a shipwreck by luck and resourcefulness and returns home with a fortune. The story focuses on the experience of loss after prosperity and the resourcefulness of one’s home.

Jabra alludes to the story of the Sindbad to show that foreign adventurers and explorers, who are, like Sindbad, “escaping from societies where they don’t feel at home”, are far from being considered mere adventurers and explorers (1970, p. 74). These people are highly politicized in the novel and their intentions are suspected and questioned by the narrator who asks “what are they looking for? Oil? Minerals? Perhaps they’re serving their government’s secret designs” (1978, p. 73). This narration makes it safe to argue that Jabra is reading these people through the lens of Orientalism. Said (1978) argues that Orientalists, who might be expatriates, adventurers, explorers and merchants are involved in the politics of their countries and they are “constrained in what they could either experience of or say about the Orient” (p. 43). According to Said, Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality that serves the interests of colonial powers. European colonialism in the Orient was facilitated by the large body of textual (and non-textual) representation of these adventurers and explorers who depicted the Orient as “a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experience” (Said, 1978, p. 1). The adventurers and explorers Jabra alludes to are Orientalists in this sense since they “venture into the unknown”, finding everything and every person exotic, and they invest in

their experiences in the Orient before they “return with something knowable, communicable” to their countries and governments (1970, p. 73).

The focus in the novel is on what Said (1978) called “Oriental residence and Scholarship”. Said argues that these explorers and adventurers “live [in the Orient] a privileged life, not of an ordinary citizen, but of a representative European whose empire (French or British) *contains* the Orient in its military, economic, and above all, cultural arms” (p.156). Their privileged life carries political and economic significance, and they foreground themselves as culturally superior. That is, their residence in the Orient serves their empires at economic, military and cultural levels, which are the levels or forms of colonialism itself. The scholarly fruits of this residence “are thereby fed into the bookish tradition of the textual attitudes” we find in their inputs (1978, pp. 156-7). Jabra’s protagonist narrates that “one explorer will spend five years among Bedouins learning a dialect of a language that he will never read or write. He then returns to London or Paris, like a victorious general from distant battlefields” (1970, p. 74). The victory, according to the protagonist, is represented in the book this explorer writes and publishes “in his foreign language to learn something new about ourselves, to learn where some of us are” (Ibid). Jabra illustrates that these explorers and adventurers visit the Orient for purposes greater than being personal; they contribute to the textual misrepresentations of the Orient and Orientals in ways described by Said (1978) as “a metamorphosis from personal to official statement” (p. 157). The residence explorer/Orientalist contributes in his /her textual testimony to the large body of literature that serves the interests of colonial powers by writing the Orient from a limited and manipulated perspective. As Qabaha (2019) argues, Orientalism in this sense is “a political-intellectual power” wherein the western scholarship about the Orient “was produced within a certain framework of reference that is politically oriented” (p. 4). Palestine, in particular, was shaped and reconstructed in this scholarship in ways that served the Zionist project.

Jabra also uses the story of Sindbad to reread these adventurers as expatriates. For Jabra they are “escapists” and

strangers in their own countries and in other countries as well. They discover the unknown in distant places in order to forget their own alienation, to put an end to it, and to return victorious to a world that they dearly would embrace and accept them. Like all adventurers, however, like every *Sindbad*, they can never remain among people for long. This feeling of alienation and this lust for escape soon takes hold of them again (1970: 74).

I think intertextuality in this sense aims to categorize these adventurers as expatriates. Expatriation, derived from the medieval Latin verb *expatriat* applies to people who seek “living in a foreign country by choice”, *ex-* ‘out’ + *patria* ‘native country’. The expatriate creates his or her own estrangement necessary to alleviate his or her sense of strangeness and alienation back at home. They therefore think of their adventure and movement away from home as a form of freedom, exploration, discovery and wealth. They are in search of alternative and better life opportunities. As the protagonist rightly suggests, these expatriates are always on the move because they cultivate the cult of resistance to attachment and they value the merits of placelessness. The term placelessness was coined by the geographer Edward Relph. It entails absence of identity and value as opposed to ‘placeness’, which implies character and meaning. According to Relph, the conundrum of placelessness emerges if an “authentic and unselfconscious sense of place” is reduced or disappears. Relph (1976) defines this authentic sense of place as “that of [unselfconsciously] being inside and belonging to your place both as an individual and as a member of a community” (p. 143). The narrator emphasizes that these adventurers/expatriates have developed a sense of placelessness because they themselves feel as strangers everywhere, and their travels are only to reduce their own feelings of alienation and seek other opportunities in other places before they discover that once placeless is always placeless, and the only opportunity they have is to turn their feeling of alienation from a disabling state into an enabling force. That is, their adventures and displacement, like that of the *Sindbad*, might lead to wealth.

Jabra uses this story again to make a distinction between self-imposed alienation/departure (expatriation) and involuntary alienation/departure (exile).

The Palestinian central character in the story Wadi responds to the depiction of these western expatriates with:

They have a place to go back to and be measured by. Henry Layard goes back to the British Museum with winged bulls, and *Sindbad* returns to Baghdad laden with jewels. Real alienation is alienation from a place, from roots. This is the crux. Land, land, that's everything (1970, p. 74).

Wadi represents the (Palestinian) exile who was forced to leave his place of origin. His alienation was caused by Israeli forces in the Nakba of 1948 and was barred from returning to Palestine. Unlike the expatriate, the exile is unable to return as far as the circumstances that made him an exile persist. By contrast, the expatriate chooses to leave his/her place of origin to gain material success and his or her return is a matter of wish and intention. Like *Sindbad*, the English traveler Henry Layard chose to travel abroad before he returned home victorious and wealthy. The Palestinian exile Wadi refuses to be lured into exile, and he undermines its resourcefulness, viewing it as antithesis of land and roots. Wadi, like Ulysses, but unlike the *Sindbad*/the expatriate, is at pains to return to Palestine and reconnect with his roots.

Ulysses and the Palestinian Odyssey

Jabra uses Ulysses as an intertext, and he compares Wadi to Ulysses, so as to enable his Palestinian character to retain hope for returning from exile. Ulysses is the protagonist of the *Odyssey*, which is a Greek epic attributed to Homer. It takes Ulysses 10 years to get back to his home in Ithaca after the Greeks won the Trojan war. Ulysses encounters various obstacles on his way back home, and he resists all the lures that would detach him from his homeland. Jabra appropriates Ulysses as a symbol of resistance to temptations abroad and the hope of homecoming. The epical hero, after valorously enduring troubles of long absence, declares:

But still, I wish, each and every day to get back home, to see the day when I return. And so, even if out there on the wine-dark sea some god breaks me apart, I will go on— the heart here in my chest is quite prepared to bear

affliction. I've already had so many troubles, and I've worked so hard through waves and warfare. Let what's yet to come to be added in with those. (Homer, 2006, p. 105).

Ulysses, for example, refused to eat the fruits offered because he understood this to mean a destruction of memories and temptation to remain away from his place of origin.

Wadi gains power, strength and agency from Ulysses, and he understands his return as something compulsory, saying "I have to go back to the land" (1970, p. 188). This reflects the determination of the Palestinian exile to struggle against all obstacles and attractions of exile and go back to his origin. Wadi draws on the story of Ulysses to reflect his understanding of how difficult this journey is, but also to say it is possible to remain faithful to his past and its memories. Wadi observes:

Ulysses was a much better sailor and voyager than any of us. Yet even he, like us, would escape so that he could eventually reach somewhere where he could plant his feet firmly on land and say, "This is my soil" (Ibid).

In this passage, Jabra uses action verbs which entail centrifugal movement such as 'start again,' 'escape,' 'wander,' and he juxtaposes them with other action verbs which connote centripetal movement like 'go back,' 'reach,' and 'plant'. This juxtaposition, which is a central pattern in Palestinian literature, shows Wadi's understanding of the significance of constant movement in the milieu of exile. To 'escape' and 'wander' in exile reflects Wadi's intended refusal to establish connections away from his place of origin as this would be equivalent to substituting exile for the homeland. Wadi's detachment from the exilic space therefore triggers the exigency of "go[ing] back," or "reach[ing]" there (Palestine) and "plant[ing] his feet firmly" on the Palestinian land and saying "this is my soil". Using the story of Ulysses as an intertext is an implication of the author's belief that Palestinians are determined to resist all havens of exile in order to 'eventually' return to Palestine. For Jabra's character, all 'islands' and 'havens' of exile are defined by existential outsidership, which

means, according to Relph (1976), uninvolvement and not feeling at home (p. 51). Wadi says:

One goes into the world and finds everywhere there are tall trees, thick forests, well ordered gardens, but none of them is equal to one crooked branch from those ancient dust-laden trees. Nothing is equal to that red rocky land that greets your feet like a lover's kiss; and when you lie down on it, it provides you with all the comfort of a bed in paradise (1970, p. 114).

Wadi contrasts homeland with exile to illustrate his determination to take up the inward journey that Ulysses took and follow his pattern of resistance to temptations. He likens his love for Maha to the love of Ulysses for Penelope. He views Ulysses as a role model. He narrates that

when he [Ulysses] most needed rest after the toils and travails of his voyage, did not Calypso the enchantress give him the choice of remaining with her on the island forever as a deity or returning to his homeland as a mortal man?" (1970, p. 188).

This narration is followed by Wadi's decision to detach himself from the temptations of other women onboard the ship and return with Maha to his homeland. Using sexual imagery, Wadi is determined to ignore all women he met in his voyage and to return with her to Palestine: "I will take her up to my own land and then I will plough them both" (Ibid). Like Ulysses, Wadi refuses immortality and chose to return home, because "in the end, mortality with your land is better, more enjoyable, and more profound" (Ibid). Wadi's refusal to be lured into the exilic space and his determination to go back with Maha to Palestine reflects Relph's idea of 'existential insideness', which

is part of knowing implicitly that this place is where you belong – in all other places we are existential outsiders no matter how open we are to their symbols and significances [...]. Then there exists between place and person a strong and profound bond like the tie between farmer and property (1976, p. 55).

Wadi recurrently expresses his 'existential insideness' in Palestine – what Tuan (1974) calls *topophilia*: the "affective bond between people and place" (p. 4). He, for instance, expresses his willingness to "abandon the prostitution of

commerce [in Kuwait] and cultivate vines, pine trees, tomatoes, and apples [in the land which I have bought in the hills beyond the vineyards of Halhoul” (1970, p. 30). One can notice that Wadi’s naming what he plans to cultivate in the piece of land he purchased suggests his strong determination, like Ulysses, to return from exile and remain steadfast in Palestine.

Like Ulysses’, Wadi’s story represents the struggle for returning home from exile. While the ship moved far away from Palestine and Iraq, Isam and Wadi towards the end of the novel are closer to their homelands. The Palestinian exile is the new Ulysses who is an exile abroad, and who can never return, nor can end his wandering. The narrator says: “The Greek Sea now envelops us in its moonlight, a night full of tales of love and murder. The smell of the earth attracts Ulysses as he roams amid the perils of the sea. There has to be a return” (1970, p. 64). The earth and the sea are depicted in this quotation as antithesis. The sea is a metaphor for displacement and negation and the earth is a metaphor for rootedness and being. Like Ulysses, Wadi (and other characters on board the ship) has gone through many adventures in the Mediterranean Sea, and the (Palestinian) Odyssey is based on many extravagant tales of love and murder told by the pioneering sailors who are on their way back after they explored the Sea. Lutwack (1984) argues that the sea in literature suggests “abstraction and loss” (p. 218). Wadi describes the sea and its romance as unreal, adding that “the only real thing is my memory of it [Jerusalem], a memory that is transformed into something resembling music” (1970, p. 22). Wadi’s reflection suggests that the placeness embedded in his allusions to Jerusalem connotes belonging, envisions nostalgia and rootedness, and embodies ‘existential insideness’, to use Relph’s term again. As Harb observes, Jerusalem signifies the Palestinian homeland as a whole; an allusion to Jerusalem is also an allusion to the attachment of Palestinians to Palestine as a “land” and a “nation” (cited in Naguib, 2011, p. 59).

Jabra uses the sea as the antithesis of earth to reflect on the protagonist’s loss of his homeland after the Nakba of 1948. While Jerusalem entails the original place of the protagonist, the sea suggests non-place in the present. According to Arefi, ‘non-places’ are those spaces that lack historical, emotional,

or cultural values. Unlike traditional places, which embed historical, emotional and cultural value and emphasise belonging, non-places emphasise transition and loss (1999, p. 180). The Mediterranean Sea in *The Ship* has these attributes, which Wadi describes throughout the novel as ‘unreal,’ ‘trap,’ ‘strange,’ and ‘hell’. Jabra asserts that the sea/ exile for Palestinians is a space of suffering and endurance. This is supported by Jabra’s allusion to Dante’s *Inferno*, which is an Italian word that means ‘Hell’. The narrator asks the sailors to: “abandon hope all ye who enter here! Abandon all memories, all ye who enter here! For voyagers, the sea is a tremendous eraser that can wipe out the most stubborn types of ink” (1970, p. 125). These instructions reflect the reason why the narrator says above “the smell of the earth attracts Ulysses as he roams amid the perils of the sea” (1970, p.64). The sea/exile is depicted as a dangerous space that could further prolong the displacement and loss of the exile. The narrator warns the people on board the Hercules that the journey across the sea is synonymous to the abandonment of the past – “a tremendous eraser” of memories and a space of oblivion, much like the sea Ulysses roams. According to Dante (1833), the phrase “abandon hope” is inscribed at the entrance to Hell, which reinforces the argument that the Palestinian odyssey is a struggle against the loss of hope to go back home (p.7). The narrator asserts that “the present moment” is “hellish”, and warns the passengers against the illusion that the future, which promises survival and wealth, is more important than the past, which entails belonging and traumatic memories. Thus, intertextuality enables Wadi to preserve his homecoming sentiment in the face of the bleak reality in which he is prevented by Israeli-settler colonialism from returning home.

Conclusion

Since the Nakba of 1948, Palestinian and Arab writers have reflected, documented and examined the historical and political landscape in the Arab world. Notably, they represented Arabs not as passive and submissive people, but instead as active participants in writing their own history while resisting loss and denial. They have creatively reflected on the ways in which their aesthetics have

been informed by the political arena; their protagonists imagine new ways to demonstrate their determination to resist erasure and enclosure. In *The Ship*, Jabra informs his audience that intertextuality is a creative mode of resistance that allows his characters to maintain their national identity and enhance their belonging. Although this novel can be described as a web of intertexts, this study has limited itself to the examination of three prominent and significant instances of intertextuality that are interconnected.

The first example of intertextuality Umm Kulthum. This paper has argued that the choice of Umm Kulthum reflects the importance of her music in the 1960s/1970s, which is the dominating temporal setting of this novel. Jabra suggests that her music sustains the characters' attitude to resist denial and loss, and the romantic aura of her music allows a mental journey to the past in search of a lost homeland and its memories. Listening to Umm Kulthum induces a repertoire of memories necessary to maintain a sense community and national solidarity in times of crisis.

The second instance of intertextuality is the story of the Sindbad. Jabra uses this story to highly politicize the intentions and desires of Western explorers and travelers to the Arab World. By Drawing on Edward Said's *Orientalism*, this paper has argued that *The Ship* reads these people as oriental residents whose experiences, which are documented and published according to Jabra, serve to rationalize colonial domination and atrocities, which include evacuation of original people from their places of origin. Jabra also draws on the story of the Sindbad to enhance his distinction in the novel between expatriation and exile in ways that instruct the audience that exile is associated with loss and erasure whereas expatriation is a privileged experience that connotes freedom and discovery.

The third example of intertextuality in *The Ship* is Ulysses. Jabra compares Wadi to Ulysses to say that no matter how difficult and challenging the obstacles are, the Palestinian exile will one day return to his homeland and reclaim it. Jabra tells his audience that the Palestinian protagonist, like Ulysses, will resist all temptations that could deter his determination to return to his place of origin.

Jabra's use of this mythical character has rendered the personal story of Wadi larger and global, permitting the specific and multifarious Palestinian struggle for homecoming to be understood on grander scales. This comparison has generalized the Palestinian struggle to the level of significant moral questions of expulsion, loss and determination.

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The Effect of Using DRTA Strategy on Developing Reading Comprehension Skills for Seventh Graders in Gaza Governorates

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the effect of employing the DRTA as a strategy to develop the reading comprehension skills among seventh-graders in Gaza governorates. The quasi-experimental approach was used on a sample of (80) female students divided into two equivalent groups. The experimental group included (44) female students, while the control one included (36) female students. The tools of data collection were a checklist of reading comprehension skills and a reading comprehension test. To analyze the collected data, a t-test was conducted. Furthermore, to examine the effectiveness of the DRTA strategy in developing reading comprehension skills, the effect size was measured. The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the mean scores of the reading comprehension skills in favor of the experimental group. In light of these results, the researcher recommended that English teachers use the DRTA strategy to develop reading comprehension skills for students.

Keywords: DRTA strategy – Reading comprehension skills