

Mortui Vivos Docent: ‘We Teach Life, Sir!’***Ölüler Yaşayanlara Öğretmektedir: ‘Hayatı Öğretiyoruz, Bayım!’*****İsmail TEKŞEN*****Highlights:**

- This study explores Rafeef Ziadah's poem *We teach life,sir* by applying Gestalt theory and analyzing the use of imagery, symbolism, and allegory to reveal a larger narrative of suppressed genocide and media manipulation.
- The research highlights how the poem critiques the commodification of human suffering and the paradox of a televised massacre, where real-time destruction is met with global indifference and detachment.
- By integrating both allegory and symbolism, the study argues for the importance of combining these literary techniques to reveal deeper meanings, while also introducing the potential for Gestalt analysis to enrich literary criticism.
- This study contributes to the academic world by introducing Gestalt theory as a valuable tool in literary analysis, demonstrating its potential to deepen our understanding of complex poetic structures and their socio-political implications.

Abstract: Rafeef Ziadah, a poet of Palestinian origin living in London, wrote the poem *We teach life,sir* as a response to a veiled accusation of hate directed at her by a journalist. In many ways, this poem is a visual and auditory manifesto of the suffering experienced in Palestine and especially Gaza. This study attempts to explore the symbolic meanings of the imagery elements that the poem displays in such a rich style, extending to allegorical subtextual fields. As a result of this attempt, the pieces that were redefined with the unity of imagery and symbolism were brought together like puzzle pieces, and an attempt was made to determine the Gestalt narrative of the poem. In the final analysis, Rafeef Ziadah's symbolic imagery demonstrates that the pieces together express a larger narrative than their individual meaning and portrays a picture of how the massacre in Gaza has turned into a silent (silenced) genocide. The poet diagnoses the world's indifferent silence towards this situation as a 'trauma spectacle' which can be roughly defined as being content with witnessing the suffering.

Keywords: Gestalt narrative, Rafeef Ziadah, Silenced genocide, Trauma spectacle.

Öne çıkanlar:

- Bu çalışma, Rafeef Ziadah'ın *We teach life,sir* adlı şiirini, Gestalt teorisini uygulayarak ve imgeler, sembolizm ve alegori kullanımı üzerinden analiz ederek, bastırılmış soykırım ve medya manipülasyonuna dair daha büyük bir anlatıyı ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.
- Araştırma, şiirin insan acısının metalaştırılmasını ve televizyon katliamının paradoksunu ele alarak, gerçek zamanlı yıkımın küresel kayıtsızlıkla karşı karşıya kaldığını vurgulamaktadır.
- Hem alegori hem de sembolizmi birleştirerek, çalışma mevzu bahis edebî tekniklerin derin anlamlar

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ortaya koymadaki önemini savunmakta ve Gestalt analizinin edebi eleştiriyi zenginleştirme potansiyelini tanıtmaktadır.

- Bu çalışma, Gestalt teorisini edebî analizde değerli bir araç olarak tanıtarak, karmaşık şiirsel yapıların ve bunların sosyo-politik yansımalarının daha derinlemesine anlaşılmasını sağlama potansiyelini akademik dünyaya kazandırmaktadır.

Öz: Londra’da yaşayan Filistin kökenli bir şair olarak tanıdığımız Rafeef Ziadah bir gazetecinin kendisine yönelttiği üstü kapalı nefret suçlaması üzerine cevap niteliğinde *We teach life, sir* şiirini yazmıştır. Bu şiir pek çok yönden Filistin ve özellikle Gazze’de yaşanan acıların görsel ve işitsel bir manifestosu hâlinindedir. Mevcut çalışma şiirin gayet zengin bir üslupla sergilediği imgelem öğelerinin sembolik anlamlarını keşfetmek üzere alegorik satır altı anlamlara uzanan bir teşebbüste bulunur. Bu teşebbüs nihayetinde ortaya konan, imgelem-sembolizm birlikteliğiyle yeniden tanımlanmış parçalar bir puzzle tamamlar gibi bir araya getirilerek şiirin Gestalt anlatısı tespit edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Son tahlilde, Rafeef Ziadah’nin sembolik imgelemi parçaların bir aradayken bizatihi anlatılarından daha büyük bir anlatıyı dile getirmekte olduğunu göstermiş ve Gazze’de yaşanan katliamın sessizleştirilmiş türden (silenced) bir soykırıma dönüştüğünün resmini çizmiştir. Ayrıca şair dünyanın bu duruma karşı kayıtsız sessizliğini -henüz yaygın olarak kullanılan bir tabir olmasa da- yaşanan acıları seyirle yetinmek olarak kabaca tanımlanabilen, ‘travma gösterisi’ olarak teşhis etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gestalt anlatı, Rafeef Ziadah, Sessizleştirilmiş soykırım, Travma Gösterisi.

Genişletilmiş Özet: Masum sivil ölümleriyle özdeşleşen, insan hayatının hiçe sayıldığı zor dönemlerden geçiyoruz. Hayatı kolaylaştırması hedeflenirken, ironik bir şekilde, yine insan hayatını hedef alan teknolojik gelişme sayısı saat farkıyla yüzleri ve binleri aşan kaybedilmiş yaşamlarla sonuçlanmaktadır. Kişisel özgürlüklerin, yaşam ümidinin, insancıl tanımların ve dahası insan tanımının dahi yitip yerine soyutlaşmış simülakra örneklemelerinin kaldığı dönemler tarih kitaplarının arşiv tasniflerini terk ederek, haber bültenlerinde, an be an yayınlanan sosyal medya akımlarında yer bulmayı başarmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, aydınlanma ve modern çağ yıkımlarının bir örnek numuneleri çağımızın kanayan yarası hâlinde zuhur etmeyi başarır halledir. Mevzubahis acıların an itibariyle en belirgin şekilde yaşandığı yerlerin başında Filistin, Gazze gelmektedir. Süregelen ve geride sayısı binleri bulan ölü, yaralı, yerinden edilmiş insan bırakan bu insan eliyle tetiklenmiş yıkıma bir son dilemek vicdan sahibi her birey için olduğu kadar sağduyunun da bir gereğidir. Fakat medya aracılığıyla şahit olunan gerçeklerin beklenen tepkinin aksine sessiz bir seyir süreci başlatması gayet ironiktir. Mevzubahis durum belki de yaşanan bu izahı güç duruma tanım olsun diye türetilmiş bir adlandırma ile travma gösterisi olarak nitelendirilir. Bu gerçeğe atfen yaşananları şiirsel bir anlatıya çeviren Rafeef Ziadah katledilen bedeninin Tv’de yani televizyona edildiğini öne sürerek şiirini adlandırır. Açıkça görülmektedir ki katliam ve televizyona ifadeleri yan yana duramayacak kadar zıt iki tabirdir, yine de koşullar absürt bir kararlılıkla travma ve gösteriyi paradoksal bir zeminde bir araya getirmektedir. ‘Katliamın medya aracılığıyla ilanı’ beklenen kurtarıcı elin uzatılmasına yetmeyince basit bir yayından ibaret kalmış ve grotesk bir nedensellik ile ‘Televize edilmiş katliam’ gerçeğini doğurmuştur. Gözler önünde devam eden bir yıkım mevzubahis gerekçelerle sessizleştirilmiş türden bir soykırıma dönüşmektedir.

Yöntem: Giriş kısmında dile getirilen amaç doğrultusunda ilerleyebilmek için, bu çalışma şiirin zengin imgelem örtüsünü aralayarak alegorik derinliğe inmeyi zaruri görmektedir. Benimsenen analitik yaklaşımın temelinde şiirin, imgeler aracılığıyla, yine imgelerin tamamından çok daha büyük bir resmin birleşenleri-parçaları olduğu fikri yatmaktadır. Adı geçen bütünü keşfetmek için aslında psikoloji alanına ait bir terim olan Gestalt tekniğinden yararlanılacaktır. Tekniği şiir üzerinde aktif hâle getirebilmek için bir dizi alt tekniğin katalizör göreviyle sürece dahil zaruri hâle gelmektedir. Bu sebeple imgelerin metin altı anlatılarına ulaşabilmeyi mümkün kılan sembolizm, sembolik anlatıların birbiriyle örtüştüğü, anlamlı bir bütünü tamamlamak üzere eklemelenmesi sürecini mümkün kılan alegori analizin hedefine ulaşmasında basamak görevi görececek edebi aparatlar olarak kullanılacaktır. Bu noktaya kadar zikredilen süreç neticesinde ortaya konan buluntular, edebi bir analiz süzgecinden geçirilerek giriş kısmında belirtilen çalışmanın amacıyla ne nispette örtüştüğü belirlenecektir.

Bulgular: Rafeef Ziadah'nin *We teach life,sir* şiiri güçlü imgeleriyle dikkat çeken edebi bir eserdir. Bu dikkat çekici imgelerin ardındaki sembolik anlamın varlığı, şiirin en başında sunulan ve neredeyse metafizik bir olguya dönüşme eğiliminde olan imgeler aracılığıyla ortaya çıkar. Gerçekten de tüm bu imgelerin ortaya koyduğu büyük sembolik anlatı, şiirin imgelerinde vücut bulur ve bu gövdeden taşarak daha büyük bir bütünün sergilenmesi olarak ortaya çıkar. Mona Lisa'nın yüzünün sadece bir burun, gözler ve bir ağız olmadığı, aksine bu parçaların bir üst birim anlatısı oluşturmak üzere bir araya geldiği örneğinden yola çıkarak; şiirin tek tek sıraladığı parçaların bir bütüne atfen ele alınması, çalışmanın nihai amacına ulaşmak anlamına gelecektir. Bu noktadan hareketle, Ziadah'ın imgeye dayalı sembolik açılımları aşağıdaki gibi belirlenmiştir. Masum insanların toplu olarak yok edildiği bir savaş medya aracılığıyla magazinleştirilmekte ve sanal gerçekliğin sınırlı boyutlarına indirgenmektedir. Bu politik temelli insanlık trajedisi aradığı yanıtı bulamamakta ve çıkmaz bir döngünün neticesinde gün geçtikçe hızlanarak devam etmektedir. İnsanlar görünür ve görünmez duvarlarla ayrıştırılmaktadır ve bu ayrıma dayanarak işgal altındaki insanlar özgürlüklerini kaybetmeye zorlanmaktadır. Katliam gözler önünde gerçekleşse de dünya tarafından ironik ve belki de paradoksal bir ilgisizlikle karşılanmaktadır. Söz konusu bulgular ışığında aşağıdaki sonuçlara ulaşılmıştır. Şiirin Gestalt anlatısı, bir travma gösterisi olarak seyredilen susturulmuş-sessiz, bastırılmış ve göz ardı edilmekte olan bir tür soykırımı tasvir etmektedir. Sessiz soykırım, medya veya hükümetler tarafından yeterli ilgi görmeyen veya sistematik olarak görmezden gelinen ve dikkate alınmayan bir tür toplu insan öldürmedir. İnsan hayatında büyük travmalara neden olan bu yıkım, statüko, politik, kültürel ve ekonomik nedenlerinden dolayı genellikle olması gereken ilgiyi çekmeyi başaramaz. Sessiz soykırım türleri, gerçek olayları çarpıtan yanlış temsil edilen, manipülatif olarak yorumlanan ve yeterince bildirilmeyen gerçeklikten beslenmektedir. Gestalt anlatısının diğer yüzünü oluşturan travma gösterisi olgusu, sessiz soykırım olgusuyla birlikte uyum içinde seyreden bir hâldedir ve bu durum ancak paradoks terimiyle açıklanabilir. Bu iddianın ardındaki temel neden 'travma gösterisinin tanımında' yatmaktadır. İnsanların yaşadığı şiddet, yıkım ve acı sansasyonel gerçeklikler olarak metalaştırılmakta ancak gerçek yaşantılarla anlamlı bir bağ kurulamadan bu seyrir unutulmakta ve tüketilmiş olmaktadır. Hâlihazırdaki paradoks, yıkım gözler önünde olmasına rağmen duyarsızlaştırılmış bir gerçeklik algısı süzgecinden geçerek özünü yitirmektedir. Bu açıdan, şiirin ve çalışmanın sembolik bir imgeyle en uygun tanımı 'Tv'd massacre' yani 'televize katliam' olabilir.

Tartışma ve Öneriler: Rafeef Ziadah'ın *We teach life,sir* adlı şiirinde imgelerin, satır arasında zuhur eden çok daha büyük bir anlatıya dâhil olarak görünür anlamlarını birer lego parçaları gibi kullanmak suretiyle parçalar-üstü büyük bir anlatıyı tamamladıkları görülmektedir. Dile getirilen durum psikoloji alanında algısal süreçleri tanımlamakta kullanılan Gestalt terimi ile açıklanmaktadır. Müstakil metinlerin yapısal bir düzene tabi olurken sergilediği tavır ve yine metinlerin bir üst anlatı dile getirirken türettiği ortak bağ Gestalt prensipleriyle büyük benzerlikler taşıyan süreçlerdir. Ne var ki, gayet yetkin bir edebî terim olma potansiyeline haiz Gestalt, edebî metin incelemelerinde sayılı çalışmalar haricinde yer bulamamaktadır. Bu sebeple çalışmanın, Gestalt Anlatının edebî bir teknik olarak alanda yer bulmasına katkı sağlayacağı umulmaktadır. Edebî temayülün ortaya koyduğu diğer bir gerçek ise sembolik çağrışım temelli bir işlerlik içerisinde olan alegori ve sembolizmin metin altı okumalarda farklı iki teknik halinde kullanımıdır. Yerleşik kanı, biri varken ötekinin mevcudiyetine gerek kalmadığı yönündedir. Mevzubahis çalışma bu önyargıyı kırarak alegori ve sembolizm birlikteliğinden türeyen bir çerçeve inşa etmiş ve şiiri bu minvalde ele almıştır. Özetle, sembolizmin sağladığı anlam zenginliği alegori filtresinden geçerek kümelenmiş ve büyük bir anlatının (Gestalt) alt öğelerine dönüşmüştür. Ayrıca, film endüstrisine ait bir tabir of McGuffin¹, akışın şekillenip ilerlemesi için gereken bir hareket nişanı hâlinde hem anlatıyı harekete sevk etmiş hem de bu harekete güzergâh biçerek şiirin anlamlı bir tema benimsemesine katkıda bulunmuştur. Bu sebepledir ki McGuffin'in yerleşik bir edebî teknik olarak kullanımının edebî analizleri daha etkin kılacağı kanısının bu çalışma ile pekiştirildiği düşünülmektedir.

¹ A MacGuffin is a plot device in a story, often an object or goal, that is extremely important to the characters and drives the plot forward, but whose specific nature or details are ultimately unimportant to the audience. Its main purpose is to motivate the characters and initiate action, rather than to be deeply explored or explained itself.

Introduction

In his book titled *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman (2005) passes the judgment that “How television stages the world becomes the model for how the world is properly to be staged” (92). Despite the overly manifested indoctrinating tone, the writer subtly employs a critical approach to criticize the new formative, prescriptive nature of the old magical oblong box. Yet again, no matter how celebrated such a stance is, the real-life incidents prove the critic's righteousness while emphasizing the lack of incentive to give it a stop. At this point, the oblong boxes that have multiplied under a variety of names such as computers, smartphones tablets, etc., import news around the world that push the levels of not only human cognition but also the conscience of a decent heart.

‘Death by war’ is not a novel theme for human history. In the Jungian sense it posits a well-poised example for the epitomized definition of an arche withal. Even so, killing the innocent without any regard for decency shakes the pillars of humanity. Not a day goes by that we hear on the media channels about people who have been mistreated, whose dreams and rights to live have been stolen, who have been displaced from their country, who have been labelled as terrorists when they object, who have been killed and bombed to death. The place where the destruction in question is most intense and perhaps most desperate is Palestine, whose people have been forced to endure similar hardships for a long time. The death toll, which increases daily by tens and hundreds, has reached tens of thousands. Numerous people have been forced to leave their country as refugees and live in camps. An equally high number of people are struggling to survive in miserable conditions due to the indirect effects of war. Those who do not die from bullets or bombs are subjected to death from secondary causes such as hunger, poverty, disease, and difficult living conditions. The vast majority of these deaths are of groups such as children, the elderly, and women who do not have a military affiliation (United Nations, 2024; Human Rights Watch, 2024). It is seen that, as a requirement of faith in the Truth, in this vortex of loss people of the century find themselves absorbed in, it is more important than ever to behave correctly, to recommend what is right, and to be patient and persistent in this cause.

Rafeef Ziadah, who is in search of a life that is in harmony with the mindset above, initially draws a picture of Palestine and Gaza with her vivid imagery, in the form of a poem. The poet's images come together between the lines to form a grand Gestalt image of the systematic destruction of a people which also permeates the entire poem. In short, it can be explained in this vein: each image presented by the poet actually constitutes parts of a whole that dominates the entire frame but whose presence is not directly discerned at first glance. This situation is similar to the dynamics of puzzle pieces that represent a whole picture when brought together.

Based on this theoretical ground, this study attempts to explore the Gestalt whole formed by the imagery in Rafeef Ziadah's poem, *We teach life, sir*. The main objective of the undertaking is the idea that the poetic imaginative patterns of Ziadah are the ultimate components of a silenced sort of genocide to which the people of Palestine and Gaza are subjected. Furthermore, the ongoing passive stance of the world in the face of destruction is to be defined as a form of trauma spectacle. In order to do this, initially imagery will be scrutinized as a literary technique. To highlight its conventional role in literature to elicit secondary and tertiary meaning; allegory, and symbolism will also be debated as associated techniques and phenomena. Secondly, the Gestalt theory and its history will be briefly discussed. The role that theory will play in poetry will be determined and Gestalt, which is indeed a psychological term, will prepare the theoretical groundwork necessary to discover the essential aura of poetry. Finally, Ziadah's poem will be examined within this prepared framework and the findings will be shared under the title of conclusion.

Methodology: An Eclectic Theoretical Framework

Canadian poet and philosopher Bruce William Powe passes the remark that "It began in images and it ended in symbolism" (2007, p.160). In the same vein Manly Hall elaborates on the notion of the symbols with the following: "By symbols men have ever sought to communicate to each other those thoughts which transcend the limitations of language" (2009, p.37). The marriage of these two literary techniques not only enables both parties to broaden their scopes but also enriches face meaning of a particular item by bringing allegorical dimensions into play. To explain it with a simple allusion, while a dead body constitutes a simple meaning, a dead body on a king's throne opens the door to a subtextual dimension where the meaning grows exponentially and reaches beyond what is read between the lines. In this respect, a dead body is an image, and when it is on the throne, it becomes a symbolic key speaking of more than a corpse and a sheer chair.

For the aforementioned reasons, although the aim of the study is to discover the Gestalt of the imagery in Ziadah's poetry, ultimately this attempt requires a journey into the depths of the apparent meaning due to the nature of the imagery technique, in which case allegory becomes a dimension of the study, and it should be known that the allegorical ground usually begins between the lines and presents its veiled face in the narrative curtains known as the subtextual field. The requirement of the technique is to go beyond the apparent patterns of meaning, where "images are stripped of their prima facie meanings and take on secondary and tertiary meaning", has been defined as "symbolism" (Iser 1978, 139-140; Todorov 1982, 19-20). Therefore, it can be summarized that allegory, subtextual fields, imagery and symbolism constitute the essential scientific apparatus of the study by which the Gestalt of the poem is expected to unveil its façade.

Imagery

While defining imagery as a glossary term Meyer Howard Abrams (1999) mentions that the technique stands for a variety of phenomena ranging from "mental pictures experienced by a reader" to a literary work that stands as an "image composed from a multiplicity of images" (p.121). Nevertheless, he brings these explanations together on a common ground in his work titled *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1957) and defines imagery as a "representational art" in which abstract concepts become more tangible through sensory experiences for the reader (p. 50). In a Shakespearean sense, the pale greyish skull that Prince Hamlet holds in his hand, accompanying his famous quote 'To be or not to be', is a simple yet perfected instantiation of human mortality. Kenneth Burke (1950) handles imagery from a different perspective as a rhetorical device that impacts the reader's "imagination [perception] of an idea" (p.84). "Images", he claims, go beyond being "sensory" and gain an "intellectual dimension", where they serve as a counselor for the "reader's experience with the metaphor-based meaning patterns they establish (pp. 84-90). The following example is believed to epitomize Burke's thought on a dual mindset. To explain freedom, a broken cage with a bird that does not exist inside would perhaps be worth pages full of definitions and descriptions. Meanwhile, the bird in the sky reaches beyond depiction and allusion while fostering action for freedom in the hearts of the readers (Chandler 2007, 123-146).

T. S. Eliot (1933) notifies the "emotional" plane the imagery is inclined to engage with. In his view, imagery is a tool to kindle "feelings" and invoke "ideas" that are difficult to reach otherwise. Moreover, multi-layered imagery can provide a "variety of interpretations", contributing to the richness of meaning in the literary work (pp. 72-73). A case example can be cited as the "dying sick rose" William Blake (1938, p.44). The image of the poet entangles issues such as life, death and love while companying these images with their own aura of ecstasy. In *The Death of the Author* (2013), Roland Barthes approaches imagery through the perspective of the reader. In his

view, the language of the imagery encourages “the reader” to embrace a more “active role” in the “deciphering of the text” in that what has been planted by the author as an image, stretching across planes of meaning, is to be animated by “the reader’s effort” (pp. 147-148). In other words, Carlos William’s “red wheelbarrow beside the white chickens” is bound by being a red wheelbarrow so long as the reader does not associate this image with another body of meaning such as workforce, agriculture or abundance (Smith 2000, 87).

In light of the preceding data, imagery can be summarized as a sort of figurative language through which abstract concepts are presented in a way that appeals to sensory perceptions. The dynamic of the representation includes a process of inherent association. Consequently, the use of an image yields a greater elucidation of meaning. Therefore, what may take hours of talkathon and prattling can be demystified at times with an image. Moreover, imagery contributes to the intensity of the emotions the readers feel while interacting with a literary work. The richness of meaning thanks to association and metaphor renders the narrative more striking, and the appropriate use of imagery not only conveys the intended meaning but also attracts the reader's attention through emphatic outlines.

Symbolism

As an example of a centuries-old tradition, couples in love gifting each other flowers is, in many ways, a concrete example of a much larger narrative of love hidden behind an image. A type of life that can be defined as a vegetative form, when under appropriate contextual conditions, can be characterized by love, passion, devotion, and togetherness on allegorical subtextual levels. A similar example can be given through the skull. It is well known that the skull sign, with a transcultural tendency, warns people of imminent peril by announcing a deadly danger. For this reason, electricity poles and toxic substance containers are marked with skulls in many parts of the world. In short, it can be said that when a rosebud or a skull is read within contextual conditions, they evoke patterns of meaning that open up to much larger dimensions than their actual self. This situation can be summarized as the symbolism of images.

The definition of the subject by experts also corresponds to the examples given above. Arthur Symons (2014), for instance, concludes that symbolism is an art of representation in which reality is expressed via symbols. In a way, by means of the effective use of imagery, Symons theorizes symbolism as a struggle to expose the image of the thing that is being told. “Every word is a jewel” he retorts “scattering and recapturing sudden fire, every image is a symbol, and the whole poem is visible music” (p. 129).

As a central figure of symbolism in literature, Eliot (1920) approaches symbolism as a deciphering process of a multilayered meaning association based on “objective correlative” notions. He mentions symbolism as a ‘fusion of elements’ that yields novel network associations in which “objects” are anchored to certain “emotions” (p. 92). In a similar vein, Tzvetan Todorov (1982) emphasizes the signification process in the nature of symbolism. He claims that “through an effort of interpretation”, symbols yield to “an indirect meaning” outside the text (p.19). The structural context, therefore, demands a meticulous reading of psychological, historical, and cultural concomitances of the symbol and the peripheral meaning. Taking a similar approach, Northrop Frye (1957) places “signification” at the heart of symbolism, yet he deals with actual phenomena on the level of “archetypes” (p.85). In his view, archetypes are “beyond cultures” and appear as universal patterns of meaning that issue “motifs and symbols” by means of which common “experiences of humanity” resonate across (pp. 85-115).

In light of the hitherto presented information it can be concluded that symbolism is a

representational literary art that feeds on the dynamics of meaning association. The narrative presented through an image can open up to larger narrative layers through the privilege provided by symbolism. Immense ideologies and ongoing narratives can be condensed and fit into an image and by the reverse logic, an ordinary, simple image may be standing for very tumultuous ideas. The common point of both sides is that the image resurrected by a symbolic mechanism is no longer a mere picture of an entity but the depiction of a greater pattern of meaning that has come to life. Thereby the text changes face and undergoes a metamorphosis into a whole of texts enmeshing layers of meaning.

Allegory and Subtextual Fields

In the book *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory* (2010), the editors Copeland and Struck notify the reader of the thin yet substantial line that not only separates allegory from symbolism but also defines each on a similar ground of "symbolic association" (pp.2-4). The demarcation is essentially based on the works of Samuel Coleridge who defined allegory as a form of extended metaphor in which elements are in a stable, one-to-one correspondence association dynamic. However, symbolism is inclined to conduct these associational matchings on a multi-layered dimension of meaning with a promise of a multitude of it. Nevertheless, both parties rely on symbolic association as the basic mechanism (Coleridge 1817).

Additionally, Lewis (2013) mentions the blurring of the line "separating fiction from the truth" once "allegory" takes over the role of the narrator (p. 40). In the same vein, Eric Auerbach (1984) highlights the schism between "literary representation" and the "mimetic reality" that can be channeled together via "allegory" (p. 74). Similarly, Paul de Man (1982) points to the field of meaning beyond the "literal level", yet he does it by including the system of "self-reference" while stretching for the "implicit meaning" (pp. 4-10). In other words, the original meaning of the text paves the way for a secondary one on allegorical depths, however, while allegorical meaning necessitates detachment from the face narration, it also relies on it for the symbolic dynamics that enable a subtextual level to host the multitude interpretations.

Considering these, allegory appears as a literary device that makes use of symbolism as a pivotal literary device. At the core of this figure of speech, there is a strong bond between what is being presented and what has been implied by it. The symbolic level on which the narration operates reaches subtextual depths of meaning where imagery stands for a secondary possibility of the meaning. The dualistic body of the narration necessitates an interpretation process so that the presented literature sheds a secondary body of meaning in addition to the first imminent one.

At this juncture, defining allegory and symbolism as two essentially different literary techniques, even though they operate on the same mechanism, may lead to the belief that there is no room for the other when one exists; indeed, many studies follow this fashion in their methodological frameworks. However, according to the analytical method adopted in the present study, the depth of meaning promised by Ziadah's strikingly marked imagery will be reached through the secondary reading technique promised by symbolism, and the findings will be defined through the framework that allegory will reveal through descriptive matches.

The Theory of Gestalt

Once situated before the world-famous painting Mona Lisa and asked for a definition, any observer would come up with the imminent answer 'a woman' rather than 'a nose, mouth, eyes, hair and so on'. By the same logic applied above, Gestalt theory elaborates on the notion of 'the whole' that consists of a collection of individual parts. By the same token, the term derives its definition as "... a complete shape or figure which has structure and meaning" (Ginger 2007, 13).

The structural shape needs “the mind as an organizer” putting patterns of the sensory input into a “cohesive unity” (Koffka 2013, 77-180). This necessity results from the human mind’s tendency to perceive phenomena as “structured wholes” rather than separate “entities” (Wertheimer 1925, 1-11). In this respect, once clustered and brought together forming a complete unit, partaking elements renounce their separate self-beings and coagulate into a holistic entity, id est Mona Lisa.

From a different perspective, Gestalt, a psychology-based theory per se, may hold viability for the analysis of literary texts. Candır and Çelik (2019), who initiated a similar attempt, assert that the Gestalt principle can be useful in reaching dimensions of meaning that cannot be reached with existing techniques but will be exposed when the elements of the text are considered as a whole.

“It [Gestalt Literary Theory] can be considered as an attempt to shed light on the dimensions of meaning that other critical theories have reached but that remain beyond their own windows and have not touched. With this approach, literary work analysis is a new and integrative perspective that encompasses and surpasses previous critical theories. It is an effort to evaluate a work in different dimensions by accepting it as both a form and a ground. Practices will show how comprehensive it can be.” (p. 445)

To sum up, Gestalt literary theory appears to be a holistic method of reading that enables meaning to appear on a broader contextual framework detaching from the singularity of the elements it consists of. Operating the likewise psychological principles of ‘mind as an organizer’ of the individual components to create a holistic meaning, the technique activates the reader’s perception of the text as a network builder to deploy the overall structure of the narration, rather than dealing with the sub-units as fragmented partitions. With this perspective, images, symbols, tone, characters, and other literary components of a work may coalesce into a transformational core of being, a novel entity that otherwise is difficult to observe.

Piecework Puzzle: The Analysis of the Poem

Once completed, a puzzle provides an outright and coherent picture by means of which the labor of the puzzle maker reaches a definite end. However, if piece-worked, puzzle blunders the complete image of the art that has been decoded yet is now fragmented. Operating a likewise logic that derives the essential dynamics of the study from the analogy cited above, the symbolic analysis of the poetry over the imagery it employs is expected to bring the puzzle pieces together due to which the collaborating units forfeit their fragmented nature in order to bind together and form a complete image. The image, under discussion, is to mark a significant cornerstone beyond which the allegorical dimension of the poetry will expose itself, much akin to the image that is expected to emerge when the puzzle is completed.

This initiative, therefore, needs putting those images together initially. The way the poet starts her poetry strikes the attention with a gruesome image of her ‘massacred body that has been TV’d’. The obvious jolt of cold sensation of a massacred body additionally brings about a peripheral dimension of a darker meaning when the fact is taken into consideration that indeed a dead poet is reciting the poetry. At this point, the motive behind a speaking dead motif poses pivotal importance and the necessary insight is given by the poet herself who confessed frankly that the force behind her poem stemmed from a journalist who raised the question “Ms. Ziadah, don’t you think that everything would be resolved if you would just stop teaching so much hatred to your children?” (Ziadah 2011, 0:37). At that time Ziadah was working as a media spokesperson of the coalition. Rather than reflecting a hot debate as an answer, she opted to write a hearty poem

and ended it with an accordingly earnest answer "We teach life, sir!" nevertheless in order to reach the poet's omega -teaching of life- we need to take the whole phenomenon back to alpha which is a "TV'd massacre" (Ziadah 2011).

Massacre implies a gruesome death by the nature of its definition. The Massacre of the Rhineland Jews in 1096, the Nanjing Massacre in 1937, the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890, and many other mass killing incidents around the world report inhumanely brutal atrocities that are inflicted upon mainly innocent folks (Nirenberg 2002; Prucha 2005; Yamamoto 2000). By the same token, Doris Bergen (2003) defines the phenomenon as an "onslaught in great numbers" of people who are "not involved in an armed conflict" nor have the means to defend their souls (p. 102). Moreover, she emphasizes that the term connotes "hopelessness, brutality", and killing of the innocent such as "old people, women, and children" (p. 17). Azeem Ibrahim (2016) mentions massacre as "an atrocity", in the form of an uncontrolled frenzy of "violence inflicted upon the civilians" -unprotected people (p. 106).

With all these in mind, a massacre appears to be an unfair and dehumanizing form of killing in which a defenseless and weak population is targeted. By locating her body as the focus of a massacre, the poet makes use of imagery that has much potential to symbolize the actual killing of the people in Gaza, but greater than that, it also draws strong analogical ties with the silencing and drowning of their cultural identity. The poet who struggles to report bombings in Gaza seems to get the fatal blow from a journalist's question at the end of the day. The image of a massacred body duplicates itself while holding the image of bomb-claimed corpses, it also attaches itself to the 'accused victim' before cameras. This condition is given voice by the poet's words: "Today, my body was a TV'd massacre" (Ziadah 2011).

At this point, 'TV'd' appears to be a literary device to channel the poet's worldview, and this image is spread throughout the poem without actually drawing much attention. The phenomenon under discussion is denoted with the terminology MacGuffin. Originating in the cinema industry, MacGuffin has been additionally adapted to literature as a narrative device in which an object or concept that does not stand as a significant element in the narration sets the whole plot in motion. Despite being an unimportant particle of the plot, MacGuffin provides the essential driving force for the narration to enliven, mature, and resolve (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013; Harmon 2012). With a simple analogy, a MacGuffin serves as the bunny in a greyhound race. While the attention of the partaking audiences of the amusement is preliminarily on the hounds that are racing, the dogs chase after a mechanic bunny which sets the racing company running towards the finishing line. Based on this foretold metaphorical scheme when the race is considered as a process of meaning production, the dog race can be determined as the text and its sub-textual meanings. However, 'the bunny' that sets this whole mechanism into motion is not actually a dominant unit of the race, but it does activate the whole race. In this respect, calling McGuffin the bunny in the race renders a perfectly fitting metaphor.

Rather correspondingly, Ziadah places 'TV'd' phrase in the very beginning of her poetry, besides she frequently refrains this expression in the following lines as well. "Apartheid walls..occupied skies..enough bone-broken limbs to cover the sun..And a hundred dead, two hundred dead, and a thousand dead./And between that, war crime and massacre..." Throughout the poem the poet's images appear as visuals framed by a TV (Ziadah 2011). TV is a magical device that transports the most distant places on Earth to the proximity of a button away. Thanks to a switch of channels, a Londoner may enjoy the Bolshoi Ballet and seconds later watching the news bulletin from Argentina. Additionally, TV operates on a system which makes use of recording. If it is seen on TV, then it is recorded in cassettes and further than that in minds. In

2024, any person who has access to the necessary means can witness the assassination of Kennedy, the hateful speeches of Hitler, and the way Elvis Presley danced. Another point about the TV emerges as a debilitating factor. Despite demonstrating the ongoing phenomena that are showcased, a TV draws an opaque line of glass to reduce reality into a two-dimensional abstraction. The fire on the screen does not burn what is beyond the glass line. Nevertheless, for those who are trapped inside, the fire maintains the state of reality. That is why, at times when TV serves more than a swift colorful bunny, the phrase acts as a signpost for the meaning of the poetry to follow a route map that is marked by a Kafkaesque alienation².

Based on the cited premises, Ziadah's TV'd images reflect the notion of a multidimensional MacGuffin. The poet states that the destruction in Gaza is happening before the eyes and memory of the whole world and underlines this fact with the TV'd image. It is not possible to deny the truth which is before the very eyes, and it should not be. For this reason, television plays an important role in the announcement of the truth. While she is accused of hatred, Ziadah thinks that she is massacred, referring to the righteousness she is forced to lose because of the identity imposed on her as an offender victim. At the same time, her body which is massacred and Tv'd refers to the destruction in Gaza. The poet lays strong bonds to associate her body with her homeland. Therefore, a massacred body poses much liability to symbolize the destruction of the Palestinian cities and the killing of the people.

The glass line effect of TV contributes to the poet's message with the bitter taste of hopelessness. Once captured and framed by the screen, the suffering of the Palestinian people transforms into an abstract reality. Electrified planar pictures in motion melt into a pot of paradoxical proximity, what is before the eyes is distanced miles away by the same mechanism. The debated feature of the media is darkly humorized in the poem as televised (Tv'd) realities to highlight the gap between the reality and the audience. While emphasizing this fact, Ziadah is subjected to the tyranny of a tragic condition that prevents her from mentioning the theme of humor. It implies the fact that the pain, destruction, and massacre ongoing in the homeland was announced to the whole world yet did not go any further than being announced. Underscoring this fact the poet cries out: "And I recount, I recount a hundred dead, a thousand dead./Is anyone out there?/ Will anyone listen?" yet these questions remain unanswered since poet is isolated by the frame of a Tv (Ziadah 2011). The TV'd massacre is a symbolic picture of what is happening turning into a massacre on display. The picture that the poet draws with imagery and symbolism is a relatively similar interpretation of Picasso's painting *Guernica* that was once painted using brush and paint in order to demonstrate Nazi atrocities. In this respect, the phrase Tv'd stands for an "alienation" process by means of "technology" contributing to nothing apart from the obvious loss of "human values" (Erden 2024, 132).

The 'sound-bite' imagery, which is in a tandem relationship with the TV image of the poem, expresses another striking issue. A soundbite is a "short recording" that targets to capture "the essence" of the whole event. In journalism, "a condensed footage" or a properly chosen phrase to delineate an actual event is referred to by this expression (Butler 2006, 174-175). It can be thought that through this image, Ziadah expresses a very clearly expressed dissatisfaction or rather an inadequacy. In her poems, she speaks of bombed cities, thousands of dead people, traumatized children if they haven't died yet, apartheid walls, and the sky that has thence been occupied, and

² Kafkaesque alienation refers to a deep sense of estrangement, powerlessness, and isolation experienced by an individual confronting illogical, oppressive, and impersonal societal forces. This type of alienation is characterized by a feeling of helplessness against unseen or incomprehensible authority, a loss of identity, and the futility of efforts to understand or escape one's predicament, as depicted in the works of Franz Kafka.

she clearly states that all these events are too big to be reduced to a 3-5 minute clip. In order to emphasize this simple truth, the poet emphasizes that no soundbite, a demarcated anaphora which she repeats seven times before ending her poem, can undo the destruction that has been experienced.

*And no sound-bite, no sound-bite I come up with, no matter how good my English gets,
no sound-bite, no sound-bite, no sound-bite, no sound-bite will bring them back to life.*

No sound-bite will fix this.

We teach life, sir.

We teach life, sir.

We Palestinians wake up every morning to teach the rest of the world life, sir (Ziadah 2011).

Then, the poet embraces an educational tone which she declares heartily with the words "We teach life, sir!" yet, the type of education she provides encompasses two fields (Ziadah 2011). The apparent one refers to the pedagogical processes for the students, the symbolic depth of the imagery delves deep into the textual referencing and reaches the declarative-informative tone of the poetry towards the world. At this point, the declarative teaching undertaken by the poet is outlined by the 'TV'd' image that has been silently drawing frame after frame in the background in order to capture the instantiation of Gaza since the beginning of the poem. In this respect the McGuffin of the poem-TV gets to work one more time and the poet contemplates on education as a labor of "...mov[ing] those that are desensitized to terrorist blood" (Ziadah 2011). The dark sarcasm she places at the core of this resolution criticizes the way the world is inclined to see the people of Gaza as terrorists. She refers to being a terrorist from an ironic perspective. In her words, she terrorizes the world with her bleeding, massacred body. In this respect, a terrorist who terrorizes by being terrorized is an epitomized figure of irony.

Then the poet embarks on a secondary labour of teaching. This time she refers to the way the world approaches the war in Gaza. She quotes cliché phrases that have been frequented in the media. "a human story-not a political- we condemn and we deplore and we reject" (Ziadah 2011). For those who are familiar with the jargon of the government spokespersons, the word choice reminds of a journalist reporting official statements over an armed conflict. But in the end, abstract political ideas can yield very concrete catastrophes inflicted upon humanity. What needs to be noted here is that the political and humanist dimensions are in a close relationship that feeds off each other. The thought of 'they are convicted because they are guilty' soon gives rise to the thought of 'they are guilty because they are convicted', and this acceptance creates a dimension of reality as an autonomous mechanism. Ziadah is against this vicious circle and emphasizes the viciousness of the cycle with accentuated words. She does not deny the human-dimensions of the war, yet she undermines the deaf ear of the world when it comes to the political ground of the issue. She regards "the human story not a political one" notion as a tabloidized, further abstracted form of distancing (Ziadah 2011). The story, she mentions, that is tailored to fit in sound-bites, turns the phenomenon into a tragedy showcase blurring the actual political reasons behind it. So long as the pivotal attention is on the tragic outcomes of the war, the incentive behind it is to be free and active. Therefore, Ziadah uses the expression "we condemn and we deplore and we reject" with an allegorical skillfulness (Ziadah 2011). With the very same jargon the world reacts to the war in Gaza, she criticizes afar, distanced, and ineffective stance of these countries towards the war. To put it succinctly, words do not count but the death toll does. In order to underscore this fact even more saliently the poet voices the following lines:

And a hundred dead, two hundred dead, and a thousand dead.

And between that, war crime and massacre, I vent out words and smile “not exotic”, “not terrorist”.

And I recount, I recount a hundred dead, a thousand dead.

Is anyone out there?

Will anyone listen?

...

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre

And let me just tell you, there's nothing your UN resolutions have ever done about this.

And no sound-bite, no sound-bite I come up with, no matter how good my English gets, no sound-bite, no sound-bite, no sound-bite, no sound-bite will bring them back to life (Ziadah, 2011).

Another symbolist resolution of the poem unravels as a reaction of the West that goes under the image of being “sorry for cattle over Gaza” (Ziadah 2011). Due to the debilitating conditions of the war, not only people but animals as well starve and get killed in the battlefield territories. This is a direct consequence of the violence inflicted upon the land that is marked as the enemy zone. Despite the sadness of the truth that animals fit the category of innocent victims, children and unarmed civilians who lose their lives are, at least, equally mistreated in this carnage. This is a simple respect, and a heart that feels sorry for animal life while bombs keep exploding on the lives of thousands of civilians is clearly missing a touch of justice. This lack of common sense paves the way for a form of thought in which human life poses a secondary place inferior to animal life. In other words, western sadness for the cattle stands as an image of the dehumanizing approach that is shown against human life. Then the poet ironically responds to this mentality with what has been passed earlier by the West to react to the war: “we condemn and we deplore and we reject” (Ziadah 2011).

Speaking of the concrete projections of abstract thoughts, the poet makes use of three striking imagery namely, occupation, apartheid and the occupied sky. These images remind of the racist bigotry imposed on the so-called inferior peoples across the world from South Africa to concentration camps. The occupation inherently implies a process of “forced presence” (Fredrickson 2002, 9-10). Once a party's presence is forced, the other's existence is forced to diminish and be limited. However, standing as a symbol of freedom, the blue sky also delineates an excessive sort of freedom loss once occupied. Indeed, the image points to the total loss of the entire concept of freedom. It is a Socratic mode of thought, which would compare two beings in terms of a greater quality that would stand as a touchstone. Only this time the loss of the touchstone annihilates the definition itself too. The dim and twilight could be compared with reference to a greater source of light, the sun for instance. In this analogy, Ziadah stands the ground of a blinded man for her debarred freedom with the imagery of the occupied sky.

We teach life, sir.

We Palestinians teach life after they have occupied the last sky.

We teach life after they have built their settlements and apartheid walls, after the last skies (Ziadah, 2011).

The final imagery of the analysis emerges as a list of dead people expanding tens, and hundreds

and forcing the limits of thousands. The symbolic elaboration on a death list stretching endlessly is a clear reference to the loss of lives in great numbers. Mass murders are a common tenet of not only wars but also “pogroms, holocausts, and genocides” (Fredrickson 2002, 9-20). Case examples can enumerate chronologic events across continents. The foremost known ones are also the most recent ones that still pulse as images in the minds of those who have been through Nazi genocides. The concentration camps that literally consumed the lives of thousands left behind lists of names saying no more than a cold enumeration in the form of obituaries. Yet those lists were stained by the blood of human atrocities and tears of suffering. By the same analogy, the tapping sound of the typewriters of Mr. Schindler and the Iron Cross medal Mr. Erkin slammed on the table transcend their physical entities and symbolize thousands of lives that have been rescued (Encyclopedia of Holocaust 2024; Şalom 2008).

A list, in this respect, is more than a clustered bulk of names. When it is used as a particle of the imagery of a poem lamenting after a war, it represents the ongoing death toll that feeds on debarred rights and claimed lives. At this point, Ziadah's list is a blood and tear-stained one yet drained by the restriction of a sound-bite word limit. A list, in this respect, is a condensed recording of an actual phenomenon. Thousands of dead bodies can be enumerated on a piece of paper. Yet once even this list is demanded to fit in limits, the act becomes a condensation of the condensed. It not only doubles the scale of suffering in the form of 'list of lists', but at the same time, quite paradoxically, a list in limits drains the grave and serious essence of the mass destruction by further abstracting. It is a form of TV'd-framed filter for reality, the parodied soul of the logocentric stale truths. Yet the poet counters this wish with the striking image of “enough bone-broken limbs to cover the sun” (Ziadah 2011). While the journalist's ambition to abstract deaths as a list in limits, Ziadah discloses that list as concrete images in the form of broken limbs flooding over the lists to reach the sun. It is a clash of sheer reality versus representation of it reduced in numbers.

How about you?

Do you have enough bone-broken limbs to cover the sun?

Hand me over your dead and give me the list of their names in one thousand two hundred word limits (Ziadah 2011).

Pieced Together: The Gestalt of the Imagery

As stated at the beginning of the study, Rafeef Ziadah's poem *We teach life, sir* is a literary work that draws attention by means of its strong imagery. The existence of the symbolic meaning behind this attention-grabbing imagery is revealed through the images that are presented at the very beginning of the poem and tend to turn into an almost metaphysical phenomenon. Indeed, the great symbolic narrative revealed by all these images finds its embodiment in the imagery of the poem and overflows from this body, emerging as the exposition of a greater whole. Based on the example of Mona Lisa's face not being just a nose, eyes, and a mouth, but rather these parts coming together to form a supra-unit narrative; looking at the entirety of the units that the poem lists one by one as isolated images will mean reaching the ultimate goal of the study. Starting from this point, Ziadah's imagery-based symbolic expansions have been identified as follows.

A war in which innocent people are mass-extermiated is tabloidized through the media and reduced to a limited proportion of virtual reality. This politically based human tragedy cannot find the response it is looking for and continues day by day in the hands of the cycle of deadlock. People are separated by visible and invisible apartheid walls, and on the basis of this separation, the occupied people are forced to lose their freedom. Although the massacre takes place before

the eyes, it is met with an ironic and perhaps paradoxical apathy.

At this juncture the findings in question provide a theoretical ground on which the overarching image of the poem can rise with persuasive credibility. In the light of what has hitherto been cited above, it can be concluded that the Gestalt narrative of the poem portrays a silenced sort of genocide which is witnessed and observed through the lenses of a trauma spectacle. "Silenced genocide" is a form of "mass human killing" that does not attract adequate attention or is "systematically ignored" and disregarded by "the media or governments" (Totten & Bartrope 2009, 517-520). This destruction, which causes great trauma in human life, often fails to attract the attention it is supposed to due to the status quo; political, cultural, and economic reasons. Silenced sorts of genocide feed on misrepresented, manipulatively interpreted, and underreported reality distorting the real events (Bilal 2023; Salam 1988).

The trauma spectacle phenomenon, which constitutes the other face of the Gestalt narrative, is in an adaptive reality with the silenced genocide phenomenon, a condition that can only be described with the term paradox. The reason behind this claim lies in the definition of the spectacle. The violence, destruction, or suffering of the people are commodified as sensational realities yet consumed by the audiences without true involvement with the humane essence of the affected people (Sontag 2003; Weissman 2005). The paradox at this juncture stems from the handicap of developing a desensitized perception of reality despite its being before the eyes, a properly fitting definition of it with a symbolic image in this respect could be 'a Tv'd massacre'.

Conclusion

This study is entitled '*Mortui Vivos Docent*'- 'the dead teach the living'. The quote is conventionally seen above the entrances of anatomy laboratories. Nevertheless, the exacerbating course of the world is forcing the dead out of laboratories, history books and TV'd screens to teach us, the living, the sanctity and preciousness of life. It was enlightened Beilby Porteus in 1759 who had claimed: "One murder made a villain, millions a hero" (p.12) that would echo in Stalin's modernist mentality pitying the death of one person as a tragedy but of millions as statistics, in the 1930s.

Reports notify us that an approximate number of 6 million Jewish people were killed during the holocaust years (Holocaust Encyclopedia). When articulated like this, the tone of the words cannot avoid the apathy of statistics, nevertheless, only a few concerned people are abreast of the name 'Arthur Kahn' who is believed to be the first person to lose his life in the genocide years. Not a number in the list; but a son, a brother, a draftsman, a chess player, a student of medicine hoping to cure diseases, all of which have been terminated with the punctuation of an executing bullet. If analyzed from this perspective, 6 million people are not statistics anymore but individual lives that are marred, claimed, traumatized, and irreversibly lost.

Today thousands more are losing their lives from all corners of the world for no apparent guilt or justifying reason. One of the hot spots, maybe the hottest one, is Gaza, Palestine. What started as an armed conflict has turned into a genocidal mass murder of civilians including the old, the weak, women, and children and it is the very same heart that has once ached for Nazi holocausts that is still aching for the dying civilians in the ancient lands of Abrahamic religions.

6 million may be a high numeric value and tiresome to reach counting, yet it all starts with 1 repeating itself six million times. Based on this analogy, in addition to the exemplified and debated mindset of the analysis in the preceding sections, this scientific undertaking employs a secondary motivation as the heartset (!) of the study. "Whoever saves a life, it will be as if he saved all of humanity" (The Quran, 5:32; The Talmud, Sanhedrin 37a). Operating back verse, the

doctrine holds the unfair killing of one innocent life as equal to the death of all humanity. By this very principle, the purpose of not only this study but also Rafeef Ziadah's poem entitled *We teach life, sir* can be summarized as an effort spent for a peaceful world where people can live despite their differences, instead of dying and killing because of them.

We are living in the post-modern era that drastically differs from an earlier phase- modernism- in which mankind mastered the art of killing. As a verbal reference to the breaking point from this stale-bitter truth, our times carry the insignia of being the post phase of modernity, much like a wish for letting the bygone be bygone. As we leave behind the gloomy shadow of the catastrophic armed conflicts in which human life is disregarded for the sake of radical grand narratives, the responsibility to be the representative and architect of an era in which human life is preserved and deemed sacred is on all of us.

Ziadah, who fights a similar battle, argues that a genuine awareness lies at the basis of this architectural design, but even though she finds the eyes she is looking for, the reaction she expects is delayed and human life is being disregarded day by day. For this reason, the image of TV'd that appears in the title of the poem creates a skeletal infrastructure that is repeated frequently throughout almost the entire poem. All other imagery elements are defined and transmitted through this television frame. The image acts as a filter of alienation that works rather effectively, in perfect harmony with the argument of the poem. The concrete reality on one side of the screen turns into abstract imagery on the other side. This abstraction is not a result of media broadcasting but rather stems from developing desensitization for what is witnessed. At this point, Ziadah issues a couple of more images that have not been scrutinized yet. Before ending her words, she asks if there is anyone listening and she repeats it. Then with a Kafkaesque dignity, she veils the dead bodies and covers the ears of children so that they won't hear the bombings. In this position, she draws a closure saying, "We Palestinians wake up every morning to teach the rest of the world life, sir" (Ziadah 2011).

The allegorical tone of the poet and the intonational emphasis in her live performances emphasize the word 'life', and the way she teaches it to the world is by losing it, *Mortui vivos docent*. She defines her condition as a dark sort of spectacle where tragedy does not move any further than its showcased definition. Thus, the poet diagnoses the other side of the screen with the trauma spectacle. The high number of deaths, destroyed cities, apartheid walls, and occupied lands add upon each other to build the grand image of a genocide. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's idea of 'seeing' provides a central framework for questioning our level of perception in the face of these tragedies. For him, seeing is not just a physical process performed with the eye, but a bodily and phenomenological relationship with the world; responsibility arises in the face of what we see. However, in a world surrounded by contemporary media images, as Ziadah also expresses, this act of seeing has become an alienation. Even if the eye sees, the body does not feel, and therefore ethical responsibility is suspended. This situation coincides with Kristeva's concept of the abject: an 'object of disgust' is formed in the face of images that we can neither fully accept nor distance ourselves from. In particular, the frequent display of dead bodies in the media shapes the distanced relationship established with the viewer through the experience of the abject, both as a disgust and a repressed guilt. These images can no longer be completely left outside or digested inside. However, this ethical-political uncertainty can also be read through the concept of liminality. Today's war victims, refugees or occupied peoples are no longer completely dead or living, neither citizens nor enemies, neither subjects nor objects. While this liminality erodes the identity boundaries that fix the modern world, it also creates a gray area where the human rights discourse becomes dysfunctional. It is at this point that the principle of *mortui vivos docent*

is updated again: The dead speaking from the liminal zones, the screams of the ignored, teach us how weak the foundations of not only life but also seeing, understanding and responsibility are. What has been cited as striking imagery reminds of the actual footage instantiations of racist holocausts of the past. However, the TV'd McGuffin, insufficient sound-bites, the indictment of hate crime and unanswered questions alter the sort of racism generating a new one. Therefore, the Gestalt narrative of the remaining images depicts a genocide which cannot be comprehensively labeled as silent but silenced because of the passive spectacle the world is in.

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