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"In the ruins of the everyday": Cairo and its abandoned children in street situations

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“In the Ruins of the Everyday”: Cairo and its Abandoned Children in Street Situations

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by Maryam Hisham Fouad

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To mama, baba, Salma and Omar; for being an exceptional and a loving family.

To Mostafa; for your ability to make me smile when the world feels a bit too much.

To Zizo; for introducing me to anthropology and the true meaning of friendship.

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Abstract:

This thesis aims at understanding Cairo's production and reproduction through the eyes of the street children, who are the abandoned communities living in street situations. The street children are the main storytellers of Cairo as a city. The research moves away from seeing them as a burden on society or as mere subjects of poverty alleviation and development programs and rethinks their contribution to the city, its labor and to understandings of the body, life and death. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork over a seven months period, in Syada Zaynab, Abu El reesh, Dokki, Maadi, Heliopolis, and downtown neighbourhoods, the research theorizes Cairo specifically, and cities more generally, from the perspective of their marginalised populations.

This research thus starts by mapping Cairo as an exhausted space in which exhausted bodies live and produce the city. It is also written from and about post-revolutionary Cairo; a space traced through its rhythms of living a revolution, and the decaying of this revolution. Using this temporality, the thesis shows how, when it comes to the street children, Cairo is a death world, in which the street children are ungrievable and are seen as bare life. Yet the ethnographic fieldwork also reveals their endurance of time as as labourers producing the city. In this thesis they are neither criminals nor victims but rather just children, labourers, lovers and dreamers. The street children thus create lives beyond the fixed interpellation of the state and the constructed society. Cairo therefore also escapes its fixed production through hegemonic powers and discourses. This scholarship uses three conceptual frameworks; bodies, space and time, to propose a new understanding of Cairo from the point of view of the street children.

Prologue:

I have found a small notebook; a red one, with the face of a man holding a sign that says; "bread, freedom, social justice". I open it to find me writing too many things that I do not remember writing. One specific writing stopped me;

"23.4.2012

4:39 Am

Dear God,

I beg you.

Bring me face to face with my passions and allow me to hug them, not run away from them." Years later, and I come face to face with my passion, this is my passion. I did not run away. This journey has transformed me; made me braver, made me kinder and made me. As I decided not to conclude, I hope this work gets to live forever.

Several years later, it's 2017, and I am sitting on the stairs of an AUC building, sending my last paper out as an undergrad, feeling that I still have so much more to give, I cry my heart out for being forced out/graduating. Zizo sends me a message saying you will be back soon. Here, I am, almost done with my MA, feeling I have so much more to give. I was brought face to face with my passions, and I believe it was the greatest of blessings. I hope this journey gets to see no end.

If the street is a killer in disguise it is also a space of freedoms; a space of love and potentialities.

This thesis is for Cairo, and everyone who is struggling to build a life in it.

This thesis is for my street children, and for their stories that construct the city.

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This thesis is very dear to my heart, it was written at a time where I thought the world was ending, and in which all my motivation disappeared, and I stared at too many walls and saw only dead ends. And truly, I couldn't have finished it without the amazing people I have in my life who always pushed me beyond what I thought were my boundaries. The words you are about to read came so intuitively with little planning and almost no order. I wrote this thesis from the bottom of my heart; I had cried and laughed with it more than with anyone else, I had believed in it, fought with it and hated it at great parts. It made me me, and I made it, through stories and long nights sitting on the streets of Cairo. So I begin by appreciating Cairo, the city that I grew up in and that constructed me, may our love-hate relationship help stir more thoughts and questions, and may our late night conversations never end. It is also pivotal to appreciate and thank my interlocutors, the street children of Cairo. May we one day meet again, in a world less traumatizing than this one, where I am sure you will all still be as brave as you always were, and where your stories will continue to construct the spaces and the times; so beautifully, so full of possibilities.

This thesis could not have been done, really; without the immense and wonderful support of my thesis committee; your guidance and belief in me made all the difference in the world.

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Thank you SamuSocial for being so generously welcoming from the very first day I came to the office. You trusted me, helped me and taught me everything, while waiting for nothing in return. Special thanks to Mr. Sherif, for teaching me how to act on the streets, what certain things mean, but most importantly, for taking me to the most amazing restaurants to eat kebda, or fool w Taameya, and Basbousa. You give everything you have, so lovingly, and you make field visits so loving, exciting, and funny.

This is for all the friends who chose to stay and support me even when I was too emotional, too stressed, and too mean.

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This for Zizo, AbdelAziz Ezz el Arab. You have changed my life on the very first day I walked into your class in 2016. I always remember you, barging in class, loudly singing, or reciting a poem. I always remember how my very first presentation with you was supposed to be only twenty minutes but ended up being four hours. I remember how excited you are for the things you love, for making everyone come together at Iftar at El Gahsh, or at your house, for taking us to theatre or movies, for talking about history, politics, and research! When I was about to graduate from my BA in political science, you asked me if it were too late to change majors. You said, "What about anthropology?" It was indeed too late to change majors, but I applied for an MA in anthropology right away. When I was asked why did you convert to anthropology, I always said "Zizo". You always inspire me, understand me, and encourage me. I am forever grateful for our friendship, for our encounters, for you calling me "Maryamah", and for the fact that everyone says "you have a minor in Ezz el Arab". I love you with all my heart ya Zizo, this thesis is because of you, and for you.

Anyone who knows me knows how attached I am to my family. If I do pour my heart out, I will write endless papers on love and appreciation that they, themselves won't read!!

This is for my mother, Manar, the light of my life and all the reasons why. You have changed me; from someone who is pessimistic and scared, to someone who is optimistic and believes in themselves. Your hug, Duaa, and love is what makes me wake up every morning passionate. You are always excited for me, for the MA, for jobs, and for any small or big life events. You see right through me, you know how to comfort me, and you always remind me of the values you have instilled in me. No words can ever do you justice, thank you for being the greatest blessing from God, thank you for being the best mother anyone can ask for.

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Introduction:

"āhtf htāf: ābn ālmkān w ālẓrf"[1]

(Mostafa Ibrahim, El-Manifesto)

Blood, chaos, and screams; everyone is running in all directions. Fire, coldness, songs of Sheikh Imam. An eye lost, two shattered limbs, and a broken heart over the loved one you have just lost. Tents, prayers, and one thousand chants that are memorized by heart. Death, life, and everything in between. A revolution. Trust, betrayal, and smoke that infiltrates the lungs. Tears, lies, fears, feelings of victory, of owning the world, of achieving all dreams and aspirations. Bullets and hope; tear gas and truce talks and you end up running in what felt like an endless street. Tahrir square in my imaginary is a spacious space with people and flags. The revolution is a word that shaped the past ten years of my life, and Tahrir is the only space with which I have identified the revolution. Yet, what happens when a space is mutilated? What happens when the revolution is no longer a revolution and when the spaces are no longer spaces in which generations have built their dreams and aspirations? What happens when the streets are obliterated, militarised, and transformed, no longer home to those who feel estranged? In 2019, I walked across Tahrir to conduct my fieldwork; the streets suddenly felt odd. They were no longer painted with blood and the walls of Mohamed Mahmoud stood naked after their Graffiti has been erased. I walked the streets of downtown Cairo and felt the systematic erasure of the nine-year young revolution. The revolution was dying and we were dying too. I walked across Tahrir, and into Mohamed Mahmoud and prayed; not only for those who died, but for those who continue to live in post-revolutionary Cairo. Even with the streets left with no traces of the revolution; they weren't quiet. People were silenced but they were still loud. The streets continued being awake at

[1] Chant a chant, build the place and opportunity.

midnight, the shops were open and the Ahwas (coffee houses) beamed with life. Street children were scattered on the pavements, they walked nomadically; gesturing for passerby's for food, money, and a smile. Through the attempt of the state to silence the streets and erase the traces of the revolution; the kids still murmured to me stories of the eighteen days. And just like the revolution with all its contradictions; I came to meet post-revolutionary Cairo and understand its streets through those hushed voices. The children painted a picture of a revolution I had been so affected by, but it was a different kind of art; one that cannot be erased; it lives forever in their hearts. The streets were always the home that welcomed the children when no one else did; they know how to maneuver it; where to hide, where to sleep, and where to eat. Most importantly, they know how to run away from policemen, when to stand still and face it all. The children painted Tahrir as their refuge and recounted how they welcomed the few million revolutionaries on the streets and taught them everything they know. The revolution lives through these stories and through remembering them. But most importantly, we live through remembering the names of everyone who died and through carving the names of those who killed them on our tongues. The children remember too; the blood, the screams, and the ruptures, the betrayals; they mainly remember the betrayals. Through the stories of the revolution and the many more stories of betrayals; this thesis produces and reproduces an understanding of Cairo from the point of view of street children. Cairo may be heavily studied; by historians, literariness, political scientists, and many more; but it was never understood through the eyes of street children. "During the 18 days of the revolution; we welcomed everyone on the streets as if we had visitors sleeping over. It was our home, and now we had to teach everyone how to sleep, eat, and just survive the streets of Cairo" (Karim, a street child in Tahrir). There is almost no narrative of street children being part of the 18 days of the 2011 revolution. Throughout my fieldwork the revolution was a frequent reference. From wishing for the return of the days of Mubarak because drugs were cheaper, to critiquing the status quo with the police state's grip getting stronger. The precarity of

living on the streets worsened in Post-revolutionary Cairo, now the street children are at higher risk of being detained and/or brutalized by the police. The revolution here acts as a rupture of time and space; and the streets are rendered scarier than before. It is important to study revolutions as anti crises and as spaces of continuities; Janet Roitman (2013, 29) in her book "Anti-crisis" elaborates that"the conviction that conclusions about the past are necessary to an understanding of the future is challenged by the idea that the future is to be apprehended as indiscernible". The future that the revolution created is not indiscernible; it is in fact a future that is full of possibilities, and for once a future that of continuities. I specifically chose to study post-revolutionary Cairo because it is another manifestation of confinement. Cairo is confining, suffocating, and limiting; especially post-revolutionary Cairo, which was expected to be an open space of freedom, having shortly experienced freedom in 2011. Cairo is, therefore; the experience of waiting, hoping, and wishing with an entrapment of the past that cannot be escaped. We all feel confined in the city that never sleeps; the city of the dead.

I decided to take on the project of understanding Cairo, my hometown; but from a completely different set of eyes; the eyes of those who have seen Cairo in its true colors, straight from sitting on the pavements and living on the streets; the street children. My journey was a journey of staying with the trouble of Cairo; indulging myself in the very present moment of street children recounting to me stories of what does it mean to live Cairo —Not live in Cairo, but live Cairo. I say live the city because Cairo is survived, lived, and felt immensely, it is not something that passes by you, or by which you pass. We become Cairo and Cairo becomes us. The street children made the city liveable; they constructed the rhythms of the streets and ordered the city through their "unruly" categorized bodies. This thesis is a work on bodies, spaces, and times —in and of Cairo; all in an attempt to understand it, or at least some versions of it; from the eyes of the street children. Walking the streets of Cairo, my eyes could never get accustomed to the children sleeping in gardens or selling tissue boxes at light stops. Their bodies

were too small, too fragile, and too dirty. At the beginning of my fieldwork, all I could feel was misery; I was mourning their life/death. They often wear no shoes, and even on the coldest of nights they walk barefoot. Shoes, slippers, and socks are luxuries they cannot afford. Water is also scarce; thus, if found; it was most likely to be used for drinking and never for washing one's hand/face/body. Definitely not clothes. Food is either found as leftovers from kind people or bought with a maximum of a few pounds. The most popular dish is not a dish but a plastic sandwich bag filled with Koshary; usually for a pound or two. Koshary in plastic plates is for the richer kids living on the streets. After a few hours of fieldwork, I noticed how dirt started compiling on my skin, and under my nails. I started itching from ant bites and had several rashes. The spaces around me; the streets and the pavements affected my body. I realized that the time I spend on the streets is like an energy that affects my body. A rupture takes place; I start itching and my body gets agitated. The children mainly suffered from scabies; so the smallest bodily interaction meant that I get scabies too. They also suffered from cuts on their feet from walking barefoot and stepping on glass. I noticed the changes in my own body, and how I took a shower the very minute I stepped into my house. But I started to notice how it affected my interlocutors and how they interacted with me. They would hesitate before they hugged me or even shook my hand. They felt how the dirt compiling on their skin made them unworthy of any human interaction; maybe because no one ever offered to shake their hands, and certainly no one ever opened their arms as an invitation for a hug. Affective relationships formed between the groups who shared similar ways of living, but around others who did not live on the streets; the children had to constrain themselves. They first showed respect by not swearing nor smoking in front of me. But as time passed, they started to obliterate the walls they built around themselves and they let me in. They told me their secrets and I listened. I listened to stories of girls being raped, and of men raping girls. I listened to stories of abuse, of violence, of neglect. I knew they trusted me when they started telling me stories of falling in love, of having sex (older interlocutors), and of

cuddling through a cold night. I started my fieldwork asking questions about the violence that shape the streets of Cairo and ended it asking; what is love? And how can potentialities become an insurrection?

I was mourning the lives of my interlocutors, grieving as I walked the streets of Cairo the human lives I thought were lost. I could not grieve with (Haraway, 39). I have been seeing only victims in small bodies scattered on the streets of Cairo. As I spent more time with my interlocutors; and as I wrote about death, I had also discovered life. “It matters what thoughts think thoughts; it matters what stories tell stories” (Ibid, 39). The stories of this thesis are stories that tell stories and thoughts that think thoughts; they are not thoughtless stories that I gathered from research on the streets of Cairo. The stories are stories to be grieved with, to be lived with, to be always remembered. These stories leak because they are not fixated in space or time; they are indeed situated in Cairo and the year 2019/20, but they leak and produce a Cairo in a new sensorium. This thesis is the milieu where I argue that there is constant becoming and movement and transformations. This thesis obliterates the lobster or the pincer (in the Deleuzian sense) that fixates the children in street situations in one category and instead create spaces where stories become fluid and changing.

I have been always fascinated with Cairo. It intrigued me to ask questions, excited me to unravel its hidden parts, and urged me to fathom it. But, I came in this MA program knowing only this, I want to base my fieldwork in Cairo, and nowhere else. When I was applying for this program, we were asked to write what we wanted to do; and I remember writing about the revolution. I wanted to do something that is of a continuation of the revolution; something that shatters fixed conceptions, something that changes, that lingers in the mind of those who read it. I wanted to write up a revolution. In a world full of possibilities; I, of course; wanted to do all things and everything related to social justice; a prison ethnography, poverty, confinement. I was lost in this world full of possibilities, and I was scared that maybe I have to give up this overly

romanticized notion of the revolution, ground myself more into the fixity I so very hate. My very first semester, my friend and I spent a whole weekend, running around police stations, hospitals, and even mashrht zenihom (morgue) looking for a boy we had met on the streets, his name was Zeyad, he was around 12 or 13 years old and he was working on the streets to support his family. Zeyad, later on, happened to be the main inspiration for my thesis. Walking the streets of Cairo, one fails to miss encounters with the street children, and I had many encounters that I believed that this was my sign. I wanted to research the street children in Cairo. After several field visits, I decide to research Cairo from the point of view of the street children. I argue that the street children are the bodies who construct the space in which they live by being hustlers, labourers and lovers, and therefore the city becomes constructed through the time they spend on it; and hence, produce a new spatiotemporal construction of Cairo from their point of view.

Almost all the debates on street children are done under developmental or policy work. But the topic is under-theorized ethnographically. My scope of research as holding the street children as the main storytellers of Cairo as a city is an addition to the field. I also write from and about post-revolutionary Cairo. A space which had changed immensely in the past few years, and therefore adds to the field the perspective of the street children who had lived a revolution and lived the failure of this revolution; and recount how the streets have changed from before, during and after the revolution. I believe I am deconstructing two fixed conceptions about both Cairo and the street children. I am adding to the field that Cairo can be both a space in which trauma is interwoven with loving and draming. The street children are also argued beyond the fixed interpolation of the state and the society, by society I mean the hegemonic media and upper classes along with the larger state apparatus, which construct an understanding and a categorization of the street children in Cairo. However, in this thesis they are neither criminals nor victims but rather just children, laborers, lovers, and dreamers. During my fieldwork; I saw things through three main concepts. I believe that the street children are bodies that are produced

by the state and the society as fixed categories through which they are always expected to act; for example as criminals and runaways. These bodies are also making the space in which they live in, and the space makes them simultaneously. So they are not only produced by the state and the society; they are, however, produced through the space in which they live. And, the bodies in spaces, and the spaces that make the bodies; are captured through the time spent on the streets of Cairo. My main quest is to understand how is Cairo constructed through the eyes of street children? Thus, I use the three concepts of bodies, space, and time; to unravel a new understanding of Cairo that is from a different lens; through the eyes of street children. I map the city of Cairo through the rhythms of time, the production of space, and finally, through the production of the subject, or in this case, the category of the body. Space, time and bodies I theorize do not exist in a vacuum, they exist in relation to each other and they can, therefore, be constructed through or understood in relation to death and labor; and thus, unwrap the new understanding of Cairo from the point of view of the street children. In relation to Cairo; I unravel what is a death world in relation to space production, who are the living dead in relation to the production of the subject/category of bodies, and what is it like to live death in relation to time. For death I chose to engage with both Mbembe and Emerson theoretically. I also asked what is labor on the streets of Cairo (Space)? What is it like to spend time laboring? And who are the laboring bodies on the streets and how are they constructing Cairo through their labor? And finally, I believe that thinking in terms of bodies, spaces, and time can help unravel the potentia that exists in each of these concepts; I ask what does love do? What is hope? And what is it like to dream on the streets of Cairo?

I believe that the main accomplishment of this thesis is holding the street children as the protagonists of the telling of Cairo as a city; one that is different from the Cairo of the rich, or the historians, or the novelists or media outlets. It also provided a new construction of Cairo that can be important for the historicization of this temporal era (what does post-revolutionary Cairo look

like)? I believe this thesis challenges the hegemonic discourses constructed by NGOs or governmental institutions which always fail to understand the point of view of the street children. On an ethnographic level, this thesis has changed my relationship with and understanding of Cairo. It also changed my conception of how should one undergo researches to unravel and understand questions that were not asked before. Finally, may this thesis unwrap all the resistance, the revolutions, the moments of change that the street children construct out of Cairo.

Background

"و حبوب سنبلة تموت ستملأ الوادي سنابل"[2]

"w ḥbwb snbla tmwt stmlā ālwādy snābl"

Mahmoud Darwish

Al-Qahirah; the conqueror, the vanquisher, the victorious. The city that never sleeps. The city of the dead. The city of the one thousand Minarets. As everyone from Cairo calls it Masr; *Umm Al Dunia* "the mother of the world"; Cairo becomes indeed the mother for all the children who choose to take its streets as their home. I am producing and reproducing a city I thought I knew. I am walking its streets and unable to recognize it; how did Cairo establish itself as victorious; indeed powerful, contradictory, and unfair? I was overwhelmed by the space, I admired it and was repelled by it at the same time. I reminded myself that everything must exist in a relationship to other things; the conqueror must be conquered. The vanquisher must be defeated. And the victory will never last. *w ākyd fyh ywm httrd fyh ālmẓālm، ābyḍ ʿlī kl mẓlwm* āswd ʿlī kl ẓālm — I kept repeating as I walked the streets of Cairo; "And there will come a day where all oppressions will end. It will be a white day for every oppressed and a black day for every oppressor." There will come a day; I am certain. But I wasn't certain of this; is Cairo the oppressor or the oppressed? The conquerer or the conquered? The colonizer or the colonized? I fail to put into words my relationship with Cairo; but it was a complicated one. So complicated it

[2] And the grains that die will fill the valley with more grains

fit the contradictory sensorium of Cairo. “It is for this reason that the relationship between a writer and a place is very important, because place implies time, history, society, and human relations” (Mehrez, 5). Spending time on the streets of Cairo; I saw the amalgamation of the past and the present in every field visit. One of my main field sites; Sayda Zaynab, is given that name in reference to the big white mosque that stands in the middle of the neighborhood. The mosque is considered a historic site; it gets very crowded during Sufi *muwld* because it is believed that the Prophet’s granddaughter is buried there. There is no reference to when exactly the mosque was built, and no one is confident that this is the actual burial site of Sayda Zaynab. But people still go, on holidays and even every day; to pray and ask “El set” for Maddad, or help. The street children have often talked to me about el Set, and how she helped them quit drugs or become better. But they also live around the mosque; use its bathrooms, and benefit from Sadakas by Sufis (money or Roz Belaban —rice pudding) t).

Syada Zaynab kept shuffling between of the past and present; the past as in the burial, is what keeps the space alive today. My other field sites did feel the same; always taking me to a past that is always reproducing the present. If one walks the streets of Cairo, they will notice how big luxurious buildings overshadow the poor slums behind them. It is also recognized for being overcrowded, poor and dirty. But in other parts, it is extravagantly rich, secluded, and quiet. As Cairo is full of contradictions, the streets are full of contradictions too; sometimes encompassing and sometimes plain cruel.

The streets are both spaces of love and spaces of violence. According to a 2016 UNICEF report; there are one million street children between Cairo and Alexandria only (Zemouri, 2018). It is important to note that no number will be really accurate since most of the street children do no hold any official papers. It is hard to keep track of the number since the children are not always staying in one place and since the police only records those who are captured and sent to corrective institutions (UKessays, 2017). At first glance; one cannot see but children sleeping on

the pavements or walking the streets of Cairo; skinny, dirty, shaken with cold or sweating of over heat, working, always working. Studies have shown how the children living in street situations are both physically and psychologically endangered. “A study conducted in 2010 in Alexandria and Cairo examined 857 street children. It reported harassment or abuse in 93% of the children by police or other children” (Zemouri, 2018). Another problem that arises when the topic of children in street situation comes up is that they are seen by the hegemonic discourses as a disease that needs to be eradicated instead of children who live in precarity and violence. “In Egypt, government legislation and rules relating to street children remains primarily disciplinary to the street children who are viewed as criminals and a threat to the society. Generally, the society looks at delinquents and street children as a disease that should be treated by isolation” (UKessays, 2017). But as this is a study of both Cairo and its street children I argue that commonality exists between both. They look alike; neglected, abandoned, and sad. Tortured, deformed, and broken. Raped, apologetic, and always blamed. It is really ironic how all these scattered thoughts can describe the city and its street children. There is a certain strange entanglement between the city and the street children; all the sadness of the city is weaved in the very flesh of children who take the streets as their refuge. I started realising that it is not only the dirt that complies over my skin when doing fieldwork and turns it darker, smellier, and dirtier; but something inside of me was also getting darker. I believe my very first heartbreak on the field was realizing that I cannot change the world. I wasn’t even remotely close to changing one life. I started questioning the real reason behind me doing this work; I am not helpful, and I am starting no revolutions. But bit by bit, I started realizing that by doing this work I insisted on showing my interlocutors that they were cared for and that their stories were heard. They were listened to compassionately, in the least judgmental way. They were smiled at and befriended, when the whole world looked the other way. But beyond the first glance, the street children also showed me a Cairo that is caring, loving, and encompassing. Both Cairo and the street children hold so

much more than the victim and unruly status; they come together and prove that there is so much more than death production; there is life, always.

Research Questions:

My main quest was an understanding of Cairo as a space through the eyes of the street children. I answer my main question through four sub-questions that form the bases of my main four chapters in this thesis. Many sub-questions arise later from the fieldwork and through writing this thesis that I unravel later on.

1. What are the mappings of spaces, bodies, and time on the streets of Cairo?
2. How is Cairo understood as a death world?
3. What is the every day and what are the laboring experiences on the streets of Cairo?
4. How is life made and constructed on the streets of Cairo?

Literature Review:

Although many studies and reports have focused on street children, none have explored how Cairo is seen from the perspective of street children. Rania Sweis (2017) is a cultural anthropologist with a focus on medical anthropology and a two year fieldwork ethnography with vulnerable children, healthcare workers and global care experts in Egypt. Her scholarship "Children as biological sufferers? The paradox of international medical aid for homeless children in Cairo"adopts a developmental framework examining international aids and medicine that is given to homeless children, is very different from the scope of my research. Her article is dissected in "children's life stories" in which she shares the life stories of her interlocutors working on the streets and living in shelters. She does her ethnographic research in a shelter and often accompanies the children to work on the streets. She does not differentiate between shelters that do not allow the children to go out, and daycare centers that only operate for early hours of the day where the children can go to sleep, eat, take a shower or simply rest.I found the

connection between her overall argument on children resisting international aid and the stories of the same children working on the streets uneasy to trace; the stories she shared felt different from the stories I have in my fieldwork. Another work that takes place in Cairo and looks closely at children in street situation is "Public Perceptions of Street Children in Cairo; The Criminalisation of Street Children and the Role of the Public" by Rebecca Göthe (2016). This study is interested in the perception of different people of the issue of Street children and how they criminalize them. Its scope is very different from my research scope as the main participants are not the children themselves. The study does not rely on ethnographic research but rather focuses on interviews and focus groups with different people from the society.

Other scholarships on street children reflect different parts of the world; like "And now my soul is hardened" argues that war and famine play great roles in the creation of street children in the Soviet states (Ball Alan, 1994). Nafiseh Imani & Emilia Nersisiance (2012) offer more of an in-depth anthropological work called "Anthropological Study of Street Working Children Problem in Karaj" in Iran, focusing on the working street children. This is similar and can be important to my research concerning the aspect of labor."Are Colombian Street Children Neglected? The Contributions of Ethnographic and Ethnohistorical Approaches to the Study of Children" (Aptekar, 1991) is another influential scholarship on street children based in Bogota, Colombia. This study is interested in the children's physiological and mental health; societal understanding and reaction of/to street children, and the class-based struggle of street children (impoverished) versus wealthier classes. The focus of the study is more ethnohistorical than ethnographic, relying on the accumulation of twenty years of newspaper articles to see how the society reacts to street children and doing cross-cultural comparisons with another study in Pakistan by Berland in 1982 on a group of entertainers who traveled from village to village to perform in order to understand the difference between the children performs in Pakistan and the ones in Colombia. The study is therefore minimally useful for my scope of research.

Filip De Boeck in his scholarship, “On Being Shege in Kinshasa: Children, the Occult and the Street” addresses very similar questions to the ones in this thesis; “What is their view of a ‘good life’? How do they integrate disruption and fragmentation into their lives? The voices, fears, and aspirations of thee young people have not been sufficiently heard”(De Boeck, 155). He identifies the street children as ‘silent others’ and critiques the voice given to them as “constructed from outside and above, as a ‘problem’, a ‘lost generation’” (Ibid, 156). Although I disagree in his insistence on portraying the street children as victims of the Congolese society; further embodying the state constructed categories he himself critiques; he also identifies the children as “important actors in transforming Congolese society” (Ibid). His research is heavily ethnographic, and therefore; I find a lot of intersections between our ethnographic researches like the bold instances of children calling themselves “thieves”(De Boeck, 158). The spending money on drinks and drugs; “They help one sleep and become strong; they get rid of headaches, chase away shame… to make memory come back and to be calm and aware of oneself. Children use drugs and alcohol to attain the state of dédoublement, which can be interpreted as leaving one’s own body to observe oneself.” (Ibid) He speaks of laboring as prostitutes, of coming into groups on the streets to share money and goods, to have a leader, to always appear strong, and to make sure to be feared. Although our researches part when he goes into the role of churches and witchcraft that shape the lives of the Congolese street children; we meet again in studying why the children take the streets as an alternative space to be “captured, appropriated, transformed and redefined to fit the terms of these children’s own experience”, “It (the street) is the space where food, freedom, sex, and money can be had.” Through understanding the street as a space of alternatives, the city also becomes a space of freedom, “(It) becomes a backward world of constraints. In contrast, the street is seen as modern and exciting” (Ibid, 166). The street is therefore the space of escaping the poverty of the family, and on which one can build dreams.

Both in Kinshasa or in Cairo; both ethnographies echo each other in understanding the city, the streets, and the street children.

Certainly, the whole topic of street children around the world is understudied anthropologically and sociologically. NGOs, UNICEF, and other developmental institutions work with the street children; but rarely any ethnographic research is produced. My thesis is not as interested in the numbers and the figures as much as it is interested in the stories there is to tell. My thesis holds the street children as protagonists of the telling of Cairo as a city. It also sheds the light on the everyday violent and traumatic experiences that the children in street situations go through; and thus, argues that although their voices are always unheard everywhere; they're not unheard here. I take on Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in which she argues that the subaltern is the person removed from all lines of mobility. My interlocutors are the subalterns of the city; unheard and uncared for. I cannot show their voices, but I can write their stories; their lives are portrayed, are felt, and are seen in this thesis. The significance of this thesis —that I could not find in any other study, also lies in its capturing of the rhythms of the everyday life of a street child; make them obvious, important, and noticed. My thesis also highlights the moments of the otherwise, the potentia (in the Deleuzian sense), the screams, and the moments of ruptures that take place on the streets; these moments are moments of joy that are as important to talk about in relation to the moments of violence.

I believe the term "street children" is a political tool that is used in order to confine the people living/working on the streets in a category that is looked down upon, criminalised and unaccepted. It is rather different from the term "homeless", which throughout my fieldwork, I found it has been mostly accepted as a category of those who need help, homes, and care, unlike the term "street children" which was always equated with criminality. Kmanal Fahmy (2007, 49) in his book *Beyond the Victim: The politics and Ethics of Empowering Cairo's Street Children*

argues, after eight years of fieldwork in Cairo, “children, youths, and adults were restoring to the street to make their living and were perceived as a threat to urban organisation”. I believe that being a threat lead the hegemonic discourses, both the media and the state apparatus, to infantilise and categorise the people on the streets of Cairo as ‘children’. The insistence on calling people in street situations as street children, as deviants, stems from them being a threat. Thus as Famhy states “nstead of using the street as a channel for getting from one point to the other, they openly make it their own habitat, where they make a living, eat, sleep, and engage in all sorts of reprehensible behaviour” (Fahmy, 87). The threat here lies in the fact that these “deviant children” will do anything to survive on the streets, and therefore, can easily steal, or even kill, and hence, the criminalisation of street children through laws of *tswl* as a term stemmed from this exact point. To protect the public space became more important than children who were only trying to survive in a world that was not so accepting. Fahmy (2007) explains that the street child becomes a threat to the social order by simply existing in public spaces. The social threat is fought by the media and the state apparatus by the constant categorisation of the street children as one lump of deviant and unruly children who left their homes searching for easy incomes and a free lifestyle that they are not worthy of. I use the term street children throughout this thesis, not in compliance with the media or state categorisation, but to specifically fight this one socially constructed production of the term; to show that there are many layers to those who live and work on the streets of Cairo.

May whoever reads this thesis realize that the point is not to eradicate them to render the streets emptier or more beautiful; but to deeply feel what is it like to suffer, at such a young age; of abandonment, violence, precarity, and silence. May it add add a little to seeing the street children as humans who are loved and appreciated. May this thesis help us understand the city we think we know, from an unprivileged point, and at the same time a point full of potentialities, for a lot of possibilities reside in the liminal space that the children live in. Finally, may this

thesis unwrap all the resistance, the revolutions, the moments of change that the children in street situations construct out of Cairo.

Conceptual Framework:

"Granted, theory, any theory, is a way of understanding reality and not a collection of observations about reality. To the extent that it enhances one's understanding of the real, it literally "stands under" observations and gives form to these observations" (Daniel, 6)

The literature I read and studied in preparation for writing this thesis had opened up ways in which there was a possibility of understanding the reality of the streets of Cairo. My aim was to unravel and reproduce an understanding of Cairo from another set of eyes; the street children. Cairo spoke to me from its spatial boundaries first. And the street children were therefore the bodies that formed that space. How is the space shaped and produced by the street children? Butler (2011) argues that bodies bring about new spaces; echoing Escobar's (2018) notion of the being that is constituted through bodies and spaces. The interpolation of bodies in spaces is an interesting one that I base my argument around and through which I argue that both —the spaces and the bodies, are exhausted. I use Althusser's (2001) notion of the production of the subject, and the interpolation of bodies into fixed categories throughout my thesis. Throughout my thesis, I unravel De Santos (2018) notion of bodies "as zones of non-being" (De Santos, 20) and Simone's (2004) understanding of spaces as "place of ruins" (Simone, 407). Adding to this; Cairo for me was always the uninhabitable (2019), and the city yet to come (2004). . Butler here intervenes in the unpacking of what a space can be for those who are not given the right (by superior powers) to be there. Butler (2011) builds on that by arguing that; "To be deprived of the space of appearance is to be deprived of reality" (Butler, 4). I argue that Cairo as a space, uninhabitable, a space of ruins, a space deprived of reality becomes a space of fear and exhaust. I

also understand the exhaustion of both the bodies and spaces in Ghassan Hage's (2009) notion of waiting in which he argues that waiting equates loss and abandonment in space. But other than Cairo being a space of exhaust; Omnia Khalil's (2014) argument on the possibilities of maneuvering spaces is important to the scope of my research on finding an otherwise, the alternative space creation. I build on that, as well as the notion of being able to dream; that creates an alternative space in Escobar's argument of "another world is possible" (Escobar, 15). He believes that there is a possibility of designing and controlling our life projects (Ibid, 16). I unravel the possibilities in space by using Massey's (2015) "Thrown togetherness: the politics of the event of place" in building on the argument of the right to the public space, in which I argued; open up for potentialities for the street children for building homes and in asserting their existence —and right to exist. The potentialities of space are also the potentialities of the production of space/city by the street children. I build on Harvey's (2000) "if the city is the world which man created, it is the world in which he is henceforth condemned to live. Thus, indirectly, and without any clear sense of the nature of his task, in making the city man has remade himself"(Harvey,4); and link it to Simone's (2004) notion of the reproduction of the city in people as infrastructure. Simone argues that there is an "inseparable connections between places, people, actions, and things" (Simone, 409) that allows for the production of the city/the space of Cairo.

Lefebvre (1991) also argued that spaces are always produced; and hence, I indulge in the notion of space production and the unpacking of how a space can be turned into a death world. Mbembe (2019).came up with the term of a death world as; "new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead" (Mbembe, 40). In here, I am brought back to the notion of the street children as bodies in spaces; but building on this more; they are bodies on which spaces of death are inscribed on. There is always the possibility of death; embedded in Cairo as a space

that is produced as a death world, but also that same emergence of death as a category creates bodies that are ungrievable. I build on Butler's (2009) notion of ungrievable bodies in the shadow of Mbembe's death world and Emerson's necropolitics. Emerson (2019) argues that; "death also encompasses the energies that move in and through bodies, creating surfaces and contouring bodies as it passes through them" (Emerson, 6). This impression of death as encompassing of energies made me understand it as both affective and precarious. Butler (2006) in "Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence" argues that; "The matter is not a simple one, for, if a life is not grievable, it is not quite a life; it does not qualify as a life and is not worth a note. It is already the unburied, if not the unburiable" (Butler, 34) and thus, through theorizing bodies —whether exhausted, waiting, or becoming the living dead.

I am also studying bodies as affective. As Affect leaves its traces on the bodies; I ask; what happens when these bodies are struggling? De Santos provides the answer for this; "bodies are as much at the center of the struggles as the struggles are at the center of the bodies" (De Santos, 89). What is a bare life? Can we think of the streets as the camps as described by Agamben and the street children as the homo sacer? Agamben (1942) argues that the homo sacer are those who are excluded in life, whereas the camp is the spatial manifestation of the hold the state has over life. Being unreal, or a bare life, does not stop the street children from being embedded in reality. Agamben responded to the COVID-19 virus in February 2020 as a bio-political —a power that that is articulated in the production, management, and administration of "life" (2020, Ronchi) tool to keep people apart, by declaring a state of exception "a normal paradigm for government" (2020). He believes this state of exception will have huge repercussions on freedoms, "the limitations on freedom imposed by governments are accepted in the name of a desire for safety that was created by the same governments that are now intervening to satisfy it" (ibid). Many have angrily responded to Agamben by arguing that the state of exception has become the new norm, and that, "there is not one paradigm of

exception" (2020, Dwivedi, Mohan). Forsaken by nothing, I find my interlocutors in the constant state of exception that has also become the multi-layered new norm, even before the COVID-19 hit. A bare life, an unruly life, yet very much embedded in the streets of Cairo, producing and reproducing it in every possible way. If the virus teaches us about our fragilities, then the street children in Cairo do too; being able to survive the constant state of fragility and producing from it possibilities and alternate ways of living. "To be free is to do what must be done in a specific situation" (2020, Ronchi). The naked life (2020, Agamben) is to be able to sacrifice everything that is "normal conditions of living —social relations, work, friendship". This naked life is the life the street children embodied long before the virus arose. It is not what keeps people apart, as Agamben argued, but rather what brings people, and in this thesis, the street children, together.

Massumi (2016) argues that bodies are affected and can affect; "the power to, is a power to change" (2). Thus, here I understand affect as a lot more than emotions; but it is rather a power, an intensity; that moves through the struggles and creates. Furthermore; De Santos argues that; "bodies cannot help but happen and be there, the struggles go on, clearing paths, often on top of the ruins of past struggles" (De Santo, 90). This is why I always speak of the street children as bodies; because their bodies survive the struggles, and they build and find potentialities even in spaces of ruins and in spaces that are uninhabitable and thus, can survive the spaces they live in due to their affective capabilities. I build on Stewart's (2007) ordinary affects and the notion of the dream of a simple life and indulge in the notion of what is an ordinary affect on the streets of Cairo for the street children.

I extended on the notion of bodies in spaces by arguing that they are precarious as well as entrenched in the notion of the everyday. I use Millar's (2014) 'the precarious present' in the understanding of precarity first as a state of anxiety, desperation, un-belonging, and risk. I then read precarity in Hammmami's (2016) precarious politics in which she understands precarity in relation to worthiness; "whose lives are worthy of sustenance and protection and whose lives are

perceived as disposable or not even human" (Hammami, 171). Fassin (2015) in governing precarity also builds on the idea of precarity as unfairness. I build on that concerning the notion which bodies get to be punished in which spaces. Precarious bodies in precarious spaces are formed and produced in the everyday. But they are also precarious in relation to the securitization that is inscribed on their bodies. I study precarity in light of policing and securitization through Dina Ebeid's (2019)'Precarious revolution: labor and neoliberal securitization in Egypt' and Salwa Ismail's The resurgence of police government in Egypt". Both scholarships are important to fathom how securitization creates spaces of precarity.

Every day on the streets of Cairo is an every day spent in precarity, liminality, violence, and hope; it is pivotal that it is studied and thought of also through the theories on labor and time. I begin unpacking the every day by tracing time in the rhythms in Lefebvre (1999), duration, and movements in Bergson (1999), and becoming in Deleuze(2004). As time is not linear, and no repetition is ever the same (Lefebvre); I tried to see how the every day is also not the same on for the street children in Cairo. I studied and read time spent laboring by moving beyond Marx's (1993) notion of the working day in which alienation is key. I argued that spending time laboring is not equal to spending time out of one's self as Marx argued, but instead, labouring on the streets of Cairo is equal to living, one cannot happen without the other, and hence it is no longer time spent outside of oneself but rather it becomes time spent living. Indeed labor was a means of surviving the every day in Cairo by the street children. I unpacked labor on the streets of Cairo by speaking of sex work and garbage collectors. I take on Thieme's (2017) work "The hustle economy: Informality, uncertainty and the geographies of getting by" to unpack what does it mean to work on the streets and to get by. She argues; "The hustle is advanced as a collective condition of individual insecurity disproportionately distributed amongst young people navigating uncertainty in irregular employment through prolonged states of 'wait-hood'" (Thieme, 530). This scholarship resonates perfectly with my fieldwork with some of my

interlocutors who who work as garbage collectors; I also dwell on the question of what is it to get by, to be always in a state of liminality, and to always be in coping with a normalized notion of uncertainty. I add to the question of labor the question of what does it mean to be a sex worker through white's (2009) "the comforts of home" and Wright's (1991) "disposable women". Both literatures spoke about bodies circulating capital through condemned work at the "bottom of the social scale" (White, 55) Finally, I go back to the notion of bodies, labored bodies and relate it to time through drugs. My fieldwork brings about the notion of the drugged working body; Benjamin's (1973) "Haschisch In Marseille" brings together notions of walking the city; understanding the bodies navigating it and feeling time while drugged. I found this experience of the drugged body also echoed by Phillip Bourgois in (2009) "Righteous Dopefiend" in which he argued that communities of drugged bodies can be refuges in hostile worlds, and which can also be understood as Grey zones in the Primo Levi sensorium.

Finally, I find that Beihl (2017), Berlant (2011), Stewart (2007), Badiou (2013), and Simone (2019) speak together in answering my question of finding potentialities of the construction of life on the streets of Cairo. Beihl's build on Bloch's notion of hope as the most humanistic of feelings, and as the possibility midst the darkness. What is the "darkness of the lived moment" (Garcia, 114) for the street children? Hope, for Bloch, is the force that makes one move beyond anxiety and huger. Hope becomes the work of becoming, "Let the daydreams grow even fuller" (Ibid,115). I build on hopes, dreams, and becoming that is the force that makes the street children survive Cairo midst confinement, death and constant criminalisation. Berlant argues that optimism is cruel in one's attachments to things that can be eventually lost. I challenge both Badiou's refusing to believe in the mythical "out of this world" kind of love and Stewart's notion of the ordinary. In fact, the love on the streets was not ordinary; and there was nothing ordinary in the every day of the street children. Love, the ordinary, and hope were all cruel because they can be lost at any time. Lost in both the spatial and the temporal Cairo; I

unpacked the mentioned above notions in relation to the every day in time and space. I go back to Simone's improvised lives and unravel the possibility of "the holding of lives". Through Simone, I understand "the rhythms of endurance" (Simone, 10) that are taken from Lefebvre's notion of time understood in rhythms.

Methodology:

I decided to do my research as an ethnography by directly being on the streets with the street children. I started my ethnographic journey from August 2019 to March 2020. I met over two hundred street children; some of whom I saw more than once and some whom we had very minimal interactions. Each field visit would start around 6 pm and would last until 11 pm or 12 am. My ethnography was initially planned to take place in Maadi and Sayda Zaynab; the former is a wealthier neighborhood while the latter is a working-class neighborhood. I wanted to portray the difference between being a street child in both contradictory neighborhoods. But the contradictions of the neighborhoods started losing their importance in telling the stories of street children around Cairo. I then walked through Maadi, Mohandseen, Dokki, Downtown Cairo, Sayda Zaynab, and Abu el Reesh with the help of Samusocial (A french NGO) and did some partial fieldwork in Heliopolis on my own. The field sites that I visited with Samusocial fall on the southern and central parts of greater Cairo. I speak throughout my thesis on the differences that lie in each field site; Some were loud, noisy and very big that I spent most of the time walking and moving around with the children (like Sayda Zaynab), while others were quite, empty and dark that I felt unsafe and some times scared. The children dressed, spoke, and acted differently in every field site. The space affects the children; one can know that this street child is not from Maadi by how he speaks or what he wears. Laboring practices differed too from one field site to the other. The street children in Maadi had to appeal and accustom themselves to their surroundings, for instance it was the only field site with little girls selling handmade

bracelets to wealthy Maadi residents sitting in Cafes on 9th street (a popular street in Maadi). While those in Dokki mainly working as Soyas and car cleaners to cater for the abundant number of Cars looking for a parking spot. Each site had a different characteristic, and thus different methodologies were applied. I spent the greater part of my fieldwork in Sayda Zaynab, not for a particular reason other than the fact that I simply connected right away with the street children there. The familiarity allowed us to have more than mere interviews and small chats (as I did in other field sites; for instance Downtown); but we soon became friends and talked endlessly and without a particular methodology in mind guiding me. I usually let the street children both approach me and start speaking about the topic of their interest; as a way of ensuring their consent, and of giving them the freedom to share what they want to share. In other field sites; like Heliopolis, I asked unstructured questions; about their name and their age; and if they go back home at the end of every day or every few days. My ethnography had no particular structure or a known methodology; I let the street children stir the conversations because eventually it was their stories and their lives to tell. By the second month of my fieldwork, the unstructured conversations had already developed their own themes. I, for instance; never asked "what is love?" "what is it to die on the streets?" "How is Cairo felt temporally?" These questions do not make sense to the street children; but throughout the conversations; questions I had previously prepared were answered without having to be asked, and new themes and ideas arose from the field which I had never thought of.

Fieldwork:

One could notice that I did not belong on that pavement in Sayda Zaynab. I was too disciplined, too clean for the dirty streets. My shoes were branded and my gold wedding ring gave away my status. My apple watch was an attraction site to the small kids; looking at pictures displayed of me on the beach with a boy in a swimming suit or in a warm family gathering hugged by my mom. I am there on the street, on that pavement, with a girl, or a boy, or a man…

a woman? And one could easily tell the difference between my ponytail curly hair and the's girl's worn-out scarf. I used to bear the guilt of what made me, me; during every field visit. I usually went home later to take a hot bath and wash away all the dirt that accumulated on my skin and under my nails. I was also always trying to wash away the guilt; but the mere fact that I can take a hot shower and sleep in my comfortable bed under layers of covers and a well-heated room made my quest an impossibility. I realized I was hiding myself way too much on the field and that made me feel like a hypocrite; why am I expecting the street children to recount me their lives when I am hiding so much? So I started being me. By being me, I saw more of the field than I ever thought I could. I knew my interlocutors trusted me the moment they started swearing around me. They too, are disciplined to believe that they should not curse in front of "others". I knew they trusted me when they told me about their sexual fantasies. We shared recipes of our favorite meals, played games, and talked about falling in love.

My fieldwork started with the help of the NGO Samusocial; which specializes in on-ground medical and social intervention to children in street situations. They go to the field with a mobile vehicle in order to reach the children themselves; this makes the access to the children more effective as they sometimes cannot commute to the NGOs. Mr. Sherif who is the operations manager since 2008 was my access to the field; he taught me everything I know, from terms that the children use to background stories on every child we met. But most importantly, he listened to me when I was too frustrated during my fieldwork. The NGO gave me a white T-shirt with their logo to wear during summer days and a grey jacket to wear during winter nights. During my first few months of fieldwork; I would take off my rings, my watch, and try to wear my oldest shoes. I was hiding behind the white/grey attire. I was not allowed to cry when hearing rape stories, "One had to stay composed"; they told me at the NGO. "We should not show our emotions; we listen only". Soon enough, I heard pieces of advice from the social workers that made me furious. They acted as real missionaries; they propagate for the life they think is to be

lived; one has to go to school, to work, to gain money in order to be respected. Other ways of living were unaccepted; and consequently; talks of the revolution were laughed at. Not all social workers were that rigid, but some did not belong on that mobile van making the street children believe that they are not worthy enough of a good life. At first I would contest what they say, fight them until I lose my breath, but there was no point in talking. How could you explain the importance of a revolution to someone who only knew how to obey? But SamuSocial provided me with protection while doing research on the Streets of Cairo. One night in Maadi, I was sitting with a boy who called himself Abdo Mota (a character done by an Egyptian Actor; referring to being a feared and powerful person in a neighborhood); he was telling me about his life in the shelter; the kind of drugs and alcohol he consumes, and showing me traces of deep scars resulting from cuts on his body. I noticed a Mokhber (police undercover agent) standing a few meters away, pretending to be talking on the phone. Living in Cairo post-2011; one could easily identify Mokhbereen; they have big hands and big mustaches; their bodies are bulky and scary. I could see that this big man was not really on the phone because I could see his screen from afar. When he approached me to ask me what I was doing; the social workers saved me from what I think something that could have ended badly if I were doing this work alone on the streets. They have the legal papers that allow them to do the kind of work they do; and yet; they are always stopped and sometimes detained. Once a policeman accused them of abducting street children to sell their organs just because they carried around a red icebox in which they kept cold water bottles for the thirsty street children. I believe that the work this organization does is extremely important; the kids have access to medicines, milk, clothes, and even more importantly chances of either reuniting with their families or going to a shelter. They do help those who ask for help, and they do not coerce anyone to do something they do not want to do. They listen, even when the whole world does not.

I started my fieldwork in August 2019 thinking that the situation on the streets of Cairo had reached its lowest. The streets felt defeated, scared, and apathetic. So many years have passed since the last time Cairene felt any hope for change. The streets felt static and unchanging. Time was repeating itself; every day felt like the day before. The street children's conditions got worse, and no one cared. I had thought this was as bad as it gets. I was anxious, sad, and always feeling guilty; how could life be this unfair? And then 2020 came; and all I cared about was to finish my thesis, I was anxious because my deadlines were approaching. The COVID-19 hit Cairo in March and nothing looked the same since then. The streets stayed unchanged; the children had nowhere to go, some were taken to prison for breaking the curfew, and some spent their lockdown in an open-air park; unable to self-isolate, unable to quarantine. They did not wear gloves, they did not wear masks; and they could not afford sanitizers. Doing fieldwork during March was tricky, I was exposing myself to the virus, but I felt it was important to trace the changes, and the ruptured rhythms on the streets of Cairo. The streets stayed the same, with less money for the children and more precarity and conversations on death. The streets stayed the same, but with fewer people being on the streets; food, work opportunities, and even casual conversations with people became scarce. Where do you buy food as a street child when all restaurants shut down? Where do you go to the bathroom when all mosques' doors are closed? Who do you beg to, help park, or sell tissue boxes to? Where do you hide from a killer virus? Who hugs you at night when your sister dies and you no longer know if this is the everyday kind of death out of hunger or if this time it's the invisible virus? I asked a lot of questions, and almost got no answer from my interlocutors. They stayed the same, just like the streets; they laughed and run around and couldn't care less. I believe when you have no option, nowhere to go, and no one to talk to; you find all the possibilities possible; you live, survive, and cling to the streets that can be so cruel, so violent; but so full of possibilities. I discovered that with the virus and without it; the situation was not so uncanny.

Chapters Description:

My thesis is divided into four main chapters, along with this introduction and a conclusion; as an attempt to comprehend Cairo as a city through the point of view of the street children. My overarching space is 2019/20 Cairo and my interlocutors are the Street Children.

The first chapter "Mapping Cairo, Mapping Lives: Exhaustion in a Failed State; Cairo; the Spaces and the Bodies of Street Children" is an attempt to map Cairo and the lives of those who live on its streets. I argue that one way of understanding Cairo is through delving into an understanding of bodies and spaces. How are the dreams intertwined with the violence of the street in Post-revolutionary Cairo? Are the bodies of Street Children rendered non-existent, and exhaustible? What is it like to be an exhausted body on the streets of Cairo? How can bodies act as archival spaces for endurance, vulnerability, and abandonment? How can the spaces be explained and portrayed? I call the spaces exhausted and unravel them as spaces of fear. I also trace the temporality of waiting on the streets of Cairo. What does it feel like to be an exhausted body waiting in an exhausted space? Thus, this chapter acts as a foundational chapter of theories of spatiality and temporality and adds an understanding and theorizing of the concept of exhaustion that shapes Cairo in space and time.

In my second chapter "Mapping Death on the Streets of the City of the dead"; I call Cairo the city of the dead because not only it was physically built on thousands of graveyards, but it is also acting as a death world. I argue that the precarity of living on the streets of Cairo is not only the risk of losing one's job, or place of sleep but it is the precarity of death; of losing one's life. I also ask how are bodies rendered killable? I map the necro-politics of living on the streets of Cairo. Who are the living dead? When is life grievable and when it's not? Finally, I conclude the chapter by trying to find life in the midst of moments of constant deaths. How do the Street children manage to assert their own lives in the face of death?

My third chapter; “The Everyday Cairo: Labour, Discipline and Drugs on the streets of Cairo” starts by laying an understanding of the every day spent on the streets of Cairo. The every day is heavily policed and disciplined; I underscore the state narrative and understanding of the street children. I then grasp the rhythms in the every day; how does Cairo look and sound like? Through the every day I delve into the world of laboring on the streets of Cairo. How does a disciplined working body still manage to labor in time and space? I unravel the working day on the streets of Cairo and ask what is a life spent working? I reach an understanding of work as a means of surviving the streets of Cairo. I argue that; “to live is to work and to work is to live”; through sex work or through being a car parking child, a garbage collector, or a beggar. I also explore the relationship between drugged bodies and work; are drugs essential for long working hours? For escaping the everyday? What do drugs offer for the street children that they become a necessity? I finally come to the conclusion that in the every day laboring practices of the street children; the city is produced along with the self (of the street children).

My fourth chapter is “Making life: Love and Becoming on The Streets of Cairo”. In this chapter I speak of love, hope, becoming, sex, desire, and all the potentialities that the streets of Cairo offer to the street children. I ask what is hope? Can the street children build a home in public spaces; merging the private into the public? What is love and what are the complex relationship and therefore the construction of life on the streets of Cairo? I also try to understand care, and dirt, and affective feelings and potentials of the ordinary; the every day spent working, living and dying on the streets of Cairo. I argue that as much as there is violence and neglect there is also love and hope.

I believe it was important to start by death and end on life, to underscore the rape but to also speak of moments of love, and to stay with the trouble; the good and the bad.

Concluding Note;

This thesis was written by and through the stories the children told me about what is it like to survive the streets of Cairo. May these stories help the readers unravel a Cairo that is always silenced and rendered invisible. May the children always succeed at producing and reproducing streets that help them feel free and happy and strong. This is a story of the spaces and the temporalities that construct Cairo. May we be brave enough to confront our greatest fears, and come to terms with living in such a horrid, but beautiful place.

Mapping Cairo, Mapping lives;

Exhaustion in a Failed State; Cairo; The Spaces and The Bodies of Children in Street Situations

Introduction:

”والمدينة أقربْ
- !! المدينةُ أقربُ
- أنتِ المدينةُ
وأنت البقيَّهْ
- آه ٍ كنتُ الضحيَّهْ
فكيف أكون الدليل ؟
أأنت بعيدهْ ؟
- على بُعْدِ حُلْم من الآن
والحُلْمُ يحمل سيفاً ويقتل شاعره حين يبلغهُ
- كيف أكمل أغنيتي
والتفاصيل ضاعت . وضاع الدليل ؟
- انتهت صورتي
فابتدئ من ضياعك.“
(محمود درويش[3]، قصيدة بين حلمي وبين اسمه كان موتي بطيئاً)[4]

AbdelSattar: “One day, when I become the president of Egypt; I will make sure that I gather everyone whoever had power in this country, strip them off the metal that they once so highly carried on their shoulders; and create my throne from which I will rule Egypt”

Me: “What will you do differently when you become president?”

Mahmoud Darwish was a palestinian poet [3]

Translation: And the city is closer. The city is closer. You are the city. You are the remaining. You were the victim. So how Am I the proof? Are you afar? About as far as a dream from now.The dream holds a sword and kills its poet when it arrives. So how do I continue my song now that the details are lost and the proof is also lost? My Image is lost. So start from your loss.

AbdelSattar: "Ya Abla[5], I will make sure that everyone marries the girl they love" (Kornish, September 2019)

AbdelSattar is in his mid-twenties and lives on Kornish. He also works as a parking attendant (Sayes) near a mosque in well-to-do Mohandseen. AbdelSattar lost his left leg in a hit and run and replaced it with an old, wooden stick. On the streets of Cairo, the bodies of the marginalized can be taken apart slowly and painfully and no one would notice, no one would come to help. I have seen more injured bodies in the few months of my fieldwork than I have ever seen in the twenty-four years I have lived in Cairo. AbdelSattar was arrested a couple of years ago after Al Gomaa prayer in the mosque next to where he works/sleeps; the story goes that a minster was praying at the same mosque with his bodyguards around him, and the state official TV news was broadcasting the prayer. Abdelsattar then started screaming to everyone that when he becomes president he will make sure to not allow corrupt men like this minster to be in power, he also started talking about how he's "*ālmhdy ālmnṭẓr*"-The awaited Mahdi. This awaited Mahdi should come to earth to rule over Muslims and to defeat ālmsykẖ āldjāl (who is also believed to come at the ends of time and make people believe in him instead of believing in God). There are many interpretations of *ālmhdy ālmnṭẓr w ālmsykẖ āldjāl*; but the awaited ruler is the one whom AbdelSattar believes to be. Dreaming to free everyone from evil, and to make sure that every boy marries the girl they love; without having to think of money, status, or the leg they have lost. One could tell AbdelSattar was heavily tortured when he was taken by police forces, and one could also tell that AbdelSattar feels abandoned; even abandoned by the policemen who took him from the streets and returned him soon enough after discovering he is "crazy" and not a real threat (according to other narratives from AbdelSattar's friends). I walk the streets of Cairo every day and fail to understand them. During my fieldwork, I found that almost no one ever speaks of the future, and no one is planning anything beyond the present moment they live. I had the feeling

[5] Miss; Mostly a term for teacher, that is used to address a young female in a tone of formality

that there is a sense of a total loss of hope if the future is out of the question. But the future is embedded in the dreams (like this of AbdelSattar), and in dreams there is hope. Thus, I wonder; how abandoned is Cairo? Is the infrastructural neglect that the city has been undergoing for the past decades echoed in a neglect in the subjects to try to live the city? I believe that the city's neglect is dispositive to the children's neglect and abandonment. But in a city that is decaying, what are the potentialities that can shape the space and make us understand it when the reality of the every day is too hard to understand? Is there a way to understand the bodies of this neglected city? This chapter aims at mapping Cairo and the bodies of street children in a non-linear spatiotemporal framework; asking how is Cairo constructed?

When thinking of AbdelSattar; his dreams are simple ones. He fell in love with a girl whose family would not accept him; poor, living on the street, with one leg, drug-addicted and is called crazy by everyone. AbdelSattar's understanding of the cornish, Mohandseen, and Cairo is an interesting one. His relationship with the state is also a different one; when he was hit by a car; his leg could have been saved but it wasn't; no medical care was provided and he was left to bleed to death on the streets until one of his friends carried him to a nearby public hospital. In the hospital, they did not try to save his leg, they did not provide him with medication for the pain, or even offer the possibility of giving him a prosthetic leg. He was left to a world of alternatives; to find a wooden stick that helps him with the walking, to get Hashish and other drugs to help him with the pain. Another alternative was for him to believe that this is not it. That he is not a crippled twenty-two years old boy, incapable of love, abandoned, living on the streets and stripped of his basic needs. He had to dream of being the awaited ruler, that the life he is living is not voided, that there are possibilities and potentialities within the state, the city, and on the streets. Loizidou speaks of dreams and the political subject; she argues that dreams are imaginary journeys that are more real than others because they involve the substance of our inner souls (Loizidou, 140). She then argues that with dreaming there is a sense of deformation of reality,

one that feels like ascending and unbounded by any forms, but most importantly; “to the desire of the soul to ascend, to unburden itself from the formal restrictions” (Loizidou, 140). AbdelSattar’s dream of being the awaited ruler, of gaining power, of helping others live happily; unburden him from his reality; the reality that is too harsh for anyone to accept. One also starts understanding the city that AbdelSattar lives; it is one full of agony, marginalization, violence, and abandonment; but also it is not voided; it is hopeful in the very fact that dreaming is still a possibility. I want to argue that the city in which AbdelSattar lives is an exhausted one. It is one where the future is inaccessible in reality, yet only accessible in one’s dream. How is the city exhausted? How are then the bodies constituting the city are exhausted too? And what is the role of the state in rendering both the city (the spaces) and the bodies making/living those streets exhausted? What are the possibilities to dream in the city? Is the state apparatus part of the enabling condition of this possibility of dreaming?

Feldman argues in the case of Palestinian refugee camps that the sentiment of thinking a hopeful future became extremely difficult due to the impossibilities and the hardships met every day. Yet, “Whatever their evaluation of present conditions and future potentialities, some people insist on trying to live; “Otherwise” (Feldman, 412) AbdelSattar could only live in the potentiality of the otherwise along with many of my interlocutors; whom I thought at first as unhopeful for not thinking a future, but who turned to be immersed in the very present moment in which a future is shaped and constructed in the same time that the past is rethought and reformed. The temporality of the city here is echoed in Augustine’s idea of “Time has no being because since the future is not yet, the past is no longer and the present does not remain” (Ricoeur, 7). In this particular moment of dreaming, hoping, reevaluating one’s soul; I try to map the city from the point of view of the street children I met during my fieldwork. It is important to note that I do not know at which age does one stop being a child; I have met boys and girls who were as young as one day and some as old as thirty years; but for me; and for

them; they have all been children, living on the streets of Cairo at some points (many points) of their lives. Thus, their mapping of the city and understanding of the state is still valid regardless of their age. Age stands unimportant and irrelevant to the telling of the story of the city. Cairo is told in this chapter and all the other chapters through my interlocutors who are street children or who have been street children at one point in their lives. My older inductors still told stories that helped me map Cairo and which were as important as the stories of my younger interlocutors. I could not abide by a social construct such as age; which in most cases is unclear and undocumented since most of the street children do not have birth certificates. I could not also abide by a power tool used by the state that often incriminates and puts the street children at risk of facing longer prison sentences. Street children live not knowing their ages, and die with no one knowing their ages; and thus, their ages do not get to filter or classify or categorize their stories in this thesis.

Tracings of exhaustion on marginal bodies:

”قالت المرأة العاطفيَّة :
كلُّ شئ يلامس جسمي
يَتَحَوَّلُ
أو يتشكَّلُ
حتى الحجارة تغدو عصافير
قلت لها باكياً :
ولماذا أنا
أتشرَّدُ
أو أيبدَّدُ
بين الرياح وبين الشعوب ؟
فأجابت :
في الخريف تعود العصافير من حالة البحرِ
-هذا هو الوقتُ
لا وقت“

- (محمود درويش، قصيدة بين حلمي وبين اسمه كان موتي بطيئاً)[6]

I have been always referring to my interlocutors as bodies on the streets of Cairo. Scattered, abandoned, wounded, neglected, invisible, and dead. One's being is constituted through bodies and spaces as argued by Escobar in Designs For the Pluriverse. He argues that; "The design's ability to broaden the range of possible ways of being through our bodies and spaces" (Escobar, 18). Buttler takes the argument of the creation of one's being through both bodies and spaces to the idea of the body exiting in relation to others; "For Arendt, the body is not primarily located in space, but with others, brings about a new space. And the space that is created is precisely between those who act together" (Butler, 4). The children create their own chosen families and friends; I see them as bodies because in being bodies they assert their existence; living, breathing, playing, working, and falling in love. "If we appear, we must be seen, which means that our bodies must be viewed and their vocalized sounds must be heard: the body must enter the visual and audible field" (Butler, 9). Are the Street Children seen or heard? Or are they intentionally muted and made invisible by both the state and the society? What is the cost of being seen or heard? Why would the State want to hide these children, to make them disappear from the spaces in which they exist? They are bodies which fight the capturing of the state; which puts them all in one basket, one definition, and one understanding. The state does not make the street children invisible, but rather, it makes them hyber-visible in a particular way. I am arguing that the society and the state's understanding and explanation of the Street Children is confining. It is not only the state that categorizes and confines but also the society. I see this in how the passersby would ignore or coerce street children asking for help. The condiment by both the state and the society shapes the lives of the children on the streets and constructs their stories

[6] The emotional woman said: Everything that touches my body transforms. Or forms. Even the rocks become birds. I told her crying : And why me? I get lost or I dissipate between the winds and the populations? So she answered: In the autumn the birds come back from the sea. This is time. No time.

of telling the city. The society makes the street children's bodies and the spaces in which they live as exhausted as the state does. If the state owns the legal tools to confine (imprison) a street child, the society has an equal power over the street children; categorizing them into those who are unruly, non-human, and untouchable.

Usually the Street Children all fall under the category of those who completely live on the streets, not those who labor and go back home, not those who spend the whole day at a daycare center and then sleep on the street, not those who live most of their lives on the streets and then go live in a shelter, not those who live on the streets for most of the week and then go back home for the weekend, and not those who live completely on the street but have a family connection; a father who visits them on the street or whom they visit occasionally. This categorization was first developed by the UNICEF, which started a protection program monitoring the situation of street children in 1999. "In this study the term, "street children" is used to refer to children who work and/or sleep on the streets. Such children may or may not necessarily be adequately supervised or directed by responsible adults and include the two co-existing categories referred to by UNICEF as those "on the street" and those "of the street" (UNICEF report). UNICEF argues that children of the streets are the children who completely live on the streets and have no one and nowhere to go, whereas children on the streets are the children who work on the streets but return home at night. The division is one way to render the group weaker; even if you identify yourself as part of a certain group; the state does not see you that way. The naming of groups on the streets aims at dividing and categorizing the street children and therefore; can deal with each group differently. Those who do not have any familial connections are forced into shelters(by the tḥyā mṣr project called " āṭfāl blā māwā" or children with no shelter). Whereas, other children with familial ties are easier to "get rid of" by imprisonment. One can tell that the categorization done by the state and the society succeeds at the internalization of the street children of a certain category. Usually hegemonic discourses in

Egypt speak of *ātfāl shwrāʿ* (street children), the criminals, the deviants and the bodies which need eradication. The tḥyā mṣr project was launched in 2016 in a collaboration between the ministry of social affairs and the social fund (Sāndo' ḥyā mṣr) that was founded by president Sisi. This project only aims at beautifying the streets of Cairo by eradicating the large number of street children from the streets, putting them into shelters or forcing them back home. Such projects, I believe, aid the internalization of the category of the street children as deviants and criminals. In fact; I met a 10-year old Ahmed, who stood proudly against the notion of "begging" and longed to become a policeman to stop all beggars from invading the streets; although, right before and after we finished our conversation he was going around and asking people for money. The mere fact that he was doing something that the society deems as unacceptable made him believe that it is indeed unacceptable and needs intervention. Both the state and the society made him believe that his existence is problematic, how his making a living is illegal, and that the only way to become part of the accepted category of a "good citizen" is to become a policeman to induce "order" and stop "bodies" like his own from existing. The state could easily do that by criminalizing begging, and the society succeeded in doing that by coercing and screaming at beggars whom they believe are unworthy of any help.

We see through Ahmed's anticipation and dream of the future and his understanding of his own body; how bodies are shaped and constructed by the state and how powerful the state narrative becomes to the extent that bodies do not even accept their existence. The interplay of temporality here is hard to understand; how the past, present, and future are all understood and constructed from one instance of time in which Ahmed was told and coerced to believe that being a body on the street is intolerable, that his body needs to be integrated, to be ordered, to be categorized and molded into the good citizen of the state. So the future is not planned anymore, it is understood and constructed from the very present moment in which a rupture happens to one's life; "Attending to ordinary affects helps in this effort to understand not how people plan for the

future, but how they experience it from their present" (Feldman, 412). Feldman goes on about how the expectation and anticipation of the future is structured in the present moment, but also how refusal gets to be constructed in the same moment. Ahmed's refusal is not only a refusal of thinking or designing the future; but he is refusing the future that is a consequent of the present moment (in which he is a beggar on the street, young, powerless, and poor), or the future as an inverse of the present; so here in Ahmed's case; the anticipation is of a future where he is a man of the state, powerful, rich, and putting the society to order.

I believe the bodies of street children are exhausted bodies; not only because they are always moving around (for labor or for escaping the police), but also because they are always in a state of stuckness, always confined within a particular category produced by powers and rendered as common sense. How can one body be both moving and stuck? Ghassan Hage describes stuckness as "Existential immobility" (Hage, 97) that has been normalized and is expected to be endured. The Street Children I have worked with were always hard to find because they are always in a state of deterritorialization; they are never fixated in one space; they move or are forced to move from streets. They do not always choose to move, but even when they do; they lack the agency to do so. Thus, even in moving; they are stuck; "Stuckedness is by definition a situation where a person suffers from both the absence of choices or alternatives to the situation they are in and an inability to grab such alternatives even if they present themselves" (Hage, 100). This state of endless stuckness also produces another factor of exhaustion; loss. What happens when one is at a constant state of loss? What happens when one is always stuck, that even when alternatives are found, they are lost? The street children lose their home, their parents, their schools, their friends, and the familiarity of the building, the street, the small shops that made their previous neighborhoods. The street children befriend loss and are forced to move; and in befriending loss; they also briefly lose hope. A very reoccurring scene from my fieldwork is street children crying for help, wanting to go to any shelter, or to

return to a home they are no longer welcomed. The streets of Cairo are indeed exhausting; from having to find a job to having to find food and then having nowhere to use as a bathroom. The chasing by the police also makes the bodies of the children extremely exhausted. But it is important to note that within stuckness hope resurfaces. Within the bleakness of one's present, possibilities arise. Feldman takes on Berlant's "cruel optimism" to discuss the attachments and the losses that take place in one of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon. Berlant's main point is that optimism can be cruel because one is attached to problematic objects; things that can be easily lost and therefore, there is always the problem of being attached and then having to let go, or to lose these attachments. Before going to the streets; the children have to learn how to get rid of these attachments; they begin by learning to lose their homes, their families, their friends, and their neighborhoods. Because the cruelty that Berlant is speaking of here is the cruelty of having to let go of these attachments, and when one loses these attachments; he/she also losses hope, even if momentarily, even if the very loss of hope helps hope resurface. At my very first days of fieldwork, I had the feeling that some of my interlocutors are very much attached to the notion of the streets. Even with having to let go of everything, they still have a relationship with a certain street and a certain pavement in that street on which they sit, and a certain spot in the garden in that street in which they sleep. Some of my interlocutors were lucky enough to have stayed decades in the same space; for instance in front of the mosque of Sayda Zaynab, but others learned at a very young age that even being attached to the streets is paving the way for another disappointment, another loss. It was very obvious however, that they do not have attachments to certain clothes, or certain material objects; but their attachment to the idea of the street itself and in many cases to a particular street/space was a different story. My interlocutors would call the streets as "theirs" and would refer to the street as their "home" or their "neighborhood". Hossam, a fifteen years old told me that he has been living all his life in Sayda Zaynab. He lost his family and the home they all lived in because his father died, but he decided to stay on the streets of

Sayda Zaynab so as not to let go of his original home. But they soon discover that the streets can be lost too. During the renovations of the streets that are taking place in Heliopolis; all the children were moved with the obliteration of old pavements and the removal of the old metro. Thus, the children learn to always move, never be fixated in one spot; to lose even the hope of getting attached to a space in which one finds familiarity and comfort. The loss of the streets also happen when one is imprisoned; to go from the immense freedom of the street, to a small cell in a faraway prison. Thus, there is always an attachment that is lost, and with this loss, hope is also scarce. "A lack of hope equates to an apathy of let-go dreams: when hope is smothered, it seems, so too is resistance" (Griffiths, 629). The street children learn to let go of dreams and attachments, and with letting go they lose the tools of resistance. With the renovations in Heliopolis, I failed to locate my interlocutors who were kicked out by the police, and I had also failed to meet up with other interlocutors who are captured and imprisoned or sent to a shelter. The process of having to relocate, to leave one's home (in this case a particular street), to have forced renovations where the tree you slept under is uprooted and a huge concrete bridge is built instead, is all unsettling and makes hope uneasy to be held on. In the state of constant waiting, constant losing, constant deprivation of previous attachments, the bodies of the Street Children, and the spaces in which they live become exhausted. But although at first hand one might think that all hope is lost, I want to argue that this is not entirely the case. Much as there is a loss of hope when letting go of attachments; other things connect and reshape the affective bodies of Street Children. I think of my interlocutors running away when the policemen approach them; fear takes over them. In this instance; "the fear—the intolerable—becomes "then the hope itself"" (Griffiths, 631). In fear, in living in shifting and changing spaces, in dreams, and in the intolerable, hope resurfaces. Even with little mentioning of the future in all my conversations with my interlocutors, which I thought meant that no one is hopeful, there was always a re-appropriation of the violence that marginalized groups go through that are translated into

resistance and in resistance one easily finds hope. Resistance for Bloch (1954, 1193) is a social engagement that manifest itself in dreams and actions that help surpass the darkness of the lived moment. Resistance is “to see around the corner, where a different, unfamiliar life may be going on”. Months after the renovations in Heliopolis were over, I passed by the street where I met my interlocutors. I had lost all hope of ever seeing them again. But they were there; roaming their neighborhoods playing and sleeping under the bridge that was once a park. The resistance and the hope here were found in how they re-appropriated the streets that were taken from them, insisted on staying close to what they know as their home, and even when it did not look the same, they managed to make it familiar by being there. They did not lose hope of ever coming back, and their relationship with the street was not an abstract relationship of the freedom that streets give them, but it was a particular relationship with a particular street that felt like home. The definition of hope in the case of Street Children varies as much as it varies in the case of Palestinians; some hope to become rich, live in fifth settlement, and own cars; others simply hope for another day with no police harassment. The politics of hope may be tricky to understand because in most narratives hope is equated with joy and happily-ever-after; but in closely looking at how bodies live and maneuver the everyday streets of Cairo, one also discovers that hope is not equal to joy. The every day may be filled with despair, with agony, with hardships, but it is not voided, it is not lacking hope of even the slightest alteration of paths. So in the dialectic relationship of hope/despair, of mobility/stuckness, of resistance/apathy; I try to map exhausted bodies in the exhausted streets of Cairo. I speak of the loss of hope and its resurfacing because this is how I got to understand how bodies are defined as exhausted on the streets of Cairo. Although hope can be understood in Bloch’s “Ontology of Not-Yet Being”; in which he argues that we put our hopes, desires, and dreams in things that cannot be realized. Hope gives the street children a power to resist, and to still construct a life through the constant confinement and categorization.

Massumi argues that the body is defined through the power to affect and to be affected (Massumi, 2). I speak of hope resurfacing with the resistance of bodies on the streets of Cairo: resisting the structural violence that slowly kills the bodies who are trying to resist it. The state won't simply let those bodies on the street die; but that it will diminish the body's affective power daily; taking limb by limb; cutting through the body slowly while it dies. But the bodies of Street Children resist this (by re-appropriating the streets and insisting on being hopeful), and through their resistance they gain the "power to" that Massumi speaks of. Power to affect, and to be affected. 'Power to' is an event of potentiality, where affect is a force that is capable and able to do things. Whereas 'power over' is to have to coercive power, it is the power that the state has over the children. But the street children have the ability to gain power through being able, as stated above, to affect each other and be affected in this process. They resist the state by continuing to live, every day, with fewer limbs and fewer rights than everyone else; but they continue to exist, dream, and affect. I argue later that resistance is found in the every day's insisting on falling in love, making friendships, and standing up to the unfair state that criminalizes them and the coercive society that confines them. This resistance, and the affective capabilities their bodies have, render their bodies exhausted with all the fluctuations between the hope and its loss, the dreaming and the realization of the reality, and the actual physical exhaustion.

Bodies as Archives:

"كنتُ أعلن حبي
على صدرها ، فتصير مدينهْ
كنتُ أعلن أنَّ رحيلي قريب
وأنَّ الرياح وأنَّ الشعوب
تتعاطى جراحي حبوباً لمنع الحروب .
بين حلمي وبين اسمه

كان موتي بطيئاً
باسمها أتراجع عن حُلْمها . ووصلتُ
وكان الخريف قريباً من العشبِ
ضاع اسمها بيننا ... فالتقينا.
لم أسجل تفاصيل هذا اللقاء السريع‘‘
(محمود درويش، قصيدة بين حلمي وبين اسمه كان موتي بطيئاً)[7]

The state leaves its traces on the bodies of Street Children, the body becomes the archive of torture, of abandonment, and endurance. The bodies have to endure the cold, the rain, the constant waiting. They also endure the rape, the deep cuts, the abduction by policemen who later torture them into admitting to “a crime, any crime” (Abdallah, 18 year old boy met in Maadi). But these moments of sheer and utter violence only act as possibilities of the otherwise. The otherwise exists, in dreams and on the streets of Cairo. But first, to understand the bodies of Street Children as archives, I ask if one needs to understand them as vulnerable bodies? Butler argues that vulnerability is felt in relation to others; the bodies of street children are vulnerable because they are left without support. “Without shelter, we are vulnerable to weather, cold, heat, and disease, perhaps also to assault, hunger, and violence” (Butler, 13). Butler also argues that the bodies are vulnerable even before the lack of infrastructure; the bodies of Street Children were vulnerable the day they were born and the moment their families decided to torture them/not accept them/abandon them/ coerce them to work at a young age. Butler looks at precariousness as a human condition; the families of the street children are precarious because they depend on their children to provide for the family. The street children become precarious bodies on precarious streets; they depend on one another in protection, in working and in seeking friendships and love. My interlocutors have spoken to me about feeling invisible.

[7] I was declaring my love on her chest, so she became a city. I was declaring that my departure was soon and that the wind and the people take my sufferings as pills to stop the wars. And between my dream and his name; my death was slow. With her name I would regress my dream and I have arrived. And the autumn was close to the people. Her name was lost between us, so we came together. But I did not record the details of this fast meeting.

"My baby can be screaming of hunger and I am begging all those who are sitting on coffeeshops for a pound or two, and all they would care about is for me to leave because my baby is too noisy" (Elham, 18 years young mother). The bodies of street children can also be understood through de Santos's notion of the abyssal line; how are people rendered inhuman or non-existent? How does the state make certain groups invisible? The state here succeeded at making the pain and the hunger of the street children as their fault and they were expected to carry the weight of their sins (choosing the street over their homes/shelters). "Being on the other, colonial, side of the abyssal line amounts to being prevented by dominant knowledge from representing the world as one's own and in one's own terms" (de Santos, 6). To have the street children recount their own stories, to let the subaltern speak, and be heard; is a scarce practice in the modern world. The bodies of the street children are invisible to even telling their own stories; if one's body is made invisible, how can his story be heard? This is why the narratives of street children are always told by the media or the state from the point of view of the dominant powers, and not from the point of view of the street children themselves. I aim at this section in making the bodies as speaking archives of the stories that can recount the city because my interlocutors are the children who know the street best; they have lived most of their days sleeping on its pavements, have walked it back and forth, have found love in it, gave birth on it, and have befriended its violence. Yet, they are not given the chance to represent their own world, their own perception and their own understanding of the space, the state, and everything that lies in between.

Before moving into how bodies can act as archives, it is important to note that the abyssal line is not only the line that separates valid knowledge from invalid and unheard knowledge; but it is also the line that separates what kind of suffering is valid, and what sufferings should be overlooked. The abyssal line creates "A zone of nonbeing" (de Santos, 20); in these zones there is the creation of them; "the world of "them," those with whom no equivalence or reciprocity is imaginable since they are not fully human. Their exclusion is both abyssal and nonexistent as it

is unimaginable that they might ever be included. They are on the other side of the abyssal line" (de Santos, 21). Adding to de Santos, exclusion here does not mean they are completely excluded from the society, since they are very much used (as laborers), their bodies are appropriated to fill crime records that need to be assigned to someone, and the ministry of social solidarity accommodates money to "help them" or in other words; imprison them in a shelter. In the case of the street children, the exclusion is not primarily a physical one, but one that is inscribed on their bodies to make them believe (as well as others in the society) that they are not worthy of being included. When my interlocutors are hesitant to hug me, or to even shake my hand; I know that it is because they too believe that they are not fully human. When the social workers ask children as young as ten years old to find a job, or find a husband (to find a home), I understand that the society has categorized them into not fully human. But most importantly; the state and the society have managed to inscribe into everyone's mind that the street children's suffering should not come as a shock. Althusser argues that the society interpellates certain identities and produces subjects out of individuals. In this way, the street children's bodies are produced first by the society and then reproduced by the state. Following Althusser, he argues that ideologies hail and offer people certain identities in which they accept as natural. The street children have internalized that they are the smelly people, the untouchables, and the unruly subjects in many of their practices, even when they hope and dream and fall in love; they do so within the premises of what is allowed to them by the powers. Even when AbdelSattar told me about his love story; it was a story that does not exceed his dreams, he told me multiple times that he will never actually marry the girl he loves because no one will accept him. How could they accept him when he only accepts himself in the identity of the awaited Mahdy? We are all desensitized to all the different acts of violence that happen on the street. I want to deconstruct this desensitization, and tell the stories of how bodies act as archives of traumas, dreams and hope despite their interpellation as street children.

One five-year-old girl whom I met on a trip with a shelter was sitting with her shorts on the edge of the pool; scared to jump in. It was mid-July; and everyone was about to faint from the heat of the sun; as I sat next to her to assure her that she can jump in and enjoy the cold water; I noticed how both of her legs had deep scars to the point of deformation. When she saw that I had noticed her scars; she told me that it's fine; that her dad was only punishing her for not being a good girl. It was not fine. She later told me that her mother was the one who dropped her in the streets and told her to go to the nearest police station and this is how she eventually moved to the shelter. Only in the span of five years; this girl had endured more violence than her little body could take. Not only physical violence; but also the violence of abandonment and neglect. What also struck me was the fact that her suffering was not the kind of violence people usually stop at. It is very normalized; that it becomes part of the everyday reality of living the streets of Cairo. "As there are abyssal and non-abyssal exclusions, there are abyssal and non-abyssal forms of suffering. This distinction does not refer to the intensity of the suffering experienced by the collective or individual body. It refers to the indifference with which suffering is inflicted, indifference meaning both cold-bloodedness and impunity. Abyssal suffering is socially and politically indifferent suffering, suffering inflicted upon peoples and sociabilities inhabiting the other side of the line." (de Santos, 95) The little girl's suffering, along with AbdelSattar's and all of my interlocutors are normalized by the state and the society in an attempt to reduce the threat of the ungoverned bodies of street children and the improvised spaces in which they live. Their bodies become archives of traumas.

In mapping exhausted bodies; it was important to show how these bodies are constructed by the state to be "zones of non-being" (de Santos, 20). The State succeeds at normalizing the suffering of street children as well as criminalizing their existence. These bodies are always chased and are always deemed illegal; many of my interlocutors have been imprisoned for Taswol (mendicity), Tasreeh Gholman (forcing small boys to work on the street), Hatk A'rd

(sexual harassment/rape), robberies, the possession of a weapon, drug use or drug dealing, prostitution and many more. The mendicity law (49) for the year 1933 legislates that anyone who is 15 years old and above, bodily able and found begging in public spaces or public stores can be imprisoned for a duration of not more than two months. It goes on by stating that; three months in prison can be given for anyone who is 15 or above who uses any method (such as hurting themselves) to gain the empathy of the public in exchange for money. The same duration of imprisonment goes anyone who is begging/roaming public spaces with more than two Egyptian pounds and cannot reveal the source of acquiring the sum of money. In the case of the reoccurrence of the crime; the duration of imprisonment should not exceed one year. It is obvious that the law is outdated since it was mandated in 1933; and thus, makes the lives of street children easier to be captured. Spending three months in prison can be the result of having two pounds in their pocket. But it is also interesting how the writing of the law is elastic, fitting anyone and making it easy for the state to criminalize the street children. What is Tasawol? It is not defined and it is left open to interpretations of every Wakeel Neyaba. Tasreeh Gholman also falls under the same law for Tasawol and leads to the imprisonment of no more than three months for anyone who forces children under 15 years old to beg in public spaces. However, I knew from my field that this is the worst crime to be accused of. Those who are accused and charged for this felony can spend a minimum of seven years in prison because they are also accused of the crime of human trafficking. The law for human trafficking is a severe and harsh law that can lead to the punishment of life sentences and a fine of not less than one hundred thousand and not more than half a million Egyptian pounds in the case of trafficking children. The blurriness of the law and the lack of definition leads to hundreds of daily arrests under no concrete basis; which is argued by my interlocutors who are always subjected to these kinds of arrests. Almost all of my interlocutors spend time in confinement based on these elastic laws. But what is even more absurd is the precarity of being a body on the streets of Cairo that allows the

government to use any law to criminalize the street children. A prosecutor who worked in Sayda Zaynab precinct argued that It is very easy to accuse the street children of theft, drug dealing, rape, and prostitution; even when the laws do not particularly mention the children or their ages. The fact that at any moment, your body can be captured, and forced to admit to a crime you did not do; it doesn't only create a precarious life in which one is always living at risk of being imprisoned, but it also helps with the construction of the category of the dangerous bodies on the streets that we need to get rid of. This narrative by the State is a famous one that the society easily buys into it. The bodies of Street Children are then rendered as not only as "the others," "the non-humans," but as the dangerous bodies on the street that we need to eradicate. The media would argue that the children are malnourished and therefore would easily get sick; which puts the society at danger. The state narrative argues that the streets do not look good with so many dirty bodies sleeping on its pavements; that this is bad for tourism and bad for the inhabitants of a certain well off neighborhood. The prominent state narrative in media always argues that these children are rendering the streets unsafe because they are "hungry thieves" and they would do anything for money. With all the categorization; the bodies of the Street Children are thus exhausted; they are interpellated as non-human exhausted bodies. By exhausted I mean that they are constantly drained, living in constant precarity and liminality that their bodies cannot escape. But within this exhaustion; there are ruptures. The young, scattered, traumatized and exhausted bodies still feel a huge range of emotions. "Emotions are the door to and the path of life in struggle. And bodies are as much at the center of the struggles as the struggles are at the center of the bodies" (de Santos, 89). I recall sitting with Dahab in Manial a few days after her release from the police station. When mapping bodies, and the traces left on these bodies; I think of Dahab. But also, when I think of the emotions that make and constitute affective bodies on the streets of Cairo, I think of this specific instance; on one night where the streets were busy and the weather had a pinch of coldness; I sat with Dahab in the mobile car of the NGO;

"Gameela's sister is Dahab. While we sat in the mobile car she told me about being captured, for the fifth time; by the police.

She showed me where exactly was she tortured.

I could smell pee. I discovered later that she cannot control her bladder because of how much electricity they used on her when police officers were pressuring her to say that her friend stole a cell phone.

But she wouldn't admit to a crime her friend did not do.

One cell phone, five places she can trace with her fingers on where they exactly electrocuted her. Her body was the archive of all the violence she had endured, and still endures. She was stripped naked, hanged from both of her hands, and electrocuted. She showed me; her eyes voided; her voice cracking; with her bladder weeping.

One cell phone lost; belonged to their fellow policemen, now she pees herself.

Dahab is only 17.

She pees herself when sitting with others.

She acts as if nothing happened, but a lot had happened.

It is not the first time she was tortured.

And it won't be the last." (Extracted from fieldwork notes taken on 12th of October in Manyal)

I refer to my interlocutors as exhausted bodies on the streets of Cairo because they happen to exist regardless of anything else. They exist through the struggles and the struggles only exist through them. They speak of being exhausted "*mrhqyn*", not only because of sleeping on the harsh pavements, or for being hungry, but for having to always fight for their right to exist on the streets. Many of my interlocutors have told me they are tired of running away from policemen, or of having to search for a safe spot to sleep. Others were exhausted because they feel the responsibility of taking care of others (their families asking them for money, or their

groups needing protection). These bodies are affected, they affect, they are ruptured and they rupture. The bodies are archives of memories, traumas, and dreams. “Bodies cannot help but happen and be there, the struggles go on, clearing paths, often on top of the ruins of past struggles” (de Santo, 90). So even though the bodies are exhausted, they are the reason why life goes on. I would also call their bodies as the suffering bodies; “…body that survives and perseveres in the struggle in spite of the suffering” (de Santos, 90). The sufferings or the struggles that my interlocutors go through are trivialized; their oppression is a banal event (de Santos, 90). Thus, in the detailed mapping of the bodies I discussed above, I hope it became clearer how bodies are constituted on the streets of Cairo, and how they constitute the street, affected and affecting; how in hope and despair we can conceptualize a different understanding of life and living. Bodies also exist in fear, in resistance, and in their power to affect and be affected. I argue that even in the glimpses of hope and joy, one needs not to forget that, “Social struggles are not just death and suffering; they are also joy and mirth, happiness with victories, whether small or great, during breaks to restore strength, or even at difficult moments to revivify the spirit and go on fighting. Dancing and singing have crucial epistemological value for the epistemologies of the South” (de Santos, 92).

Exhausted Spaces, Failing states: exploring spaces of fear;

”وكوني مدينهْ !
ولكن , لماذا سقطتِ , لماذا احترقتِ
بلا سَبَبٍ ؟
ولماذا ترهّلت في خيمة بدويَّهْ ؟
- لأنكَ كنتَ تمارس موتاً بدون شهيَّهْ
وأضافت ’ كأنَّ القَدَرْ
يتكسَّرُ في صوتها :
هل رأيت المدينةَ تذهبُ
أم كنتَ أنت الذي يتدحرج من شرفة الله

قافلةً من سبايا ؟
هل رأيتَ المدينةَ تهربُ
أم كنتَ أنت الذي يحتمي بالزوايا !
المدينةُ لا تسقطُ ِ الناس تسقط !
ورويداً... رويداً تفتَّت وجهُ المدينهْ"
(محمود درويش، قصيدة بين حلمي وبين اسمه كان موتي بطيئاً)[8]

"We can see how the existing public space is seized by those who have no existing right to gather there, and whose lives are exposed to violence and death in the course of gathering as they do" (Butler, 6). The State takes away the right of the street children to exist in the spaces in which they inhabit. The spaces are always taken from them; the streets are appropriated by "formal vendors" and "state-approved kiosks"; for even when street children want to work for a living, they are chased and kicked out. The street children are always in a fight with the state that wants to eradicate them, hide them, and render them unreal/non-existent. I call it a fight because street children still exist despite all the failed trials by the state; they fight to stay, to work, to sleep, to even sing and play in the spaces in which they have chosen. Thus, as I called their bodies exhausted; I am calling the spaces as exhausted too since they are the battlefields in which dreams, hopes, aspirations as well as violence, coercion, and defeat take place. "Those who are excluded from existing polities, who belong to no nation-state or other contemporary state formation may be "unreal" only by those who seek to monopolize the terms of reality. And yet even after the public sphere has been defined through their exclusion, they act (emphasis added). Whether abandoned to precarity or left to die through systematic negligence, concerted action still emerges from such sites. And this is what we see, for instance, when undocumented workers amass on the street without the legal right to do so, when populations lay claim to a public square that has belonged to the military,

[8] And be the city. But why did you fall? Why did you burn? For no reason? Why did you slouch in bedouin tent? Because you used to practice death with no appetite. She added, with fate cracking in her voice: did you see the city go? Or were you the one who lost faith in God? In the convoy of women slaves? Did you see the city escape? Or were you hiding in corners? The city does not fall. The people fall.And slowly, slowly… the face of the city crumbles.

or when the refugees take place in collective uprisings demanding shelter, food, and rights of mobility, when populations amass, without the protection of the law and without permits to demonstrate, to bring down an unjust or criminal regime of law or to protest austerity measures that destroy the possibility of employment and education for many" (Butler, 6). I would add to Butler's examples of actions; the action of the street children existing, working, marrying, falling in love, and resisting all forms of exclusion they face from the state. Thus, in this section of the chapter, I want to indulge in how spaces were rendered exhausted by being spaces in which fights over living and existing take place; and in which the state fails at appropriating these spaces as centralized, ordered and securitized.

"To be deprived of the space of appearance is to be deprived of reality. In other words, we must appear to others in ways that we cannot know, that we must become available to a perspective that established by a body that is not our own. And if we ask, where do we appear? Or where are we when we appear? It will be over there, between us, in a space that exists only because we are more than one, more than two, plural and embodied" (Butler, 4). How do the street children appear in these spaces? How do their bodies constitute the streets on which they live, work, sleep, and die? I want to argue here that as much as the street makes the children who inhabit it, the children also make the street. If space only exists because of people coming together, forming communities/ demonstrations/families; then the streets are made also by the children, and are thus are rendered as exhausted as the children's bodies. What I am trying to do in this section is an attempt to map the streets of Cairo, spatially and temporally. I argue that the street children have a different understanding of the streets, and can help us understand the face of Cairo that is usually censored by the state.

I will share in this section several stories that took place during my fieldwork that I believe made me realize that indeed the spaces are exhausted, but they are not produced

exhausted, They are exhausted in relation to the state, the spaces/the streets are made exhausted by the State.

"Time stopped, for a few seconds, as I tried to fathom what was happening in front of the police station next to the Sayda Zaynab mosque at 10 pm. A small girl was running in fear. Screaming. "They're coming for us, Abu Atata is coming for us" Time stopped as I failed to understand what was happening. I am seeing everything in slow motion, she's wearing a pink t-shirt, a pink hairband. She has tears in her eyes. Time stops. I am seeing everything in slow motion, and all I could feel was fear. She has tears in her eyes. Everyone is running now, another girl is hugged by her mother. In an assertion of protection, and a loud promise that if anyone tried to touch her, she would kill them. The mother is a mother; protective and assertive and strong. But afraid. I could see it in her eyes, and I could hear it in her shaky voice, fear. A few minutes earlier, we were talking of revolutions and police brutality; a young man told me that one day; everyone who is poor and unwell and left on the streets will eat the flesh of the policemen alive. He promised that he knows no fear. So when the times come, when the revolution comes; he promised that no one will be able to stop them from getting their dues. The policemen will hide again, they will throw out their uniforms again. But as in a manifestation of real power, and an assertion of fear, the boy ran away with those who did as the microbus came towards us. I kept asking what was happening until I saw the white microbus approaching. Fear. I also felt it immensely. I remembered all the times I said I wasn't afraid. Lies. We all lie to keep on surviving the city of the dead; the police state. We run when we have to. We run because we are afraid. I stood still and awaited my fate; I was scared for the mother, for her daughter, for all the interlocutors I now call friends. I was scared for them, for myself, for my parents, and everyone; for one day, one night, one moment on one street. The microbus passed by and did not stop where we were. But fear had taken over everyone. Silence prevailed. I wondered how do the children

endure this every day, and every moment of their lives. A little boy finally spoke out, he is no more than seven years old "I cannot go back to jail". Fear must have taken over him as he remembered his nights jailed. Only 7 years old… No one spoke another word. Life moved on naturally. But fear was still there. It will always be there. It became part and parcel of us. It took hold of the space around us, and captured us in it so immensely, that we think we no longer live in fear; until a white microbus passes by; and only then that we are reminded that we have been always living in fear, and we always will." (Sayda Zaynab, November 2019)

The extract from my field notes above is only capturing one moment of fieldwork; but it is not a moment that I think I will ever forget. The bodies of street children are bodies who live in fear. And I got to experience that for one moment of my life and it had changed me immensely. But most importantly; these spaces of fear are constructed for a reason. Abu Atata is the face of the state that the children know and the white microbus is where they are abducted and taken to prison. Usually at the end of every year, policemen from the Police Station in Abu Atata go around the streets to bring in some of the children to finalize unclosed cases. Many of the children go to prison for crimes they have never even heard of "I was imprisoned for Hatk Ard, I was too young; only seventeen years old and did not know what it meant" (Ahmed, 23 years old, Dokki). But the creation of spaces of fear would make the children more cooperative with the police and would render them silent in the face of all the violence and oppression they have to endure. ""We the people" may remain afraid. For even if a less oppressive political atmosphere emerges, the very presence of a liberal democratic state requires that its citizens develop the habit of fear, which is necessary to its protection of legal rights." (Asad, 294) As Asad argues, the state protects itself by making sure that the bodies remain afraid and that the spaces remain spaces of fear.

Tracing temporality on the streets; one can also be shocked by how fear shapes the spaces and the streets. When do the street children sleep? They do not sleep at night. My interlocutors

have shared with me that they only sleep when the sun rises because, at night, anything can happen. They can be captured by the police, their possessions can be stolen, or they can be harassed/raped. They sleep when the sun rises or during the day because this is when life is brought back to the streets; there are more people and thus, less violence is expected to take place. Fear also takes place in identifying one's self; most of the children would change their names, or go by nicknames because they wouldn't want to be easily identified by the state or the police. Everyone is a threat to them; the people walking by their streets may scold them or beat them up for no reason, their friends may decide to abandon them, the police may start chasing them and even their loved ones may put them through danger. Thus, living in precarity, being unable to sleep at night or to trust someone enough to tell him/her their real names, the spaces succeed at becoming spaces of fear. One day in Manyal, I met my first rapist. Even though talking about rape was at this point of fieldwork an ordinary conversation, it was no longer ordinary when I found myself speaking to the assaulter and not the assaulted.

"Today I met my first rapist.

He's 22 years old. His name is karaneesho.

He's a funny guy, always joking and laughing

He told me about raping an 18-year-old girl, whom he once dated, along with two other older men.

They walked her to a dark mashtal (garden), and told her that only girls who come here are whores. They took turns raping her after beating her up with bottles of cold drinks.

He thinks it's his right to rape her, for revenging his manhood. What he didn't say was that the two other men where much much stronger than he is, they're the leaders of the street.

Karaneesho felt it was his right to rape his ex, because after all he gave her fifty pounds a day and took care of her child. He said he bought the child pampers, clothes and food. He bought his ex-wife food and cigarettes and Hash. But she did not love him.

Karaneesho: "A friend of mine told me that she was flirting with him, especially that they have a history together; so my friend told me if he should proceed with the flirting to prove her infidelity. When it was proved that she was flirting with other men, I tore all the papers that I kept with me (referring to fake marriage certificates). I shouted to everyone in the street that she no longer belongs to me, that I do not protect her anymore, and to prove it; I beat her up in front of everyone. El Masry and El Sagheer took her by the hand, and they told me to follow them. We take her to the mashtal, and we start raping her after beating her up"

I said: بس انت كدة سلمتها يا كرانيشوا... *(but you've handed her to them on a silver plate)*

"No, this was her choice; she cheated on me and I needed to prove I am enough of a man" (Manyal, October 2019)

I wonder what it must have felt like to be living in a constant state of fear. Fear is gendered, the boys I met during my fieldwork were not scared of rape, they were not scared of sleeping in public spaces, and they were not scared of having to become a sex worker. They did not fear losing their virginity, or falling out of love with someone who will find it their god-given right to punish them for it. I knew later that the girl who was raped was only sixteen years old, with a baby and now kicked out of Manyal after being raped by three older men. Manyal here becomes an exhausted space and a violent street. The very idea of the state is premised on the idea of fear. Fear was gendered, and it was also racist. My interlocutors with darker skin tones were more scared to stay on the streets because of the constant harassment and "jokes"/bullying they receive from passersby. They spoke to me about being called the worst of names just because of their skin color.

But fear is also within those who govern, not only the governed; in the case of Karaneesho; he was governing that street; and he was afraid of losing his image and status. And in the case of the state, fear lies at its core. One can see fear when the policemen are afraid to have unclosed cases that require them to coerce street children into admitting crimes they did not

do. Fear is also found in the Ministry of Social Solidarity suggesting a camp on the margins of the State where all Street Children should be sent to learn different skills and become valuable laborers. Fear is felt, is seen, and is heard on the streets of Cairo; and it does not only belong to the oppressed, it also belongs to the oppressor. I was afraid too; for my sensibilities of hate and empathy were intermixed. I was sitting with Karaneesho, scared of the fact that he was a rapist, and empathetic because he was interpellated into this subject he had to become. He is both a rapist and a raped man (theoretically) on the streets of Cairo. His mere existence as a street leader subjugates being both powerful and powerless. Karaneesho was produced as a subject, and in this production I study the relationships that are produced of being a rapist and a protector at the same time; that led to spaces of fear and exhaustion.

Fear is about not knowing what's next, in the uncertainty of how things will unfold, or in knowing exactly how they could unfold; bodies and spaces are both rendered exhausted. One of the basic rights that the children lack is the right to eat; but fear takes over mothers every day when the issue of food is brought up. I have been meeting a lot of street children who are called "young mothers"; these young mothers can be as young as 14 years old. Living in dire poverty and on the streets, feeding one's baby becomes very challenging. I have interlocutors who are too weak and young that their breasts do not produce natural milk, and others who take drugs and are conscious enough to not feed their babies drugged milk. So in almost all the cases I have met of young (and even old) mothers living on the streets, buying powered baby milk is a must. One can of powdered baby milk is consumed in exactly four days and it originally costs eighty pounds. This is one component that the mother has to buy every four days, other than pampers, clothes, blankets + needs for herself (food, etc). The state has come up with two solutions for families who do not afford milk for their newly borns; one needs to go to the nearest health office (Maktab Seha) to get their milk. This rarely happens because all of the milk is somehow stolen by nurses or people who work in these facilities, and even if the milk is not stolen, most of the

young mothers on the street do not issue birth certificates for their babies and have no documents to prove poverty, or that even that the baby is their own. The other brilliant solution is that the milk has been subsidized by the military; so one can pay 40 pounds instead of 80. Although this milk is not available, I was shocked to know that the military has been responsible for importing this milk for a really low price, putting its margin of profit on it, and selling it as "subsidized". The State in this sense has been profiting off the hunger of little street children and their babies. A mother has to endure seeing her baby go hungry for days, and even risk giving him/her biscuits and chips (the cheapest on the street) as to feed his/her hunger. When one doctor with Samusocial got angry that a mother is feeding her three months old biscuits and yogurt; she responded; " we are not like you, we cannot afford milk every day". The words spoken by this young mother shook me; it is superior to us to go around manifesting our anger at the children's bad eating habits when really the real problem lies in the state being a broker, and a greedy thief. But also her words proved how she feels excluded from the rest of the society; "This respondent expressed how he feels excluded from the new imagined city, which explains how these mega-projects do not serve the public and ordinary people (Bayat 2009)" (Khalil, 100). Although Khalil here speaks of the new capital on the outskirts of Cairo; all the children I have met have expressed feelings of exclusion from the mega-projects around them; be it subsidized milk that never really reaches them, or a new capital that is built specifically for people to avoid scenes of children sleeping on pavements. A new capital that is built by the poor, for the rich and for a certain imagined scenery, one that is organized, clean, and modern. The street children are treated as if they are infections; they know and internalize how badly they need to be excluded from the overall scenery of the spaces around them. Maybe the state builds high walled new capitals for their exclusion and maybe for many other reasons; but one thing I am sure of; some babies of young mothers will sleep hungry tonight because the military/the state is too corrupt to care for them.

This is how spaces of fears are produced; exhausted, hungry and sleep deprived.

Waiting, exhausted:

”وجئتُ المدينةَ منهزماً من جديد
كان سورُ المدينة يُشبهني
وقلتُ لها :
سأحاول حُبّكِ...
لا أذكر الآن شكل المدينةِ
لا أذكر اسمي
ينادونني حَسَبَ الطقس والأمزجهْ
لقد سقط اسمي بين تفاصيل تلك المدينةِ
لملمه عسكريُّ المرور
ورتَّبه في ملف الحكومهْ
تشبهين الهويَّة حين أكون غريباً“ -
(محمود درويش، قصيدة بين حلمي وبين اسمه كان موتي بطيئاً)[9] -

As exhausted bodies are exhausted because of waiting. Spaces are also exhausted because they are spaces in which one is always waiting. Waiting is not only about the time spent waiting, waiting for waiting to end, waiting for the next moment; but it is also about the space in which one is waiting. Hage speaks of the compartmentalization of spaces (Waiting rooms in airports), but what happens when the space for waiting is an open one? How do the street children wait? What do they wait for? And what is it like to wait in an open, exhausted space like the streets of Cairo? I wrote the next field note after a visit to Al Sayda Zaynab, in which I came face to face with the idea of waiting. Sayda Zaynab is a famous mosque, people come from everywhere in Egypt to visit it, pray in it and ask for the help of el-Set. Therefore, a lot of my interlocutors live around the mosque;

[9] And I came to the city defeated again.The wall of the city resembled me and I told her I will try to love you. I do not remember how the city looks like. I do not remember my name. They call be according to the weather and the moods. My name fell between all the details of the city; a traffic officer gathered it and sorted it in a governmental file. You resemble the identity when I am a stranger.

mainly because the people coming to pray would distribute food or give out money as Sadaka

“They wait, lost—indeed abandoned—in time and space” (Hage, 29)

“On a November night, that should have been cold but was not cold, we waited with Sabrine and other street children for Batta. I asked about where she is and they told me she was kidnaped.

Pause.

I learned that Batta was doing the usual, sitting around with other street children in front of the mosque. They were waiting. Maybe for a better day, maybe for food, for love… Maybe they waited for the day to end so that the next would start. Maybe they waited for nothing. But all the time spent on the street is the time spent waiting. They just wait. Waiting shapes their lives and molds their present into very similar repetitive moments; but these repetitions are never identical. They learned this the hard way.

Pause.

—What happened to Batta, why are we waiting for her? I ask again.

Pause.

-Batta is kidnapped.

We are waiting for her to come back or for someone to save her.

Pause.

—How?

Batta was sitting with the other children. Waiting. For everything and nothing.

Pause.

A group of men approached the kids, they asked one of the older girls to come with them. She refused, argued she's not pretty enough. Take Batta, she's younger, a virgin, only 14 years old; she has her whole life waiting for her. Take Batta; so she stops waiting for a better day.

Batta waits in silence. She thinks of what is to happen to her. No one moves. Everyone is waiting for the next moment, a moment that is not identical to the last, a moment that will not be repeated in the near future. A moment passed. The men agree to take Batta, they leave, and now everyone is waiting

Pause.

I leave the field and think of Batta, I keep thinking of what might have happened to her.
Is she waiting in confinement to be raped?
Is she waiting to go back home?
Is she waiting to be saved?
Is she done with waiting at all?

Pause.

I am yet to understand how is life lived in waiting.

We wait in queues, in traffic, in class.

We wait for love, for company, for success.

Our waiting is hopeful; hoping that after waiting we will reach somewhere, a destination; a dissertation, a happy life.

But waiting is oppressive when you wait for things to end; for the rapist to fulfill his needs, for the night to pass without a kidnap, and for life to be kinder.

Pause." (Sayda Zaynab, November)

In waiting, in fear, the space is rendered exhausted. I use the term exhausted because walking the streets of Cairo one can feel the decay of everything and the slowness of time. To live in exhausted spaces is to not really sleep, not really eat, not live. Sabrine, an eighteen-year-old told me that she doesn't really sleep because she always fears that someone would kidnap her few months old son. She would hug him tight, and be half asleep; always thinking that at any moment she might lose him. She is also one of the young mothers who cannot afford to buy powdered milk. This fear of kidnapping young children is a shared fear by everyone on the streets; Sabrine's best friend (Shaymaa) has lost three children to kidnappers already. The exhaustion is a physical one due to lack of sleep and malnutrition, but it is also a mental one due to living in constant waiting. The spaces are therefore exhausted or are made exhausted by the state and by capital.

Dreams on the streets of Cairo also experience waiting. Waiting for that dream to become a reality. Omnia Khalil argues that; "The main point that Miller makes is that the places of precarity, which are regarded as places of absolute suffering, would still have the potential for the precarious laborers to live their lives on their terms, and to maneuver their way beyond marginality and victimhood" (Khalil, 114). Can dreams be the spaces in which we imagine and

live the otherwise? Is the street, an alternative in the face of the hegemony of the state? Many of my interlocutors have told me that they chose the street and would choose it for the freedom it entails. On the streets they get to be whoever they want. Most of my fieldwork was heartbreaking, but in many moments I also met joy. The spaces and the bodies remained exhausted, remained afraid and waiting. But there was a rupture on the streets of Cairo where dreams make spaces momentarily not so exhausting and constitute moments where the street children indulge in them with all of their emotions, all of their smiling faces remembering the first time they ever fell in love, remembering a good hot meal, or a hug from someone who took all of their pain away.

Conclusion:

”لم أكن حاضراً
لم أكن غائباً
كنتُ بين الحضور وبين الغيابْ
حَجَراً... أو سحابهْ
-تشبهين الكآبهْ
ولكن صدرك صار مظاهرة العائدين من الموت ...
ما كنتُ جنديَّ هذا الزمان
لأحمل لافتةً ِ أوعصا ’ في الشوارع
كان لقائي قصيراً
وكان وداعي سريعاً
تشبهين المدينَة حين أكون غريباً
قلت لها باختصار شديد
تشبهين المدينهْ
هل رآك الجنود على حافَّةِ الأرض
هل هربوا منكِ
أم رجموكِ بقنبلة يدويهْ ؟“
(محمود درويش، قصيدة بين حلمي وبين اسمه كان موتي بطيئاً)[10] -

[10] I was not present. I was not absent. I was between the present and the absence; a rock, or a cloud. You resemble depression; but your chest became the demonstrations of the coming back from the dead. I was not a solider of this era to carry a sign, or a stick in the streets. My encounter was short and my goodbye was fast. You resemble the city when I am a stranger. I told her very briefly; you resemble the city. Did the soldiers see you at the edges of the earth? Did they run away from you or did they bomb you with hand grenades?

This chapter is an attempt to map the city through the eyes of street children. I argue that in order to understand the city, one needs to delve into an understanding of bodies and spaces, how they are shaped by the state, and how they all shape each other. I have spoken of moments of dreams that were intertwined with spaces of violence. I have shared the street children's fears and hopes and argued that the city is best understood through them. Cairo from the point of view of the marginalized street children is a space in which their bodies are argued to be interpellated in a specific identity, but is also a space in which battlefields of asserting individuality prevails. Cairo as a space can be best understood through the stories I have shared from the lives of my interlocutors; how the dreams and hopes that shape the past, the present, and the future assert the argument of the non-linearity of time. I argued that the spaces and the bodies in Cairo are exhausted because they shape each other. The street children shape their own worlds, but also the worlds shape them. Thus, the bodies are exhausted because of the violence (in all its shades) they endure; and they, therefore, render the spaces exhausted too. The spaces are also made exhausted by the state and the society that want these spaces to be spaces of fear, spaces in which capturing the bodies of the Street Children is possible, and spaces in which there is violence, waiting, abandonment, and precarity. Finally, as I mapped the spaces and the bodies in their exhaustion. I made sure to start with dreams (AbdelSattar's dream of becoming the awaited ruler) and I want to end with another dream. The dream of the possibility of another world, and the knowledge production that takes place on the street as in finding alternative ways of living, despite the hegemonic discourses' failed attempts at erasing the existence of the street children from the understanding of the city.

The street children in Cairo are a threat because they offer a different knowledge and experience on what is life and what is living. "Another world is possible" (Escobar, 15) Indeed; working with the street children in Cairo has taught me that another world is possible. The world

that was inscribed upon us is not the only possible way of living. This world is supposed to be a structured one; you are born with a certain name that indicates your religion, you grow up and go to school to be taught one kind of knowledge, you are told not to question things, you have to go to university, you learn nothing, you question no one, you have to find someone to marry, you have to find an apartment and make it into a home, you do not have the money so you are always indebted, always have to go to a job you do not like, to pay for the life you do not want, then you have to have kids who will grow up to know one kind of knowledge and just like this, life is captured, you are captured; every day and every moment, and even in your death, your body is still captured. But as abstract as this life is described, it is the only life that is accepted. So when a child goes to the street; people start to deem this act as crazy. The society fails to understand that another world is possible. A world where you are no longer following societal norms and expectations; where you have sexual relations without the approval of the state, where you find a home on the streets; without being indebted, without being captured. The Street Children succeeded at designing their own worlds; and just as the Zapatista of Chiapas; the Street Children in Cairo also argue "We ourselves want to be those who design and control our life projects" (Escobar, 16). How is the world that they are designing is different? Through the acts of refusal to be dehumanized, the refusal to stay in situations of maltreatment, the refusal to be docile bodies, and the refusal of being policed; the street children have managed to create an alternate space in which new modes of life were created. How the street children live is the excess that leaks from the structured system that thought of itself as fixed and stable. We live in the moment of crisis that Negri is talking about and which produces a leakage or an excess. There is something so corrupt about the system; as Foucault has explained it, that it is producing an excess. The State mandates and creates docile bodies throughout institutions (like schools) and creates "the normal" citizen. The normal citizen is a category, it is centered, hegemonic, and fixed. Because something exists such as the "docile body/the citizen" the system also produces

its opposite; the margin, the non-hegemonic, and in this specific case; the street child. “ For Foucault, the concern is much more with power in the routines of the ordinary and thus the production of the “normal” (Das, 25). The street children have a totally different take on the state, and on understanding it. Through the acts of refusal and resistance as well as fear and suffering; ideas of alternative modes of life became possible on the street. The street children succeeded at living the dream; let go of corrupt family structures and build their own; all street children call and treat each other as siblings; if one has food they all get to share it, if one has gained a large sum of money, they distribute it amongst themselves, if one gave birth; they all take rounds to take care of the newly born, bring him/her food and money, play with him/her and love him/her as if it were their own. In a nutshell; the street children construct families instead of the chaos of what was meant to be once their family. Here; the same knowledge of what is a family is deconstructed and reshaped in a new way; and thus, a new mode of life; that is outside of the power of the state, and that is an alternative community; managed to exist beyond the state as we know it. The Street children have also managed to stay outside of the grip of the law; It is like being given the juridic title of a “street child” which is in all ways dehumanizing; but still refusing it. How? Most street children do not have birth certificates, are not issued death certificates, do not marry officially in front of the state, do not buy houses, pay for electricity or water, never, therefore, pay taxes, never use the subsidized goods that the state offers, do not go to public schools or engage with the state in any form. Thus, the street children are not registered in many cases; therefore not counted, not monitored, not used in statistics, they fall outside of the grip of the law; they fail to be docile bodies and normal citizens, and in this failure, they find the excess from which they can produce a new mode of life. Esmeir’s work in juridical humanity is fascinating when arguing that; “humanity” is a title that can be given and thus taken away at any time, but what is more fascinating is that the street children refused to be stripped away from their humanity by insisting on surviving and creating a new mode of life but not within the

system that stripped them from their humanity in the first place. It is in a way like refusing to be part of the system that does not accept them and therefore felt the necessity to create one where they have agency and power over their own lives.

The bodies, the spaces, the dreams exist through the struggles. These struggles render them exhausted, but not voided. May all our struggles are rendered hopeful, and may we find spaces to dream in the failures of states.

MAPPING DEATH ON THE STREETS OF THE CITY OF THE DEAD

Death and Precarity: The rhythms and the infrastructure of killable bodies:

Painting (Death and life, Gustav Klim)

”وعيال عرايا

تفيض بها الطرقات

من القرى ومن المقاطعات

اطفال فى لون الجوع

صوت النفس مسموع

اطفال شبه وضلوع“

(عبد الرحمن الابنودي، الاحزان العادية)[11]

“ Doctora, what do you think happens if I inject myself with an air syringe?” I was asked by Laila, a twelve years old girl who currently lives on the street after being kicked out by her father who simply hates girls and cannot fathom why he should pay for them to live in his tiny house. It was my first day in the field; and I am already called a doctor when I am not, and asked a question that I know its answer is fatal.

“Why are you asking?” I respond

[11] Naked children who are left on the streets. From the villages to the districts; children coloured with hunger, the sound of their breaths is not heard.Young children and broken ribs

"I saw a boy who injected himself with air in this small garden, and he died."

I pause. Unable to comment or answer.

"I want to die." Laila goes on.

"This life I am living is hard enough, what is life anyway? My father does not want me, and I am sick of sleeping on the pavements. Death will be my way out."

To save me from my shock, the social worker from the NGO intervenes to answer Laila; "Do you want to die a Kafra (a disbeliever, faithless)?"

The girl's eyes widen; "after all the praying I have been doing?? Will I go to hell?"

"Yes, if you kill yourself you go straight to hell, tell me what are you praying for?" The social worker continues.

"I am praying for my misery to end, I am praying to die fast" Laila says.

"Why don't you pray for things to get better; for your father to love you, for a family, and a nice home?" (Maadi, August 2019)

Since that day, I met death in every conversation during my fieldwork. Death presents itself strongly on the streets, on the margin, and in the spaces of the city in which life barely exists. Death only exists in a fluid relationship with Life, we know death because we also know life. They make each other exist, and one cannot exist without the other. But what happens when both temporal and spatial (life and death) fields merge? What are death worlds? How are death worlds constituted and who inhabits them? How are bodies rendered killable? And when? How can death shape the life of the street children in Cairo? How does being the living dead render the street children's bodies exhausted, captured, precarious and disposable? What does it mean to be the ungrievable bodies on the streets of Cairo? How do the children living on the streets of Cairo make their own bodies killable? In this chapter I am seeking an understanding of Cairo which I argue is built on the dead and disposable bodies of street children. In this tracing of death on the

streets of Cairo, I look at the rhythms of a life lived in the shadow of death; in how death is always merging with life and shaping/molding the bodies of the street children. In also tracing death, I try to see moments of life and living that exist as the infrastructure of Cairo, despite the constant deadening, killing and disposing of bodies

Deleuze and Guattari argue in their book "A Thousand Plateaux" that a concept is like a brick, either used to build a reasonable argument or thrown through a window. This chapter is both; I am talking about the construction of the deaths worlds, and the making of the socially constituted body that is rendered killable and ungrievable; both constructing a new concept and shattering constructed ideas about the lives, the bodies and the spaces of street children on the streets of Cairo. This chapter also paves the way to mapping the streets of Cairo, which I believe are built over the bodies of the marginalized and precarious street children. This chapter is one brick that makes up one part of the overall argument of the thesis in which the street children offer a production of Cairo from their point of view.

<u>The City of the dead; the creation of death worlds through precarity and loss:</u>

"انا عندي فكرة عن المدن الي يكرها النور"

(عبد الرحمن الابنودي، الاحزان العادية)[12]

Cairo is named the city of the dead because it is built on thousands of graveyards. While it stands on the bodies of those who died, it continues striving by creating itself as a death world; exhausting, deadening, and scary. In this chapter, I argue that Cairo is indeed the city of the dead that is constantly built as a death world, over the bodies of street children among others. It is the city that does not see the light, it is the city that only knows death and deadening and killing. It is

[12] "I have an idea about cities that are hated by light"

the city that is always in mourning, always grieving, always in loss. It is the city that the Street Children have to survive as the living dead. Mbembe (2019, 40) talked about the creation of death worlds as "new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead". Cairo is the death world for conferring on the street children the status of the living dead. I speak later in this chapter about how the street children are produced as the living dead. Emerson in his book 'Necropolitics, Living death in Mexico' unpacks the idea of the living dead; "It is the dismembered corpse left at strategic points throughout the city by warring cartels to confront residents with the ever-present possibility of death" (Emerson, 3). The street children confronted me about the reality of death, death worlds, and the living dead. On the streets, there is an omnipresent possibility of death that is so strongly immersed and intertwined in the making of the city that it becomes pivotal to its understanding.

"Today I learned about the death of a 14-year-old boy whom I just saw last week. Mahmoud was sitting with Sabrine when I first (and last) saw him. He was a shy boy who did not talk a lot but was very curious as to look inside the van and try to understand what's happening. I talked with Mahmoud briefly but nothing important. I learned about his death from Sherif, the supervisor from Samusocial; he mentioned that Mahmoud died when we were walking the streets of Manyal, with bags of Fatta and Lahma in celebration of Eid; this death conversation was very out of place, yet very mundane. I shockingly asked Sherif about what happened; he told me; "he overdosed on Powder, a friend took him to the sea (the Nile) for a quick swim and gave him the drug which killed him instantly since he never smoked a cigarette in his life". Powder, as I later learned, is the new substitute of Strox" (Extracted from fieldwork notes, August 2019)

Throughout my fieldwork, I discovered that I have to get used to death, to get to know interlocutors who will die a day later or even the same day. The precariousness of the situation of living on the streets of Cairo is not only the result of being homeless; but it's due to always being at the risk of dying, there is very little mention of tomorrows or future events in almost all

conversations because the one unsaid rule of the streets is that no one knows what will happen tomorrow; one day you are alive, working, playing, falling in love, and then the next day you are dead, imprisoned, or waiting for both. I had a chat during my early fieldwork days with a girl in Maadi who is in love with another boy, Gameel. Randa told me that Gameel will marry her next year, I smiled and said that's good. She paused for a second and asked me what will happen if Gameel dies? I told her I don't know, what do you think will happen? She said, "I will marry any other boy, what should I do? Wait for him to escape his grave?" Although Randa has been cutting herself every time she fights with Gameel and she had shown me the scars on her arm in a portrayal of love, she also showed me that death will be the end of this love. Randa was being realistic, which is something you wouldn't expect from a sixteen-year-old; who is hopelessly in love with a beautiful boy who is strong and protective of her. Randa doesn't get to have her fairytale, even within the premises of her own mind, just because of the reality of death, and the precariousness of the streets. Cairo in this sense becomes a death world, creating and constructing subjects who are unable to hold on to love and hope because the reality is always butchering the dreams. The fact that Randa thought of death when a future plan was mentioned made it obvious that mapping Cairo would also necessitate a tracing of death and the creation of death worlds.

How are bodies rendered killable? And when? Emerson argues that, "Necropolitics studies this intersection between living death and the death world. It is a study of life's inherence to death, the sensations informing how to navigate a violent terrain, and the spontaneous order that emerges as bodies move through the shifting multiplicities of which they are composed" (Emerson,4). To live the death worlds, or to be the living dead, is to be in a constant state of capturing. The term precarity was first introduced theoretically as a term that explains the risk of being an irregularly employed laborer under neoliberalism. Millar (2014, 2) speaks of the relationship between precarity and "states of anxiety, desperation, un-belonging, and risk". I

argue that in the case of the street children in Cairo, the risk, the anxiety, the exhaustion and the fear all stem from always being subjected to the idea of death. The sense of losing social ties and losing the sense of belonging to the society is part and parcel of the experience of precarity that is produced by the death world. Dreams and future plans are haunted by death. The streets of Cairo construct the idea that one might die today, or might not; and in both cases, death inhabits life on the streets. If precarity on the streets of Cairo is produced by the death-world, then what are the rhythms of death? "As noted, death also encompasses the energies that move in and through bodies, creating surfaces and contouring bodies as it passes through them. This death is beyond linearity and more than a final horizon of existence" (Emerson, 6). The death worlds on the streets of Cairo are devoid of any linearity of past, present, and future. You live and you die constantly and simultaneously. The rhythms of the death-worlds encompass the streets of Cairo; death haunts the street children; it makes them scared of planning a future, angry when one of them dies, and unable to live when constantly reminded that tomorrows might not come for them. This explains why my interlocutors would always bring death up in our conversations, not only because of how easy their deaths become, but also because Cairo had become a death world in which they were the living dead.

Another manifestation of the death world lies at the core of the police state. Hazem Kandil (2014, 1) argues that Egypt has become a more vigorous police state three years after the revolution, with the commencement of the Sisi rule, "The enemy is everywhere, and any effort to expose and eradicate him is given popular assent". Alves argues in his paper on "refusing to be governed" that policing is about administering social deaths. On the streets of Cairo; the state is the police. The daily battles that take place on the streets are mainly through confrontations with the police forces. Salwa Ismail argues in "The resurgence of police government in Egypt" that under the rule of Mubarak, the police "emerged as an apparatus of government" (Ismail, 1). The police became an integral part of the everyday life in Cairo. There is not a day where the police

do not harass the street children; asking them for money, asking them to clean precincts, and to work for them. Ismail describes the encounters between the police and the citizens as marked with humiliation and violence. This everyday violence and constant confrontations with policemen also construct Cairo as a death-world because as Mbembe describes it, necropolitics and the creation of the death world are also premised on the idea of "the possibility that anyone whomever can be killed by anyone whomever at whatever moment, using any pretext at all" (Mbembe, 35). Cairo's police have the capacity to kill, while Cairo's street children embody all the possibilities of being killed. Alves argues that a life that lives in humility equates social death, and indeed, his description resonates with the lives of Street Children in Cairo; who describe their interactions with the police as humiliating and violent. This violence also produces the precarious lives that make the street children further embedded in the death world. While I was doing fieldwork in Maadi; I asked a twenty-one-year-old Mohamed about his fear of the police. He said, "It is not that we are afraid, we are just tired. Many of us escaped our homes, our jobs at sweatshops because of the constant beatings and cursing from our parents or mea'lmeen (bosses); we decided to live on the streets because of the freedom of doing whatever we want. But then one day you're simply sitting on a pavement laughing with friends, and you see them coming. Whoever can run will run, but most of the time we are taken to the police station. Some times you're lucky, they take all your money, ask you to clean every inch of the station and then let you go (which is a systematic practice that takes place every month), but other times you're just unlucky; it's usually at the end of the year, they have a lot of sentences to give and a lot of cases to finalize. They would torture you to claim that some of the drugs that you have never seen before belong to you, and you are jailed. Why? Because you are weak. They have control over you and your whole life" I asked him if he thinks he should go back home instead of being harassed by the police systematically. He said, "We have no homes to go back to, you just simply learn to run faster when you see them approaching". Makram-Ebeid (2019) in her article

“Precarious revolution: labor and neoliberal securitization in Egypt” argues that, “neoliberal securitization was imperative to class making”. She argues that understandings of precarity in Egypt, are really specific to being about being vulnerable to the police. My fieldwork echoes that securtisation not only constructs classes, but also create a death world in which precarity prevails and leads to also the creation of the living dead subject. This precarious life with all its vulnerability and violence is one way of the many ways the death worlds are created. This is simply life lived through “brutal and raw violence that can be translated into abandonment, incarceration, and death” (Alves, 3). Death here can act as the actual death through torture, bad conditions of imprisonment, or death out of neglect; street children speak of dying out of hunger or coldness. But it also means the figurative death, to be the living dead, the one who is not counted as human, the one who can be used every month to clean the police station or the one whose money is taken by the police.

Precarity, violence, and loss are the rhythms through which I traced death (and therefore the creation of the death world) on the streets of Cairo. “Each of us is constituted politically in part by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies—as a site of desire and physical vulnerability, as a site of publicity at once assertive and exposed. Loss and vulnerability seem to follow from our social being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by risk of that exposure” (Butler, 20). Street children are in a constant state of loss. The loss has rhythms, as spoken of in my chapter on mapping the city; the loss only happens because attachments take place. First having to put up with losing the attachments with family, home, and familiar street, to losing status as a child only to become a category of and in the death world, to becoming everything but human, someone who is ungrieavble, to losing the value of your life. Yet ironically, in death, they are still nothing, not even a loss. This constant state of loss makes one more vulnerable, turns the body weak, unimportant, ungrievable; and thus turns the spaces, exhausted, and dead. “There is losing, as we

know, but there is also the transformative effect of loss, and this latter cannot be charted or planned. One can try to choose it, but it may be that this experience of transformation deconstitutes choice at some level" (Ibid, 21). The street children are transformed by this constant state of loss; Randa experiences loss every day when thinking Gameel might leave her, Shaimaa experiences loss by not being able to continue on living, and Mahmoud's friends experienced loss by losing him to death. The loss constructs the death world; it cuts all ties, makes like uneasy to be lived, and leaves a heavy feeling on one's chest. The street children have no idea how their lives will turn out to be, or what tomorrow may bring. But as Butler argued, we lose certain people and certain places only to discover who we are, to discover that we only exist through the ties that we have to others. We think it's temporary, that eventually things will be better, there will be no mourning; but this state of loss is never temporary. Loss sticks with the street children constantly; it shapes them and reshapes them with every time they lose something. In the case of the street children, I argue that they have lost so much that they are in constant trial to find themselves. "Who "am" I, without you? When we lose some of these ties by which we are constituted, we don't know who we are or what to do. On one level, I think I have lost "you" only to discover that "I" have gone missing as well" (Butler, 22). Finding one's self in the death world is also finding that one is a living dead, an ungrievable body.

"… The conditions under which certain human lives are more vulnerable than others, and thus certain human lives are more grievable than others" (Butler, 30). Nada is fourteen years old, she would tell you she is fifteen. When I first met Nada, she was pregnant and expected to deliver a week from our meeting. Nada's mother went to prison when Nada was only two years old, she got a sentence of twenty-five years. "Mo'abad" or as described by Nada, a life sentence. She would usually tell people her mother is dead. What is the difference between dying and between living the rest of your life in prison? Nada would argue that it's all the same; her mother is the living dead, inhabiting the death-world of prison. Her father did not want to raise her, so by

the time she was eleven, she started taking the street as an alternative home. She found love in an older boy, whom she told me should have made up for the love that her father did not give her. Her love, Saad, a name that is derived from the Arabic "Saeed" or happy, got her pregnant by the time she was thirteen and then was summoned to prison for no apparent reason. Saad, whose name is not synonyms of his life, did not lead a life of happiness. He too, inhabited the death world. He was poor, homeless, and just a boy who fell in love with a girl on the streets of a death world. Now Nada lives on the street, alone with no kin, no friends. Her whole life was Saad, and now he's in prison and no one knows why, or when will he get out. The situation and the life that Nada lives is a vulnerable one. So vulnerable for only being a fourteen-year-old pregnant street child with no where to go and nothing to eat. So vulnerable that because she doesn't have a birth certificate, she's not alive in the eyes of the state, and so invisible and unseen that she cannot deliver her baby in a hospital; for no documents prove she even exists, no documents prove she's married, and with nothing that she can give her daughter; not even a name on a piece of paper. Usually the hospital would be scared of Nada leaving her daughter behind in the hospital and flee. But more importantly; how will Nada ever prove that her daughter is really her daughter even though her daughter would pass through her womb and into this life? Nada's daughter would also be passing through to the death world that her mother, her father, and her grandparents inhabited. Thus, Nada's life is less grievable; if she dies, no one would notice, if she lives, she's not really alive. Her daughter will probably walk the same path she did. A week later, I learned that Nada finally delivered her daughter. She named her "Waad" which means a promise. Maybe she's promising her a better future, a future that is not deadening, a future where she won't have to be the living dead, where her life will be grievable, where she will matter, where she will be seen and recognized and loved and never abandoned. A few months passed, and Nada probably realized she won't be able to keep her promise, so she started calling her little girl "Karma" maybe because it's just a nice name, but maybe also as a reminder that all the

vulnerability and the violence and the abandonment and the precarity that she lived will be the good karma that her daughter wouldn't get to live. Maybe her daughter will be her own good karma, will love her when the world does not see her anymore; and maybe, just maybe, her daughter will mourn her when she dies.

<u>Ungrieavble bodies; Who are the living dead?</u>

"ذا جاك الموت يا وليدي

موت على طول..

اللي اتخطفوا فضلوا أحباب

صاحيين في القلب

كإن ماحدش غاب..

واللي ماتوا حتة حتة

ونشفوا وهم حيين..

حتى سلامو عليكم مش بتعدي

من بره الأعتاب

أول مايجيك الموت.. افتح..

أول ماينادي عليك.. إجلح..

إنت الكسبان.." (عبد الرحمن الابنودي، قصيدة موت)[13]

Mbembe in his book "*Necropolitics*" references Fanon's arguments on coloniality; how the system is made to "deaden people's capacity to suffer because the natives were suffering, everything to dull their ability to be affected by this suffering" (Mbembe, 2019, 5). In the death world "deadening" takes place. To be made a killable subject, an ungrieavble subject, is to take

[13] If death comes to you my child, die right away.Those who were kidnapped (by death, as in died quickly) remained lovers, living in the heart as if they never left. And those who did bit by bit, were drained when they were alive. Even a hello would not pass behind the doors. So when death comes, open the door. When it calls you, withdraw. You will be the winner

away even the right of the street children to suffer. Prior to my fieldwork, I expected the children to always speak of how unliveable their lives became since they started living/working on the streets of Cairo. Instead, voicing their sufferings was not part of their daily conversations. I argue that the desensitization in their stories is a consequence of the creation of the subject of the living dead; deadening the capacity to suffer, to dull and to kill their abilities to feel the intensity of living the death world. It is to make them inhabit the death-worlds as well. Mbembe argues that violence captures the desire of the subjects to live or to consider themselves moral agents (Mbembe, 5). I can never forget all the girls who hesitate to hug me, or even shake my hands during my fieldwork; they always insist that I must feel some sort of disgust because of how dirty they are. When I once insisted that I do not care about dirtiness; one girl made it clear to me that, "You're a human being, we are not". I always remember her؛ reclaiming the inhumanity that the society and the state have asserted on her body. The state has succeeded in making the street children believe that they are not worthy of any better life, and thus successfully categorized them as the living dead, the ungrievable, and the "others". The powers succeeded in stripping away desire by the constant policing and through the creation of the ideal "good citizen"; one who is expected to lead a certain life, to go to school, to labor, and to marry under the supervision of the state. The street children lead a life that is unacceptable to the society and to the state; one that is deemed as less of a life, and therefore an ungrievable one. Buttler in "Precarious life, the power of mourning and violence" asks; "Who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? And, finally, what makes for a grievable life?" (Butler, 20). The street children are categorized as: "the thugs", "the gangs", "the drug dealers", "the rapists", "the abducted", and "the unmannered". The media and the dominant society narrative advise the people to avoid the street children, to take the other pavement when walking the streets of Cairo, to look the other way as to not show sympathy, to never give them money, to always scold them and be disgusted with them because they will certainly rob you or harass you. The unruly bodies and unbounded by law can be infectious to the society. This category production

is also a production of the ungrievable bodies and the living dead subjects. For instance, the street children are not simply human, they are thieves. The Egyptian media also makes sure to state that no one should help the “epidemic” of street children survive, it’s contagious, unproductive and dangerous. To be a street child in Cairo is the work of the violent categorization that is done through the state and which is rendered convincing to people. Why would the state make the lives of the street children a violent one, to render their lives as unliveable, and therefore to render them the “living dead”; turning their deaths into ungrievable events? The state, and especially the police state wants to keep everything in control; to propagate its ideas of right and wrong, Halal and Haram and to mandate of who deserves to live and who deserves to die. The street children take over the public space which the police state assumes control over and therefore, the creation of the living dead and the ungrievable bodies allow the police state to “deal” with the elimination of these bodies with popular consent from the society. The society applauds the systematic erasure of the street children, believing that confining them is good for their overall welfare.

I argued that the death's rhythms can be traced through studying Cairo and its street children. The death worlds again, create ungrievable bodies, or the living dead. As mentioned above, the ungrievable bodies are constructed by the police state and categorized by the society because of the fear of being uncontrollable and for living lives that are not in accordance with the majority's approval of how a life should be lived. There are other ways in which the street children become the living dead; ”The matter is not a simple one, for, if a life is not grievable, it is not quite a life; it does not qualify as a life and is not worth a note. It is already the unburied, if not the unburiable” (Butler, 34). How are the lives of the street children ungrievable? The powers make these bodies killable when they want, disposable, unbound by any rights, uncared for, and invisible. "In government by terror, at issue is no longer so much to repress and discipline as it is to kill either en masse or in small doses” (Mbembe, 35). When the street children become

ungrievable bodies, they no longer have to make an offense in order to be punished. They are punished because they simply are the embodiment of everything that is considered a threat to the order of the capital-state world; living a life of their choosing, and not bounded by structures or laws. Their bodies are socially constituted to potentially be offensive. It is important to note that the categorization of the ungrievable body and the living dead is not only done by the police state, but it is also very much produced by the society too. Fassin (2015) speaks of the entitlement to punish by time does not become only an act of the state, or its institutions, it becomes an immediate action by the whole society. Immediately you no longer have to wait for the police to punish, or for the court to issue a "fair verdict"; the society directly becomes the moral agent of the state, deciding who gets to be grieved and who does not deserve to be considered alive. Some people beat street children up just for being street children, asking them to leave the streets because they pollute them. Local initiatives ask for the eradication of the problematic that is called "the street children" as if the street children are only a category, with no lives involved in this eradication project to care about. The state no longer has to intervene into putting those unruly bodies in order —and yet it still does. Even the calls for restitutive justice do not take place anymore amongst Cairens. A recent initiative on social media has been going on with slogans of "do not have sympathy for them, they take your money to buy drugs/to smoke". Asking society to not have sympathy is equal to asking the society of only offering brutality. I was even shocked that the campaign insisted on retributive justice, which is only through an inflection of pain on the offender. As Fassin puts it; " the moral economy of punishment involves the appropriateness and fairness of the sentence, which change over time: the rehabilitative paradigm of the sanction, which was dominant until the 1970s, has been replaced by a retributive one, but this punitive turn has disproportionately affected disadvantaged minorities by focusing repression on certain types of offenses, such as drug use, while overlooking others, such as financial crime." (Fassin, 9) This violence on part of the society

helps produce the category of the living dead who constitute the death world. Structural violence is a directly affective event, which diminishes the body's powers of existence, without lifting a finger. Structural violence is not simply the act of letting the street children die physically, but it is the act of letting them die over and over again. It is happening in the constant molding and shaping of the bodies of street children, of rendering them the living dead and in insisting that they only exist as threats, of making sure that they are in a constant state of punishment, a constant state of killing and thus, ungrievable. Structural violence is a very systemic erosion for the possibilities for the street children to live. "They cannot be mourned because they are always already lost or, rather, never "were," and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness. Violence renews itself in the face of the apparent inexhaustibility of its object. The derealisation of the "other" means that it is neither alive nor dead, but interminably spectral" (Butler, 33).

Death is precarious, life is precarious; on the grieving the ungrievable bodies:

"وفى لحظه ما انا متزحلق

فى قماشى الابيض

من جوف القبر

اتقدم ضابط واعترض

قبض على الجثه

وطلب الاوراق

مزع الاكفان

عدل الوش

ووقف وركلنى

وقالى بلؤم شديد

حتى فى الموت بتغش

شيلوه" (عبد الرحمن الابنودي، الاحزان العادية)[14]

Today I heard of Abdu's death; he was 21 years old. He has leukemia. Had. Street 9 never looked any sadder, although life was moving on just fine. People were still hanging out in cafes, smoking shishas, playing cards, as if nothing has changed. But everything changes when one of you dies. I noticed that most of the children are not present on the street; I thought maybe they went to burry Abdu… But where? Burying a body needs documents, money, and a blood connection for the bureaucratic procedures. Abdu did not have any. So his friends (or the family he made on the street) took him to the nearest charity graveyards. For someone who is homeless, poor, and with no birth certificate/ID, your body is charity. And even though life was still happening on street 9, the children were grieving the loss of their friend, their chosen brother, their loved one." (Extract from field-notes, Maadi, August 2019)

To always being in a state of loss and unknowingness is to lead a precariat life. Butler asks: "What are the cultural conditions of the human at work here? How do our cultural frames thinking the human set limits on the kinds of losses we can avow as loss? After all, if someone is lost, and that person is not someone, then what and where is the loss, and how does mourning take place?" (Butler, 32) It is indeed important to ask if the children are not considered humans; how do they lose anything in the first place? Where is the loss when a child dies? What is mourning; but some tears on the cheeks of whoever considered him/her a friend? By rendering the children's lives non-normative in relation to "unwanted violence against their bodies in the name of the normative of the human, a normative notion of the what the body of a human must be" (Butler, 33) their death

[14] And in the moment of slipping in my white cloth, from the deep coffin, came forward a police man and objected. He captured the dead body, asked for the papers, tore the white shroud, and straightened the face. He stopped and kicked me and told me really meanly; even in death you cheat? Carry him away from here

becomes ordinary, and mourning or grieving their death does not take place. Society does not recognize the loss, and therefore; their deaths become precariat too. To lead a life as the buried alive, the living dead, the one inhabiting the death world, the one whose death is not grievable and whose life is not recognized is to lead both precarious lives and deaths. “It is not just that a death is poorly marked, but that it is unmarkable. Such a death vanishes, not into explicit discourse, but in the ellipses by which public discourse proceeds” (Butler, 35). With death being unmarkable, ungrievable, the notion of loss produces also the notion of what remains. “loss is inseparable from what remains, for what is lost is known only by what remains of it, by how these remains are produced, read, and sustained” (Eng, 2)

I unpacked above the rhythms of tracing the death world on the streets of Cairo and how it consequently produces the street children as the category of the living dead. In the upcoming part of my chapter I am tracing the rhythms of the life that exist along with death. I argue that grieving takes place as an act of recognition and in defiance of the state. Grieving takes place, in mourning, in crying, and in remembering the lost child. Although death happens every day on the streets of Cairo, the children are not neglectful or forgetful of its implications; they are always in a mode of grieving as an assertion of the existence of their robbed humanity. By grieving and mourning, the street children rupture the system that deems them as bodies that do not count. Hammami talks about the creation of the bodies that count versus the bodies that don’t, drawing on Butler’s work “The distinction between lives that are recognizable, as constituting the human “us” in dominant Western (and colonial) norms, Butler (building from her social ontology of precariousness) refers to as “grievable,” in contrast to those “ungrieavble” others who are made unintelligible by the racist operations of these same norms” (Hammami, 171). I asked in the previous section: how are bodies made ungrieavble? How does the state

succeed in turning lives into disposable bodies that even in their death, they are not grieved? I argued that due to a total case of marginalization of street children, their bodies do not count. They are not documented; they are the living dead, the ungrievable bodies of the deaths world; they are not really alive nor really dead. This is how the state constructs the category of the street children. Yet, grieving is one way of countering this .categorization

Hammami (ibid) argues that some lives may be grievable in their own communities, but become ungrievable in other spaces in which they are recognized as non-human. When a street child dies, almost no one notices but his/her chosen kin. The state does not notice, and would not notice. Even the street that formed and shaped the life of the child would remain unchanged, it will remain a space in which life and death are simultaneous. Both the state and the city as spaces will make sure that the bodies of the street children are ungrieavble. But as if it is another unsaid rule of the street, "To grieve someone thus moves from being a personal experience of loss to becoming the basis for sustained political acts of recognition and mutual interdependence" (Hammami, 171). The children grieve each other's deaths in an assertion of their humanity; disposing the category of the .living dead

As Roberto Esposito notes, 'death is not solely the archaic figure against which life" defines itself, nor the tragic price that life must pay in order to expand, but rather one of its inner folds, a mode—or tonality—of its own preservation'" (Emerson, 6). In this quote, death is not only the continuation of life, but it is part of it. Death molds and shapes life. Here; death and life are merged, they are not simply nonlinear propositions of one to the other; they make each other possible. In life there is death, and in death, we get to meet life. To be the disposable body, the living dead, your life is always at risk,

your life is a precarious one because each day you are at the risk of dying, whether from narcotics, from police brutality, from hunger or from coldness. Mbembe argues that life happens in exchange with death; not with death entirely taking over it. Life happens in the small instances in which it meets death, and asserts itself in its face (Mbembe, 69). Even though the prospect death makes life on the streets precarious, there are different reasons why not only death is precarious, but life on the street becomes precarious as well. "The differential distribution of precarity across populations relies powerfully on representational regimes that delimit whose lives are worthy of sustenance and protection and whose lives are perceived as disposable or not even human" (Hammami, 171). The precarity of the every day for the street children is a always being at risk of not finding food, not finding love, not finding clothes, not gaining money, and not making friends. It is also in the loss of everything that connects the children with their surroundings; the society and the state both want to eradicate them, their family doesn't want them; so they are always detached from the society and from the streets on which they live. Life on the streets of Cairo precarious because the street children always depend on each other, which makes the group formation hierarchal; following street leaders or seeking protection through traumatic relationships. But this same dependency on the group or on each other is what makes life on the streets of Cairo worth living. The construction of a chosen kin, the falling in love, and the playing moments are what the street children seek out of the decision of living on the streets. The street children are always living/and dying in a constant state of violence; Abdallah tells me*: "I ran away from the shelter because they tortured us. One time, I did not follow one of their stood rules and they made me climb a palm tree naked and threw rocks at me. Other times they would make me stand in the middle of a circle made by the boys at the shelter pointing out at me and laughing, sometimes spitting and hitting me. I ran away and hid for four days in an abandoned villa*

near the shelter because I was too scared they would find me. I did not care about food or water, I just wanted to escape" (Maadi, September 2019). My field note does not echo the position of the state and the society because the creation of the death world and the living dead subjects propagates the idea of violent street children and never a violent state. "The public will be created on the condition that certain images do not appear in the media, certain names of the dead are not utterable, certain losses are not avowed as losses, and violence is derealised and diffused" (Butler, 38). Violence is derealised and diffused, always. The violence that the street children endured will always be there, but no one will remember them "as their lives are ungrievable, their deaths go unmarked" (Butler, 38). On the streets of Cairo, the children too mourn each other's deaths; maybe they are the only ones who notice that someone of them is no longer there because as their lives are ungrievable, their deaths go unmarked. In always having to deal with the possibility of death, when always having to fear death, in meeting death every day, in every conversation and every corner; life is rendered precarious as well as violent. If the precarity of life is violent, the precarity of death is not. I argue that as much as there are potentialities that leak from the precarity of death, ruptures also take place and potentialities arise from death. Death becomes the rupture that ends all the violence, all the marginalisation, all the abandonment, and the neglect. Death may not be the stopping of time, but it is a rupture in which the temporality of the street shifts. It is the street children punching the state in the face and saying you no longer control me, it is gaining power to; your body, your soul, your dreams, your aspirations. Maybe on the street, there is little mention of tomorrows because the future does not exist, but within death there are possibilities and potentialities. Although many people believe that when one dies they die; most of my interlocutors believe that in death they will meet their creator, and only then, they will ask for paybacks; nice warm homes and families who truly love them. In

death, they are promised a Gana (paradise) “full of food, places to play and families to hold” I was told by a girl named Gana, who explained to me why she loves her name, it reminds her that maybe what is coming is not all bad, it’s not all violent, it is not all [15] precariat.

<u>When there is death there is also life; When life holds death’s hands:</u>

”قلت لنفسى وبعدين

راح تفضل كده لامتى يا غلبان؟

ما لقتش الراحه فى الموت

يمكن تلاقيها ورا القضبان

اطلعت على الشبابيك وعلى القضبان

على الموقف

على السجن وعلى السجان

ولقيتنى طول عمرى كنت كده

كلب.. محاصر.. متهان.. منبوذ.. جربان

وانا يا ابنى الحلم اللى ما لهش اوان

معروف عشى فى قلب البستان

معروف صوتى فى زمن الاحزان

وفى أي زمان“ (عبد الرحمن الابنودي، الاحزان العادية)[16]

[15] The religious discourse of enduring violence in life to avoid it in death does not represent my beliefs. The idea of death as an end of traumas and violence is from the fieldwork.

[16] I asked myself: what’s next? Until one are you going to say the same, you poor soul? You did not find comfort in death, maybe you will find it behind prison bars. I looked at the windows and at the prison bars, at the situation; the prison and the prisoner… to find myself like this all the time: a dog, confined, humiliated, outcasted and dirty. I am the dream that its time is yet to come. My house is known to be midst the gardens. My voice is known midst the times of grieving, and in all times.

"But in these ruins, something else besides decay might be happening" (Simone, 407). I wonder what happens in moments of decay, what happens in the leaks and the cracks of the dark moments of the everyday? How do the street children manage to assert their own lives in the face of death? In this segment I talk about the different instances in which life was asserted on the streets defying death. As much as there is agony, vulnerability, ungrievability, and violence there is also happiness, laughter, and a celebration of life. This is an attempt to outline all the moments where the leakages, the instabilities, and the different temporalities of living the street opened up potentialities and possibilities to the street children to lead an autonomous, free life while facing death every day. This is not by any means an attempt to overshadow the miseries they go through on a daily basis, but only an attempt to reveal the human of the street children and to explore the small instances which the state fails to capture, and in its leakages; life is constructed differently.

AbdulMaliq Simone argues in "*people as infrastructure*" that some cities are made flexible, mobile and provisional through their residents' ability to maneuver them without really knowing how to inhabit and use them as well as "on the ability of residents to engage complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices. These conjunctions become an infrastructure—a platform providing for and reproducing life in the city" (Simone, 408). On the streets, I saw death; in bodies too intoxicated that pavements are imagined as the most comfortable beds. I saw death; in bodies, too precarious, too marginal that one may step over them while going to his/her fancy dinner. I saw death; in children, who are abandoned, whose bodies are too weak to survive rainy days. But I also saw life; in all its forms and shapes. Life is apparent in the interactions on the street: how the street children still hold on to falling in love, to making love, and to spreading love. I saw life in moments of standing together against the policemen who forcibly take them, for standing for me when I was harassed by a policeman during fieldwork. I saw life in always insisting on telling jokes, playing games, and on

maintaining the status of being children. I saw life in refusing to work and in refusing to engage with the state. When I met Mahmoud for the first time, he told me his story in refusing to deal with the state.

"My name is Mohamed. But my name on my birth certificate is Abdelrahman. Abdelrahman is four years older than me. But he is me, isn't he? So Am I sixteen or twenty?… You do not understand do you? When I was born, my parents were dealing with my brother's death. Abdelrham was/is four years older and he was my brother. He died when I was born… So my parents decided to give me his birth certificate as to save themselves the trip of issuing him a death certificate, and the money to issue me a birth certificate…So who am I?"

The threat of being a street child lies also in the fact that they do not exist, on paper, for the state. How can they be controlled when they do not exist? When they have no national ID, no birth certificate, and in many cases no death certificate; how can a street child becomes a citizen, a laborer, a child, or a family member? In many ways, Mahmoud's refusal to interact with the state has rendered him helpless; but within this state of non-existence, he exists. He exists by learning what he likes the most; for instance, he wants to become an actor. He exists by telling jokes and watching movies that make him laugh. He exists, although the state does not know it; in his interactions on the street with people who grow close to him, who help him study and learn new things, who care for him and for whom he cares. Life exists not only despite of death, but with death. Life exists when the street children decide to marry whoever they want, in whichever age they feel like it; in coming together to insist on forming a family, finding a home, and in the portrayal of love. Life exists in refusing to adhere to social norms. I saw life in their tattoos, in destroying the taboos. I saw life in refusing the family that was given to them, in going to the streets to make their own families, to make friendships that last, or might not last. But life was mainly seen in taking manners in their own hands, in deciding how life should be lived, and in living life even when they are disposable, to the fullest. Mbembe argues "So, although it destroys

what was to be, obliterates what was supposed to continue being, and reduces to nothing the individual who takes it, death does not amount to the pure annihilation of being" (Mbembe, 69) Either dying, or living the city of the dead, it does not stop one from being.

I have always wondered why would the children choose, at such a young age, to leave their homes and take the streets. During fieldwork, I got to know the atrocities and the different shades of violence that the children are subjected to, either from the parents directly (through bodily torture) or through overall neglect. Sometimes the children are even forced to take the streets as laboring sites to feed themselves, and to contribute to their homes. But when all the stories of rape, torture, maltreatment, neglect, and abandonment that take place at the children's homes also happen on the streets, with even more risks like being kidnapped, becoming the living dead, and a threat to the police state. Living on the streets of Cairo also meant that the street children would have to go on days without food or without a roof over their heads to protect them from the heat of the sun or the coldness of the nights. I stop and wonder how do the children choose the street with all the structural violence and the precarity it brings?

An eighteen-year-old Sabrine, who currently lives with her newborn in Sayda Zaynab told me that in the street there is freedom. She says; "One at least chooses what kind of violence to endure". Sabrine, as well as many others chose the streets and learned how to maneuverer it. She is now protective of many younger girls due to her strong character. She has many cuts all over her body, some she did to herself to avoid being caught by the police, and some were done by older boys who wanted to coerce her into sleeping with them. Thus, her life is not free of violence; but it is a violence she chooses every day over going back to her father. Sabrine's father kicked her out of the house at the age of thirteen after she was raped and insisted on reporting her rapist, who was their neighbor. Her father instead was happy with taking a sum of money from the rapist, who later forced him (the father) to kick out his daughter. The freedom Sabrine was talking about is in the concept of "power to" in Massumi; "Power to" is an event of potentiality.

Sabrine has the power to protect the girls on the streets of Sayda Zaynab. She gained this power from living on the streets of Cairo. She talks about her pride in cutting her self when street leaders or policemen believe they have power over her. Thus, her affective relationships are built on the streets through the construction of her 'power to'. "Power to is the power to change. That is the starting point: a nonlimitative concept of power as life-enhancing, and life-changing, through an openness onto the outside." (Massumi, 2) On the streets the potentialities exist in all sorts. A street child may be imprisoned or may not, he/she may be beaten, raped, abducted, hungry, and cold; or they may not. They may die, but they also may not. I see that in this potentiality there is a chance to change one's life, to have the power to mold and shape one's life as one wants. There is also affect, the power to affect and to be affected, to fall in love, to find a home, to have friends. In Sabrine's case, as well as many cases of street children; their power comes from occupying the potential of residing in the street, in embracing all the precarity and the death-worlds, and being the living dead. Their powers come from resisting the status quo, resisting the power over their lives by their families, resisting the neglect, resisting the abandonment, and resisting the notion of being the good productive citizen. "Where there is resistance, there is some degree of how a body is affected and can affect" (Massumi, 6).

In this potentiality; in being an affective body, and in resisting, the street children choose to be the killable bodies. When the state keeps on categorizing them into killable, ungrievable bodies, the power lies within the premises of the state and its institutions. But what happens when the children decide to be killable? What happens when they kill themselves before the state decides to kill them? By killing themselves here I do not necessarily mean to take one's life, but to inhabit the notion and the category of the killable body, to put an end to the state's "power over" the street children's bodies. The risk that the street children take by going to the streets is in a way an inhabiting of the category of the killable body, the ungrievable body. The street children would argue; If I am an ungrievable body, I have the freedom of leading the life I want.

I have the power to stir my life into the direction I want. The street children are only flipping the script that the state and the society except of a docile body. When they are the bodies who are not recognized by the social and therefore unbound of any rights; they create their world in which they live the life they want to live. They have to no longer marry in front of the state, to have one's name recognized by the state, to no longer having to find a job, and be "productive". And when they die, they don't have to be amongst the statistics of the bodies that are no longer useful to the state. They were never useful anyway, never recognized, so why not take in that the freedom that they always wanted?

Conclusion:

"الحكاية إن البلد مش ملك ناسها

والخلايق في البلد مش مالكة راسها

والبلد يا ولاد بلدنا مش عليلة

البلد علتها جاية من خرسها"

— أحمد فؤاد نجم، الاعمال الشعرية الكاملة[17]

On a concluding note, I argue that Cairo is a death world that turns the bodies of those on its margins, the street children as ungrieavble and the living dead. I see that the street children are mainly marginalized due to class structures and categorizations done by the state and the society. They are the poor and the dirty bodies who should be caged; always spoken of as a disease spreading and turning the streets into dangerous zones. When Mbembe (2019, 168) argues that, "humanity is suspended" I remember all the instances in which I saw —- during my fieldwork, how the power to kill and to render bodies as ungrievable came precisely from suspending or eradicating the humanity of the street children. To have power is not only to have the power of killing, but it is

[17] The story goes that this country is not for tis people. And the creators in this country are not in the right places. The country is not ill, my children. The illness of the country comes from its silence.

also to have the power of deciding when to kill, how to kill, and how to construct life through death. Mbembe argues that, “This withering away of life and matter is not the equivalent of death” (ibid). Yet, I challenge Mbembe by arguing that seeing one’s life withering away is equivalent to constantly living in a state of death merged within the premises of life. I argue that the children live in a constant state of zero world. “In this zero world, neither matter nor life ends as such. They do not return to nothingness. They merely pursue a movement of exiting toward something else, with the end being deferred each time and the very question of finitude left hanging. The zero world is a world in which becoming is difficult to figure because the time of which it is woven cannot be captured through the traditional categories of the present, past, and future. In this fragmented and crepuscular world, time constantly oscillates between its different segments” (Mbembe, 169). Mbembe draws open the temporality of life and death; there is no linearity; one does not live and then dies; the street children have been living in this constant state of living death; they are always dead yet they also make sure they live. “The immobile is in movement. Speech is in silence. The beginning is at the end, and the end is in the middle. And all, or nearly all, is interlacing, incompletion, expansion, and contraction” (Mbembe, 169). I have lived the past months trying to understand how the street children survive death every day. But I have discovered that maybe death and life are always merging; always coming together to form a state of surviving; that is not entirely death, and not entirely life; it is something in between. In this in-betweenness or liminality a la Turner, I saw my interlocutors existing and surviving despite how marginal, precarious and killable their bodies are made. The rhythms of surviving the streets of Cairo as a street child can be traced in how they manage to still exist, to always remind themselves that they are still humans. In this chapter, I draw upon stories of people I have met on the streets of Cairo whose bodies construct the city of the dead, who inhabit the deaths-world, and who are made the living dead. Each of them has a name, a loved one, a friend and a story. Each of them is unseen, un-grieved, and uncared for. Each of them is precarious; living in a constant state of risk. Each of them is categorized as the “street

child”; a category that confines them to violence and to being the living dead. They are all living the rhythms of both being mobile in a constant state of immobility; all have fought to be heard but were silenced, all have suffered but were never seen, and all have known life; despite living in the deaths world.

The Everyday Cairo:

Labour, Discipline and Drugs on the streets of Cairo:

Introduction:

”كان رسّاماً وثائر

كان يرسم وطناً مزدحماً بالناس

والصفصاف والحرب وموج البحر

والعمال والباعة والريف ويرسم جسداً

مزدحماً بالوطن المطحون

في معجزة الخبز“

(محمود درويش، قصيدة الخبز)[18]

“She starts taking her clothes off. First her oversized t-shirt, then her pants. It happens so quickly but in a slow motion. The streets stay the same. An old woman, fully naked, with her boobs hanging and her butt naked; stands in the middle of the streets but no one pays attention. The streets stay the same. No one talks to her, no policeman comes running to arrest her. No one molests her. No one even looks her way. She starts walking the streets with her clothes under her armpit, smiling, very full of herself. And no one stops and she stops for no one. She must be seeing another street, I wonder. One, not so full of people and garbage. One where the police station does not stand in the middle of the street; making every movement disciplined and controlled. One where it is not so cold, not so rough to walk on, not so noisy and quite at the very same time. She must be somewhere else. I envied her for her ability to leave Cairo when her body is very much still there. But the mind is an amazing thing. Also the drugs” (Sayda Zaynab, October 2019)

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[18] He was a painter and also a revolutionary. He would draw a homeland busy with people and willow leaves and wars and sea waves and workers and vendors and the country side. And he would draw a body, busy with a crushed homeland, in the miracle of bread.

Life lived at transit. Hard work that produces nothing. Drugged bodies escaping the city. Making the city. Bodies producing the self. Bodies constructing the city. Drugged, laboring, non-productive bodies living in transit. Living in liminality. Drugged, laboring, non-productive bodies living the every day of a city. Cairo. Liminality. Drugs. Space and time interjecting. Coming together and forming an alternative reality. A hard-working day translating into a lifetime of work. Drugged, laboring, disciplined bodies in certain spaces, and certain times. Always running, always hiding. A police state, a coercive society, and a harsh everyday. Street children. Children in the streets. Children abandoned. Bodies of abandoned children on the streets of Cairo. Everyday. Abandoned, liminal, disciplined, coerced, policed, drugged.

This was one scene from my fieldwork that I never forget. No one looked, no one stopped, no one laughed. For me, there was a temporal shift. Time slowed down. I tried looking at the police officers; who had just brought many boys into the police station for questioning. I tried to look at the vendors, at people going to pray. No one moved. As if sings of insanity are so immersed within the space that no one stops at such things. Life goes on. I stood there, in my jacket, in late October; shocked and sad that no one is helping her. I was always for freedom, yet I waited for the police to stop her. I, who never had a problem with nudity in movies or in theatre; looked the other way, pitying the lady who is clearly “crazy”. I was, and still am; a part of the society I very much critique. I wanted someone to cover her in the name of saving her or helping her. I did not see her nudity as liberating. I feared to approach her for an interview or for even asking her if she was all right. I embodied the police state and the judgemental society; I became the power I so very wanted to bring down. I became an integral part of the street that was moving, living, and not stopping as I jumped in the car in fear of being approached by the crazy naked lady. That day was an eye-opener for me. I questioned myself and through this; I questioned everything else. This is a chapter on the repetitiveness of everyday Cairo which is pivotal to understanding the city. When deciding to write about the everyday life for street children in Cairo; I found that it is

constituted of several parts; laboring, policing/disciplining, and drugs. I bring the three together to illuminate a better understanding of the everyday. My main argument in this chapter is that the repetitive every day is produced through labor and the relationships it constitutes with the police state that rendered the every day also heavily policed. Labour is essential for the survival of street children on the streets of Cairo. Laboring on the streets of Cairo should be understood in light of Thieme's (2017, 530) "The hustle economy: Informality, uncertainty and the geographies of getting by". She argues that "navigating uncertainty in irregular employment through prolonged states of 'waithood'". The labor of street children is often spent on the streets of Cairo waiting and getting by the city. I explore labor in this chapter through the concept of the hustling economy and argue that although policed and securitized, generative possibilities emerge from everyday hustling on the streets of Cairo. Laboring becomes heavily policed because it is taking place in public spaces controlled by the police state. The policing of the bodies of the street children and the spaces in which they exist, leads to the creation of the everyday Cairo as a policed space in which laboring becomes precarious and life becomes violent. Complex relationships form between the children and the police in terms of allowing/not allowing laborers in certain spaces, at certain times, and during certain circumstances to exist on the streets of Cairo. In order to understand this discipline; I begin by dissecting the state's narrative on the categorization of street children that is also echoed in the society's narrative. This narrative produces the conditions of the every day where the children are maltreated by the society, and coerced by the police wanting to imprison them. From an exploration of the every day; I delve into different forms of labor with a focus on sex work and how street girls have to sell their bodies to survive Cairo. I then speak of different kinds of labor such as being a garbage collector or a sayes; which I argue is liminal and precarious. This labor occupies the informal sector, yet it is also crucial for the 'formal'/organized economies, in their ability to act as surplus labor. I also argue that the state benefits from this surplus of informal labor; the city survives and is mandated

through the different forms of labor that street children produce. I then unravel the relationship between laboring on the streets and consuming drugs; almost all the street children argue that they have been consuming drugs to be able to survive long working hours and to escape the reality of having to be on the streets. Finally, I argue that the city is produced through the labor of the children, but also a product of the self happens simultaneously.

Policing bodies, Policing spaces:

"لا لَيْلَ عِنْدَكِ , إذ تَدْلِفينَ

إلى الليل وَحْدَكِ . أَنتِ هُنا

تَكْسِرينَ بنظرتِكِ الوَقْتَ. أَنتِ

هنا في مكانك بعدي وبعدك

ولا أَنْتِ تنتظرين , و لا أَحَدٌ يَنْتَظِرْ"

(محمود درويش، الاسطورة)[19]

The State narrative concerning the street children is a deceiving one. When looking at the laws concerning "children without shelters" —As the state refers to them; the law is in favor of providing each child with basic necessities. It is deceiving, still; because the law of *Tasawol* (Begging) is specifically made to criminalize the mere existence of the street children, but without saying it is specifically targeting them. Early February 2020; I attended a conference where all the NGOs working with street children in addition to the shelters, and the ministry of social solidarity gathered. I was appalled by the state narrative, so proudly put on the table of discussions. The question was always a question of how to limit the presence of street children on the street; for their protection first, and then for the overall wellbeing of the city. Whilst many NGOs argued that the main responsibility is to make sure that no child is coerced to go back home or to be confined to a

[19] The night does not come, if you walk away to the night alone. You are here, breaking time with your gaze. You. Here in a far away space, after me and you. And you do not wait, and no one waits

shelter and to make sure that every child is safe and well; the ministry representatives argued that; the solution is to build rapport with the children, know their daily routes and routines; and anonymously report them to the police to lock them up. In an article by El Ahram published in 2018; the senate's representative of the ministry of social solidarity argued that 90% of the beggars are gang members, and unworthy of support. He also argued that the ministry of social solidarity should focus on the categories of people worth supporting, and not those who beg for a living, not the street children. "They do not deserve the support since they take begging as a full-time job" (Al Ahram, 2018). The representative of human rights in the senate, Margret Azar; argued that combating the problem of begging should be in form of a "societal awareness to the citizens on the importance of legitimate work" (Al Ahram, 2018). The article quoted Saeed Sadek, an AUC sociology professor; who claimed that the real problem with the spread of the begging practice in Egypt portrayed a "bad picture of the Egyptian human in front of the tourists trying to get their sympathy" in addition to being the practice of anyone who wants to gain the money he/she does not deserve. The article ended with a statement for the same AUC professor;; claiming he is against imprisonment the beggars; but it was more important to get to "use them beneficially". How? The professor argued that the beggars should be used by the state in "cleaning jobs to benefit from them, since the sentencing to prison does not benefit the society with the large number of beggars". Finally, he argued that the main reason behind begging is the growth in population; through which people choose to have a lot of children and send them to work as beggars, adding; that if begging did not exist; the society would have been much more active than it is now.

The state narrative is important because it is heavily echoed in the society. The professor's arguments is a widely popular narrative between different sectors of the society, which is also constructed along with the state's narrative that criminalizes the existence of street children by the elasticity of laws that indirectly target them and makes their confinement an easier practice. I have always had endless arguments with friends/family on how beggars are

parts of bigger webs of gangs, and that these children are victims of these gangs who force them to work or kidnap them from their families. Although the narrative is very popular; it is mainly based on an old movie (1990) called el Afareet; where two little girls recount how they are part of a bigger gang forcing them to sell heroin on the streets of Cairo and train them to be thieves. Yet, no actual proof of the fact that gangs exist, or that the street children are part of gangs was the result of ethnographic or any other form of researches. During my fieldwork; all talks of gangs were laughed at, both by social workers or by the street children I met myself. The only form of control that the street children might have over their lives (other than the police) is the control of the street leaders (usually older and usually in charge of certain parts of the street). The children choose to affiliate with the street leader; looking for protection and care (exactly like wolf figure in Deleuze); and thus, in return, share part of their earned daily money/food with the leaders. All of my interlocutors spoke very highly of the street leaders; showed affection and argued of the foundation of a stronger familial tie found on the streets than in their previous homes. But assumptions are built, by both the state and the society that those street leaders are heads of gang members. I am arguing that this is an assumption and an unfounded claim that I questioned in my fieldwork.

"Ahmed is the commander. He sits with all the other street children gathered around him, and he orders them around. He says, "I'm hungry"; so I find Ranada running to a sushi stand in front of McDonald's and getting him one piece. I ask him if he likes sushi and he says he only eats it because it reminds him of Tameeya. Ranada pays five pounds for the one sushi she gets for Ahmed. He then says I am thirsty, and I find her running fetching for water. Four other smaller boys have run to McDonalds to come back with what looks like leftovers. Ahmed is pissed and refuses to eat the leftovers. The boys swear that the manager refused to give them proper food, but they all ended up sharing the leftovers of fries and a can of Pepsi" (Maadi, September, 2019)

At first glance one might think that Randa and the other smaller boys are doing this because of fear. But the truth is, I could see in their eyes how they looked up to Ahmed, and loved him as a brother, a family member who provides them with protection and cares for them at the same moment. This is an alternative formulation of an idea of a family that the children so eagerly miss, and at the same time; need.

I share the state and the society's narrative here because through this narrative; the policing and the disciplining of the bodies of street children become a legitimate act from the state. It is also important to highlight the state narrative to show how violence is produced in the everyday life of street children. The violence by the state is supported by the society which believes the gang narrative or believes that beggars are unworthy of the money they make. And thus, they should not be left to labor; because their labor hinders the progression of the city. This makes their coercing pivotal and applauded.

The Everyday:

"تبدو الحياة غير العادية عاديَّةَ الوتيرة .

ما زال الأفراد إذا صحوا أحياء

قادرين على القول : صباح الخير . ثم يذهبون

إلى أشغالهم الروتينية : تشييع الشهداء

ولا يعرفون إن كانوا سيعودون سالمين إلى

ما تبقى من بيوت تحاصرها جرافات ودبابات وأشجار

سرو مكسورة . والحياة , من فرط

لامبالاتها , لا تُرَى إلاّ تخطيطاً أولياً"

(محمود درويش، روتين)[20]

[20] The non ordinary life seems so ordinarily paced . But the people who woke up alive were still able to say: good morning, and then leave for their routines; for the funerals of the martyrs. They do not know if they will be back safely to what is left of homes now surrounded by tanks and bulldozers and broken cedar trees that do not see beyond primary planing.

To understand Cairo one must understand its streets. They are busy and quiet, liberating and suffocating, dead and alive. The streets are composed of mixtures of feelings; freedom, insecurity, and exhaust. One way of understanding Cairo is knowing the different sounds one hears while walking its streets. The chaotic disturbances of noise sounds intermixed with curse words and the call for prayer, Athan, and car honks is what I write in my field notes about the every day in Cairo. I try to explain what Cairo sounds like; and what it feels like to walk its streets;

"Allahu Akbarr Allahu Akbarr, Ash-hadu Ala Illahhh Ela Allah". The streets still hustled and bustled and couldn't care less about the call for prayer. No one moved towards the mosque. "El Ashra B Geneh El Ashra B geneh" "Coca Cola Bebs, Coca Cola Bebs". "Ash-hadu An Mohamed Rasul Allah" I tried to have a conversation with the tissue box boy who is sitting next to me on the pavement of a busy Sayda Zaynab Square. "How old are you?" The cars were beeping and stopping in the middle of the busy roundabout, and one man was shouting "mtmshy yā ḥmār" -"Move you donkey". Too many shoutings and voices and sounds that I could no longer identify. Too many people were walking up and down the pavement we were sitting on. I can now tell the difference between the sounds of shoes, slippers and bare feet walking the streets of Cairo. The bare feet tiptoed carelessly trying to avoid the shattered glass and scrunched cans of fizzy drinks that are almost always unavoidable resulting in blood dripping feet and almost always accompanied with ruptured cries of "Aḥas and khkhkhkh". The shoes are not for those who live on the streets, but they result in crushing the bare feet of those who cannot afford them. The slippers rub themselves against the roughness of the streets, they make the sounds that my father hated; "Khisht, Khisht" it's the sound that makes one shudder. I remember my father always saying;"lift your feet off the ground, do not drag them behind you". Yet, the children do drag their feet behind them in an attempt to not lose their slipper, which probably cost them the earnings of a hard-working day. "I am fifteen" His voice has not matured yet and his face wore

many cuts; but not a single hair that announced him hitting puberty. His friend interrupted my train of thoughts mockingly; "Mathawarsh, You are only 10" "A ḥ a, 10 eih? Atlalak betaay'"[21] *said the 10 or 15-year-old boy as he moved his hands to unbutton his worn-out pants. I stand still but look up to the sky. I do not wish to see the proof of his manhood. "ḥay Ala Al Sallah, ḥay Ala El Falaḥ"*[22] *"Maṭḥterm nafsak Yala Yabn Al Metnaka, Fi Anesa Wa'fa"*[23]*, I smile. "Allahu Akbarr Allahu Akbarr, Ash-hadu ALa Illahhh Ela Allah".* [24]*Yet, All the sounds of the world would not make up for the silence of Abu El Reesh. The scariest moment of my fieldwork was the moment of complete silence. The difference between Abu El Reesh and Sayda Zaynab is about a twenty-minute drive, and a light-year difference of how the places sound like. Silence and darkness encompass the place. The children are no longer running around the streets singing their favorite Sha'bi*[25] *songs. They are scattered under the bridge too intoxicated to stand up or even sit down. So they lay down, one body next to the other. Bodies too unruffled, too still, too at rest that I mistook them for dead. My heart broke as I tried to wake them up. They did not wake up. Fear took over me thinking they were dead. I ran around checking their pluses, shaking them too roughly that crickets found their way out of under their small bodies. The stillness and the silence of Abu El Reesh echoes the deathly aura that resonates with the dead bodies scattered under the bridge. They were not dead. Their chests rhythmically went up and down as they breathed slowly the pee odor intermixed with dirt. They were dead, breathing, or not breathing. They were dead; even when they are alive, loud, and singing. The place sounded like death, smelled like emptiness, and longed for a motherly hug. They were dead."*

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[21] Do not kid her. What? 10 what? Do I show my thing?

[22] Come to prayer, come to goodness.

[23] Behave yourself you son of a bitch, there a lady standing.

[24] God is great, God is great. There is no god but one god.

[25] local

Through my description of walking two of my main field sites; I describe what it feels like to listen to a certain space and what the everyday sounds/feels like. “Space is not a specific object removed from ideology or politics. It has always been political and strategic. There is an ideology of space. Because space, which seems homogenous, which appears as a whole in its objectivity, in its put form, such as we determine it, is a social product” (Lefebvre, 2004). I speak of the ideology of space to highlight why street children choose certain spaces/streets/ neighborhoods in which they decide to labor and/or live. As described above; the difference between Sayda Zaynab and Abu El Reesh is clear. Sayda Zaynab’s neighborhood is built around the mosque it is claimed that Sayda Zaynab is buried whilst Abu El Reesh is a children’s hospital. They are geographically close to each other but they look nothing alike. A lot of people (usually sufis) visit el Sayda Zaynab for prayers and therefore; the place is always beaming with life, noise, and different sounds. It is still a very poor neighborhood, and most of the children I met there work just around the fences of the mosque. Abu El Reesh is different; it’s quiet, isolated, and dark. The children who stay there do not work there; they mainly sleep under the bridge and sniff glue. They usually labor somewhere else (Sayda Zaynab), and then go back to sniff glue and sleep in Abu El Reesh. I have been to other field sites where the scenery of the space and the streets were completely different. For instance; Maadi, which is a richer neighborhood, with a main street full of Cafes and supermarkets (Street 9); has most of the children laboring there; benefiting of the rich sitting on cafes; selling them bracelets and rings, while others just beg for a living, or work as Soyas. The every day of the children I met in Maadi is drastically different from the ever yday of those I met in Sayda or Abu El Reesh. All of those whom I met in Maadi go back home every day; some of them even take younger street children in, just not to let anyone sleep on the streets. They all sleep somewhere but not on the streets; if not with their families. Whereas almost all I met from Sayda Zaynab and Abu El Reesh sleep where they labor;, and have certain spots of the stress belonging to them. Laboring on the streets

is not a 9-5 job; it is a lifetime job as Marx would argue. “Capital is dead labor, which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks”(Marx, 342). The every day looks the same, the street children wake up to work and only sleep when they're done working.

I asked one of my interlocutors to describe me his “everyday” living on the streets of Cairo;

“Ahmed: I wake up to drink my Nescafe by the Nile with Am Abdo every day around one or two pm because we all sleep very late. I am scared to sleep at night; anything can happen at night. I start my day by counting how much money I gained, and keep a big sum of it with Am Abdo because I am saving a big amount of money to give it to my family when I go visit them. I stand and wait, for cars that are looking for a parking space, I wait all day, and all night.

Maryam: What do you do other than help cars park?

Ahmed: I tried everything on the streets; selling tissue boxes, selling bracelets, and even selling Strox (a drug). But I like being a Sayes.

Maryam: What are you most excited about, everyday as you wake up?

Ahmed: Every day is like the day before ya Doctora, I am excited for nothing”

Everyday is like the day before. Time is not linear, I remind myself as I talk to Ahmed. Time is neither linear nor static; there are rhythms that constitute and construct the city, the rhythms of day and night, the rhythms of exhaust, falling in love, and of living on the streets of Cairo (Lefebvre). There are movements a la Bergson; life always moving in all directions, sometimes too slow and sometimes too fast, the streets are moving, busy with cars and never stopping to look at the street child. And there is becoming; moments of potentialities a la Deleuze; moments that are rhizomatic, untraceable, and always leaking. Tracing the rhythms of the every day, the movement, and the moments of becoming; I discovered, should be done

through also tracing the time spent laboring in spaces that do not usually give the permit to that labor to take place. As time cannot be captured, nor contained; it is important to note that although the every day seems repetitive; unexciting, and mundane; Lefebvre (2004) argues that no repetition is ever the same. Throughout my fieldwork; I realized that indeed no repetition is ever the same; the street children may have similar days where time elongates and where the every day feels like forever; but they live every day as if it's a whole new eternity. Every day is different; they discover different spots to work and sit, they discover different games and get to know new people, they fall in and out of love, get pregnant and give birth and visit loved ones in prison. Their every day should not be reduced to only working and drug consumption; but it is only that through those two that different constructions of the city emerge and turn their every single day into a whole different experience. Abdullah; a 16-year-old told me that he loves the streets because every day there's always something new. Every day becomes an adventure; even if repetitive, violent, and tiring.

Discipline and Work; in Time and in Space:

"يمرُّ الزمانُ بنا , أَو نمرُّ به

كضيوفٍ على حنطة الله

في حاضرٍ سابقٍ , حاضر لاحق ,

هكذا هكذا نحن في حاجة للخرافة

كي نتحمَّلَ عبءَ المسافة ما بَيْن بابين"

(محمود درويش، ربما لان الشتا تاخر)[26]

"Disciplined bodies are, of course, central to the success of capitalism" (Pine, 134). The violence that the state exercises through policing the street children every day is a result of the popular belief that these children are not disciplined. How could they be? They are, after all,

[26] Time passes through us or do we pass through it as visitors of God's wheat? In a past present, or a future present, This is why we need myths, so we can carry the weight between two doors.

runaways from families and homes, drug addicts, thieves, and non-virgins. I argue that the bodies of the street children are constantly disciplined to be constantly exploited. Elyachar's "markets of dispossession" start by explaining the ethical value of the informal labor. She argues that when states could no longer provide jobs; the citizens had to take care of themselves. "Those who had to survive on their own and would be cast to the mercies of the market were reconfigured as a sector of the economy. They became "the informal economy." The most important thing they produced was survival itself" (Elyachar, 9). Survival was key to the street children; and surviving the streets was their most important task. Surviving the streets was echoed by laboring; in most cases, and begging (which can also be understood as a form of labor). Where would a street child buy the necessities to live (food/water) if not by laboring the street of Cairo? I argue that the street children's labor produces survival because without this labor the street children cannot live on the streets of Cairo. The precarity of being homeless or of having to provide for your family requires a method to survive the streets, and this method is labor. Thus, in this chapter; I discuss the every day, and the labor that takes place to survive the everyday streets of Cairo.

To understand time; one must look also at time in the working day. Marx is arguing that; "If the worker consumes his disposable time for himself, he robs the capitalist" (Marx,342). It is illogical that laborers are expected to work for eternity without the right for free time. Capitalism is robbing their lives, and thus, their time. Marx also argued how overwork is only translated into forced labor until death. The overwork gives the sense of the routined repetitive working day, where time is personified into full-timers and part-timers. Yet, as Lefebvre argued that repetitions must entail different results and as Deleuze argued that; "Difference is the thing itself; it is the very being of the subject" (Baridotti, 29) The time, with all its differences can be interrupted where one can find its cracks to slow it down, and to disrupt capitalism's greater scheme. That time can be echoed in the silenced laborers who are always waiting, and also it is echoed in their

own death through the overworking. In this chapter of Das Capital, the working day; Marx concludes by saying; “When the time which the worker sells is ended, and when his own begins.” (Marx, 416) The laborers start living when they stop selling their time when they slow down time and disrupt the grand plan. The working day for Marx was the socially necessary time to produce something (Marx, 342). Marx was arguing that a man needs to rest, and feed his intellectual needs throughout the day, and then wondered how much time would be left for work then? (Marx 341). He argued that capital can steal from the meal times of the workers, or make them overwork for an extra half an hour a day which means that a lifetime of work is added to their time in work (Marx, 343). But all of this was irrelevant when it came to studying the working day on the streets of Cairo. The notion of nine to five and stealing an extra half an hour to exploit workers is not there. Work is less organized- and based on-demand only. Work is also done throughout the day and the night; and thus, becomes more exploitive; a twenty-four-hour working day is a lifetime of work. The problem intensifies as all the free time is time spent looking for work. The line separating living from laboring becomes blurry here; both cannot exist without the other; and life on the streets of Cairo for the street children is entirely spent laboring. In a hyper-capitalist world, productivity becomes essential to survival, and ‘free time’ becomes a luxury that precarious laborers cannot afford. All the time spent not working results in a present without food, water, and necessities; and thus, it becomes crucial that the street child laborers all the time that he/she is awake to be able to survive on the streets of Cairo.

Lefebvre critiques Marx and Engles’ abstract definition of production. “The concept of production has come to be used so very loosely that it has lost practically all definition” (Lefebvre, 69). When speaking of labor; production is the first word that is brought to the table. But what do the street children produce, how, why, and for whom? Do the children “produce” or do they “create” —as in the argument by Lefebvre (2004, 70) arguing that nature creates life (do the street children in that sense also create life)? I want to argue that the street

children both produce and create; not products; but values. “To create the value they regard as essential to their community viability” (Munn, 3). The value the street children bring to Cairo is propagated as unimportant through different discourses and representations; but in this chapter, I want to show the cases in which the laboring of the children becomes valuable to the city. Terence Turner (1984, 7) argues that “Marx's concept of value can be defined as the relative amount of productive force expended in the production of a given product, as contrasted to the amounts of productive force embodied in other products of the same system of social production.” The society does not understand the importance or the value of the labor of the street children. Most people condemn and critique jobs such as “Soyas” or car cleaners. Yet, in spaces where Soyas do not exist; the streets are rendered more chaotic, and finding a parking spot becomes a nightmare. The organizational value of the streets is pivotal to how the city survives the overcrowding and the millions of cars trying to commute. In many neighborhoods, the street children form strong ties of trust with car owners through which cars are completely left to the Sayes/the Street child while the car owner hurries to work. Why do people trust the Sayes with their expensive cars? Thieme in her article “ The hustle economy: Informality, uncertainty and the geographies of getting by” argues that hustling, or in this case roaming around Cairo looking for work, provides a platform of relationships both between the street children and their work (Car parking helpers) and between the hustlers and the city (with the people of the city). Therefore, the trust takes place on the streets of Cairo between Soyas and car owners. Thus, the flow of the streets is dependant on the street children who work as soyas; managing and regulating the streets. The relationships formed between people from neighborhoods and soyas also offers another value that the street children provide to the city. The safety that the soyas provide to car owners who fear leaving their cars in unregulated, unprotected streets is a great value to the streets and the society. The soyas keep the cars safe when the police can take them away or gives them a fine for parking in an unauthorized spaces

because the soyas pay members the police and negotiate agreements that other actors in the society won't be able to.

Another value some of the street children bring to the streets of Cairo that is always unnoticed is the collection and separating of waste; often collection empty cans and selling them to recycling factories. This laboring is partially done by the street children; who have vast access to the waste thrown on the streets, and have the time to collect it. And thus, one kind of laboring that is of value to the streets of Cairo is the garbage/waste collection (not to mention the environmental aspect of how the city breathes cleaner air with less waste). Maybe waste and the street children found commonality in one another; both neglected, yet could yield something full of potentialities. It is pivotal to note that I believe that although the value of the laboring is not translated in producing actual products; and thus, is not seen by the society, It is the labor that no one else would do, and which is done without regulations nor costs; for instance, the children are not paid wages by the government when working as a Soyas. But although the street children are pivotal to the smooth flow of the streets of Cairo, and are helping in providing an environmental solution to waste; they also become important laborers in police stations; asked to clean them, asked to pay money to stay in certain streets and their labor is exploited by some members of the police. Their labor is still heavily policed and securitized, whilst let to labor because still needed. Many police stations in many parts of the city benefit from the laboring of street children; making them clean the precincts or imprisoning them to validate the police's fist of steel. The street children are therefore, I argue; pivotal to the survival of the city, as much as the city is pivotal to their survival.

"I have been going to the Tivoli spot for the past three days looking for the children I regularly meet there but they have disappeared; all since the Baladya has been present with the police overlooking the removal and reconstruction of the tram. It is important to note that the kids'

number one enemy is the police force; they dictate their whole lives; where to sleep, how and when to work, and how much money they get to make every day." (Heliopolis, September 2019)

I have discussed in previous chapters how policing inscribe violence and death on the bodies of street children. I have described instances of torture, humiliation, and rape; done by the police; just to scare the street children into listening to them. Every day on the streets of Cairo is an every day spent in fear, exhaustion, and death; but it is also an every day spent policed and disciplined. I argue in this chapter that to survive the streets of Cairo, the children have to labor and that their laboring is pivotal to the survival of the streets. As much as the children believe that they are free (to labor, to have sexual relations, and to live outside of familial ties); they learn the hard way that their every step is policed. Roaming around Cairo can get them imprisoned. Working as a sayes, a garbage collector or a beggar means that violence by the police becomes inscribed on their bodies. Adrienne Pine discusses the violence that the people of Honduras have internalized and that became part of their habitus. She goes on to say that they have internalized being less worthy than the wealthy (pine, 65); and thus, have accepted and normalized death. Her most important argument which echoes the reality of the streets of Cairo is "While the fault is not theirs, without the poor's active complicity, it would be impossible for the state to harm them to the extent that it has"(pine, 65). The state has been harming the street children as I have described earlier because it could, but also because the street children do feel like they deserve it; they internalize the society's view of them as unworthy, non-disciplined, and dangerous.

"We see him as he begs for money. But we watch from afar; he notices us and comes for a chat. we greet him and ask him if he needs any help.

He starts swearing he is not a beggar.

We ask him what does he want to become when older, and he answers; a policeman. Why? I was shocked. “To gather all the street children and the beggars and throw them in prison; they are the real reason behind all evil that exists in this country”

In my field-note; I fail to mention how young the boy was, only six or seven years old; already internalizing that everything that he does resonates with evilness. I believe he must have been told so; that his laboring (his begging); is only making the city a more evil space. He has internalized this policing of morals and ideals so deep that he thinks that children his age should be thrown in prison. The constructs that come out of the violence of policing and of internalizing the deserving of this policing constitute the everyday laboring in Cairo.

“We stop for a red light.

Right in front of me two police officers, not in uniform; are getting off their motorcycle. I try to look at where they are heading. Two boys are sleeping on a Kareta (a small buggy led by a monkey, often used to collect garbage). The boys are woken up by one of the officers beating them up. I hear the officer say “What are you doing sleeping here?” He keeps on slapping them on their faces and kicking them to get up.

One sentence alarmed me, and it was the only sentence that stuck with me

“Go sleep at your homes”

Our car leaves, and I get my head out of the window in an attempt to see how the story ends.

It’s probably one of the many moments where police brutality goes unnoticed because of how repetitive it is. We see this every day, that no one stops at it anymore.

I do not know or care to understand why the police officers were so mad that two boys were sleeping peacefully.

What I do care about is the absurdity of what was told to them.

To go home…”

To work is to live, To live is to work:

—تَضِيقُ بِنَا الأَرْضُ. تَحْشُرُنَا فِي المَمَرِّ الأَخِيرِ, فَنَخْلَعُ أَعْضَاءَنَا كَيْ نَمُرَّ

وَتَعْصُرُنَا الأَرْضُ. [27]

(محمود درويش، تضيق بنا الأرض)

What does it mean to work/not to work on the streets? How can one survive the streets without working? One needs to work to survive the streets of Cairo. I met; however; several children who did choose not to work; they survived the streets by getting food/clothes from other street vendors/laborers. Dina, who was a fifteen-year-old girl living on the streets; escaped her home when she fell in love with an older boy on the streets. She lived off by getting food from a nearby corn seller who pitted her. She got access to bathroom and water from a lady who worked in a governmental institution nearby where she lived; who passed by her every few weeks and took her home. When I asked her if she worked she quickly answered that she does not like to. She does not beg either; she refuses to get pity money from passersby. All she cares about was to get a bag of chips, be with her lover, and enjoy the freedom of the streets. However, almost every other interlocutor I met labored. They linked working to surviving. They either worked to support themselves or worked to support their families (either on or off the streets).

One of the cruelest realities of the streets is all the dreams that shatter. There is an overarching reduction of life into labor. Capitalism shatters dreams and reduces life into working hours. The street children were fighting this, and they were dreaming. The society, however, would not let that pass. I saw this in a conversation on one night round in Mohandseen;

He told me that when he grows up he's going to make sure to take his mother and his father for Hajj.

[27] The land narrows down, confines us in the last corridor; so we remove our ribs to pass and the land squeezes us.

The social worker asked him; “but how would you? Do you have money?”

Abdo answered no, but he was determined not to become like his older half brothers, with all the drug consumption and the excessive money spending.

The social worker in one instant shattered his dreams.

He told him that he needs to work to achieve any of his dreams

“You need to learn any craft, any profession; instead of becoming like your brothers”

A: “I learned Nekel, but I do not like it”

SW.: “You do not have to like it”

A: “But I want to be so much more than this”

SW: “you are uneducated, you are living on the streets; to live a good life you need to find a job”

SW: “Maybe become a security man, you will be paid a good amount of money; and only then you can get a house, take your parents to hajj, get married and have kids” (Dokki, October 2019)

The social worker’s attempt to make him ready for a life of hardship, ended up shattering his dreams. Abdo looked sad after this conversation, and refused to continue talking about his dreams about wanting to be “so much more than this”.

But at other instances, life was reduced into labor, and only labor; as a mean to reach one’s dream;

Mahmoud is sixteen and has an interesting story. He goes back home every day, and he works as a Sayes. He is uneducated, and uncared for, yet he is so funny and social and talkative that one would just forget him. Mahmoud jokes with Sherif all the time and I am standing there, with the biggest grim on my face because I just love him too much. He starts talking about wanting to become better, about wanting to learn things. He has now two jobs; one at a flower shop that

starts at 10 am and ends at 7 pm (he gets paid 60 pounds a day…no days off. And then starts to work as a Sayes from 7 to 3 am. He gains around 100 pounds and thus he makes 160 pounds a day. He gives his mother 100 pounds and saves 60 pounds (-30 pounds for one meal a day). Mahmoud told us that someone living nearby will teach him English and Arabic, as he was sad that when someone writes him on Facebook messenger a message he wouldn't be able to read it. He is also eager to learn because he wants to become an actor, and said that in the future he will have to read scripts so he better starts now.

I decided not to talk to Mahmoud about work, capitalism, and things we only talk about when we afford to. I cannot ask him to not work as he is only 16, and to go to school. I found him too enthusiastic about building a better future for himself… I couldn't break his heart.

"How do you squeeze skill from a body said to embody the opposite of anything that resembles skill?" (Wright, 46). The Street children are always living in that liminal space; the space of the in-between; always trying to survive, but struggling too; due to the harsh conditions of the everyday. This liminality reproduces the violence, and puts the children at a state of confusion and questioning of their own lives on the streets of Cairo."Their situation is marked by 'intense feelings of liminality' which, following Victor Turner, involve being 'neither here nor there … betwixt and between' (Hage, 123). Liminality is the state of the unknown, it is not knowing where one stands and where one will go. To always being in-between categories; are the street children the disposable bodies or are their bodies pivotal to the progression of the city? Is their labor beneficial, or is it only taking what's not their right? The street children find themselves in a liminal space, in the city that does not fully integrate them but that lives off the surplus of their production. Therefore, If one word describes the everyday laboring of street children than it is liminality. The liminality of the working bodies of street children answers also the question of the value of their labor. "Benjamin provides a good point of departure for this feminist interrogation into one of Marx's staple concerns: the dehumanizing process behind

forming variable capital, which, he writes, "converts the worker into a crippled monstrosity" (Marx 1977, 481). Through the image of dialectical stillness, Benjamin helps explain how this process involves the creation of not only value at the worker's expense but also a value that is valorized only insofar as it is counterposed to what it is not: waste (Wright, 73).

Rape, Sex Work and Sex:

"أَنا والمسيحُ على حالنا :

يَمُوتُ ويحيا , وفي نَفْسِهِ مريمُ

وأَحيا وأَحْلُمْ ثانيةً أَنني أَحلُمُ

ولكنَّ حُلْمي سريعٌ كبرقيَّةٍ"[28]

(محمود درويش، ربما لان الشتا تاخر)

"Imagine this; you're thirteen, you just came back from the shelter; you go to a shelter because you just spend way too much time on the streets and your parents cannot afford feeding you and your other seven siblings; you love the shelter; it's big, you have friends, a bed, and you get to eat three meals a day but today, you're here for a visit and you're just thirteen; you go up the roof to play with the chicken trapped in a wooden cage, you look from the rooftop and see the mosque; you've lived your whole life in Sayda Zaynab so you are familiar with how big he mosque is, surrounded by too many vendors and people who want to pray and ask el "set" for everything and nothing, you're thirteen and today is the day your life changes forever; you hear footsteps approaching you as you were lost in the beautiful chaos of your street, you turn around, and it's your neighbour; he is old; with white hair and fewer teeth than other men you've seen; he puts his hands on your shoulder as you start moving away, he tells you he just wants to play a

[28] Jesus and I stay the same: he dies and he lives; and Maryam stays in his soul. I live and I dream again that I am living. But my dream goes away very fast.

game; "let's go play with the chicken and the ducks in their wooden cage", you get excited and go with him; you're in the cage; he asks you to lower your pants, and to lift your shirt up; you are uncomfortable but do as he asks you to, he starts getting closer and you fail to understand what happens next; you fail to remember what happens next; you do not want to remember what happens next; you only remember it wasn't once, you met him on the roof many times while visiting your parents from the shelter, you also remember feeling loved, cared for, and seen; you are no longer invisible—But one day, you learn at the shelter that having sex is not good, it's Haram; They tell you no one should touch you down there; you feel the tears of guilt running down your face, you feel disgust, your teacher at the shelter now understands what happened to you without you having to explain anything; "you were raped", She tells you as she hugs you, you are only thirteen but you do know what the word meant, you are pregnant, you're only thirteen; raped by a man you later knew was sixty years old; not once, not twice; but tens of times, you're only thirteen and your teacher takes you for an abortion; you do not know this word, rape was the only word you knew."

This is how Sabrine told me her story; one night sitting on a pavement in Sayda Zaynab. Sabrine was raped at a very young age; but this was not the only thing that startled me. I was shocked when she told me she went back on the same roof to meet her rapist. Sabrine argued that this was the only time she felt that she was loved and it was the only time she was taken care of. Throughout my fieldwork, sex formed itself as an integral part of every conversation I had with the street girls. Sex on the street is both accepted and frowned upon. Things like rape, sex work, and consensual sex do not fall under different categories neither for the society nor for the street children themselves. They are all one thing, and they all fall under topics of pleasure and topics of Haram. Girls are judged even when raped; as it is often thought to be a normal sexual consensual relationship. In a previous chapter, I talked about some of my interlocutors waiting for rape, waiting for their friend to come back after she was raped and the pain that they went

through “waiting”. I went back to the field a few weeks later to see the girl who was raped, now hated by all girls; because she went back to see her rapist and is now in a relationship with him. I could not blame her, nor blame the girls who are blaming her. Complex relations take place on the streets, nothing is completely black nor white, no one is completely good nor bad. I have sat with rapists whom I sympathized with, and whom I despised at the same moment. Girls I met on the street speak of rape as they speak of engaging in consensual sexual relationships because they internalized that they must be at fault too; they must have done something wrong; and thus, they usually go back to engaging in consensual sexual relationships with their rapists. The girls bear the marks of their choices on their bodies and their faces. When a girl is raped; she is marked as raped—cut with a Matwa on her cheeks; so the rest of the street leaders know that she is no longer a virgin; and can rape her too. When a girl refuses to be raped/to engage in sexual relations; she is cut on her back, on her arm, and so on; usually running away. So the bodies of the girls bare the marks of rape, and bare the judgments of the society; an impure, non-virgin, dirty body on the streets of Cairo. A girl on the street survives with her body; either to offer it for money (for upper-classmen) or to offer it for street leaders (for protection and inclusion) or to offer it for love (to feel loved and cared for). When speaking of rape, I asked during my fieldwork if boys get raped too. They do, of course, but rarely speak of it. I heard a lot of stories of young boys being raped by “Safah el Dokki” or the serial killer of Dokki, who would take young boys in a small boat on the Nile, rape them, and then kills them with disposing of their bodies in the Nile. However, no man ever spoke to me about being raped, and no boy ever spoke to me about being harassed. I believe they believe it makes them less manly, and thus, science prevails in the face of gendered rape. The men have no problem of being rapists, but silence is all I heard; when their bodies were breached. This is the silenced and unwritten face of the city.

It is pivotal, when discussing the topic of labor; to also speak of how the street women/ girls labor with their bodies in all sorts of engagements in sexual relationships; nonconsensual,

free, or waged. Federici in her book ‘Caliban and the witch’ (1998, 170) argues that the female body was the first attacked by capitalism; “an attack on women’s resistance to the spread of capitalist relations and the power that women had gained by their sexuality, their control over reproduction, and their ability to heal”. She also argues that, “The body is attacked as the source of all evils” (Ibid, 137). In light of these arguments, I study the body of street girls in relation to laboring as sex workers and being a sight of exploitation.

Sex workers fall at the bottom of the category of laboring on the streets of Cairo; often not allowed to be in groups and not accepted as “friends”. I knew this as I was talking to Laila, a drug dealer who just got out of prison. We were near Tahrir when she told me how selling drugs was very profitable, but very risky. She only spoke of how the society is deteriorating, and the street is becoming a scarier place; when she was referring to another girl, standing in the middle of the street at a light stop; pretending to sell tissue boxes but is waiting to be picked up. I saw the other girl (the sex worker) as she leaned over to touch one driver’s head in an explicitly sexual invitation; Lila laughed as she told me; “See what she’s doing? She’s selling her body for money. She is getting diseases and spreading them. She’s polluting the streets with this act” I laughed as I asked her if she thinks drugs are ruining the streets too. She did not like my question, but told me that sex work is just Haram, and that she is proud she doesn’t have to steep that low for money. Why is sex work unacceptable and is thought of as a ruiner of the society and the street but drug dealing isn’t? Laila believes drugs are no different than cigarettes and alcohol; she asked me, why would it be okay for the government to sell and profits of tobacco and alcohol and she wouldn’t profit of Hashish and Strox? But for Laila; “Sex work is just haram, men cheat on their wives and then get diseases and girls are left with babies not knowing who their father is! How can you compare this to drugs and being in a good mood?”.

“Condemned streetwalkers: their "income, blatant solicitation, promiscuity and impersonal

sexuality combined to offer them little comfort"; their work was "at the bottom of the social scale." (White, 55)

I concluded that; selling one's body is still thought of as selling one's honor; but selling Hashish is just for business. Although rape and consensual sex are vastly found in the stories of children in the street; sex work is almost always hidden and unspoken of. It is shameful to be a sex worker on the streets and it is at the bottom of the hierarchal street society. Sex workers are looked down upon as much as kulla (glue) sniffers are looked down upon, as kulla is the cheapest drug on the streets, and the only drug that has a long effect on the drug user even when not on the drug. Other children take pride in not having to sell their bodies for money, and not giving in to the world of kulla. Prostitution was legalized and regulated in Egypt until 1949. Historians have argued that the sex workers were clean, vaccinated, and periodically medically checked up. However, now the case with the girls on the street is different, sex workers are not clean, often wearing dirty clothes, having dirty fingernails and lice in their hair; as for the rest of the street children with little access to water and hygienic products. The criminalization of female Sex workers is a criminalization of "poor women's occasional labor and creating an illegal population" (White, 3) Their criminalization is due to the impurity of the bodies of the girls; and thus, they are no longer victims, exploited by capitalism and by the society, but they are criminals, dirty, impure and transmitting disease. "Prostitutes, in other words, became less womanly the longer they worked." (White, 7) In the shelters; the girls feel confined. Throughout the duration of my fieldwork; cases of girls fleeing the shelter were not surprising. The social workers of the shelters often argued that the girls flee due to wanting to engage in sexual relations; having been raped, or having been in love and have had sexual experiences; leave the girls yearning for sex. "they were seduced and abandoned, they were tired of work, they came from "bad home conditions," they were lonely and bored" (White, 8)

"Your father is offered fifty-five thousand pounds as compensation for waiving your right to trial. Fifty-five thousand pounds and your rapist is free. You think about it every day, for fifty-five times at least. You tell me this story five years later; five years of being on the street. Five years that resulted in so many cuts on your body and your face by men who knew you were no longer a virgin and thought it was an open invitation for sex. Five years of sleeping on the pavement in Sayda Zaynab, going to the bathroom in regulated hours —when the mosque doors are open for the five prayers a day. Five years of enduring heatwaves and frozen streets without even having socks on. Five years in which you fell in love with a thirty-year-old street leader who promised you protection and all the love that your father has failed to give you. One year "married" but not officially to a man who you later discovered was married to a sister of yours and had a child with her, your heart is broken and you feel unloved and not special. Your husband goes to jail and you discover you're pregnant at fifteen. You have your baby alone in the bathroom of the mosque, with some help from other women who also gave birth at the Mosque because all the five hospitals surrounding Sayda Zaynab would not take them without marriage certificates or IDs. You sleep with your eyes half open and your mind fully concentrated because you now have a child to protect. Five was also the number of cuts on your left cheek when I first met you. You tell me it is how you protect yourself from the police; who take you in at least five times a week and it results in you cutting your flesh so they let you go. But it's five years later and you are now protecting five girls on the streets. They look up to you and find refuge in your arms."

Money, Sex, and the repetitiveness of the every day also form the complex relations of having to be on the street; many of the families force their daughters to be sex workers; benefiting from the body of their daughters, and others; like Sabrine's father, stand silent to his daughter's rapist in exchange of a sum of money. "Prostitutes' work is reproductive-in fact, they sell that part of themselves-of male labor power and family formations" (White, 11) What I want to add here to white's argument is that sex on the streets of Cairo, in all of its forms (Rape/sex

work/Consensual sex) become a transaction in the neoliberal market. White also argues something that is echoed on the streets of Ciro; "The same women who make working life tolerable for wage laborers may use their earnings so that brothers and lovers can avoid wage labor. The same women who cater to the needs of working men may buy houses and rent rooms to wage laborers at rates that impoverish them" (Ibid, 12). The sex work becomes valuable to women and girls on the streets of Cairo because it offers them another means of surviving. Their bodies become autonomous, they get to put a price on the labor they provide the city.

The inequality of working the streets of Cairo;

"وَمَا زال فِي الدَّرب دربٌ. وما زال في الدرب مُتّسعٌ للرَّحيلْ"[29]

(محمود درويش، مَا زال فِي الدَّرب دربٌ)

"He goes on about how the lowest he gains on the street is 9 pounds but the highest is 150 pounds. And that one time he tried going on with collecting cans (to be sold for recycling) for hours and he collected a kilo and a half for only 15 pounds which he manipulated the buyer by filling the cans with dirt and rocks to gain more money. I say; "but this is wrong!" and he responds; "what's really wrong is that guy buying them with only 15 pounds when he sells them with 70 pounds, it's okay to manipulate him if he's stealing of us" I provoke him by saying; "What is he exactly stealing?" and the 9-year-old Mohamed answers eloquently: "Our time. وقتنا. عرقنا. كل يوم في حياتنا *Our Sweat. Our every day" (Heliopolis, September 2019)*

"If history teaches us anything, it is that distinguishing between the worthy and unworthy poor never withstands the test of time" (Bourgois, 362). As the street children survive the streets of Cairo; they realize their unworthiness. They do not see themselves but anything other than in

[29] there is still a trail on the road, and there is still room on the road for leaving

the very present moment; in poverty, in drug addiction, in being homeless. This belief stems first from how the society perceives them and how it internalizes this notion of the unworthy poor. In this section, I want to speak of the inequality of working the streets of Cairo that is inscribed by capitalism in addition to the state and the society. The state has been propagating the idea of the bad, unworthy street children. The society at large has been normalizing the state's narrative, aiding at making sure that no one helps the street children and to make sure to avoid them when seeing them on the streets. But most importantly; both the state and the society are under the spell of the capitalist notion of the need for constant production and money generating laborers. "neoliberal political-economic model of capitalism—free markets protected by law enforcement and military intervention, for the benefit of corporate monopolies with minimal redistribution of income and social services for the poor—has obviously exacerbated homelessness" (Bourgois, 363). Thus, neoliberalism, the state and the society come together to create a category of "street children" that is criminalized and deemed unworthy. What's more appealing is that the street children internalize this narrative; they too; believe they are unworthy of sympathy and care from anyone but their own inner groups. "The homeless tend to blame themselves for their fate. The logic of the gray zone makes their self-condemnation appear to be justified, because victims often desperately lash out against those closest to them. They frequently mistreat the only people over whom they still have a shred of power—usually their loved ones, often themselves. The ugly spectacle of everyday interpersonal violence and mutual betrayal often obscures the impact of larger long-term social forces" (ibid, 365).

Randa, Sabrine, Gameel, Fares, and Karim; and many more of my interlocutors have shown me how they self-harm. Randa and Sabrine both told me stories of how they inflict pain on their own bodies in order to distract themselves from the pain of the every day; including when they fight with their lovers and would want to show that they are really hurting. In other

narratives, my interlocutors spoke of the necessity of cutting themselves in order not to be captured by the police, and for others to fear them.

"One night, an older man came to me with a Beshla (a small edged weapon made of steel) asking me to sleep with him. He thought that this way, I will be scared and will listen to him. So I took the Beshla from his hands, and cut myself. I needed to show him I am not scared of the pain, and I am not scared of having a cut across my face. To survive the streets you need to be tough, you need to show strength, and you need to make sure that everyone knows how strong you are" (Sarbine, Sayda Zaynab —December 2019)

The drugged working body:

"تُنْسَى, كأنك لم تكن

شخصاً, ولا نصّاً... وتُنْسَى

أَمشي على هَدْيِ البصيرة، رُبّما

أُعطي الحكايةَ سيرةً شخصيَّةً. فالمفرداتُ

تسُوسُني وأسُوسُها. أنا شكلها

وهي التجلّي الحُرُّ. لكنْ قيل ما سأقول."

(محمود درويش، تُنْسَى كأنك لم تكن)[30]

Almost all of the children I met during my fieldwork were heavily drugged. Drug use on the st is very prominent and very normalized. Starting from ḥshysh, Strox, bljykā, kulla, to medical pills; my interlocutors were always in a state of intoxication. The street children are not shameful nor scared of doing drugs; many of them argue that they are important to survive the every day on the streets of Cairo. Since the children work for long hours; walking aimlessly, standing for long hours, and sleeping on pavements; numbing the pain is a must for the laboring body to continue to walk, stand and sleep on harsh surroundings. But I discovered that also the drugs play a great role in

[30] You forget as if you were never; a person or a text… and you forget.I walk towards the insight, maybe. I give the story a personal resume. The vocabulary speaks to me and I speak to it, I shape it and it's the liberated transfiguration. Everything that I want to say is already said.

creating an alternate reality; one where the children can be happy, can laugh and can live to see the next day. One of my interlocutors argued that only when on drugs that he feels like not killing himself. “I think I am a good person. The problem is with the people who look at me in a bad way because I wipe cars and sniff glue. What can I do? I sniff glue precisely to forget the way they look at me” (Fahmy, 110). This quote is from a fieldwork done in the 90s, and yet, sounded exactly like a conversation I would have with one of my interlocutors. Others just describe how when on drugs; they feel like conquering the streets; becoming stronger to stand up to some police members kicking them out of their working spots; or to the leaders who force money out of their pockets after a long day of work. Being drugged is also when the children get to dream of what they cannot have in real life

“Hisham told me about working on the streets to feed his family and then told me that his uncle has kicked him out of his own house. I asked him how much does he gain after a long day of work (usually as a sayes); he said “ One day, I was out with friends, we were doing different kinds of drugs and then suddenly; I was looking at the ground and I found a lot of bills of money on the street. I immediately covered them and waited until all of my friends left, I gathered them and counted them to discover that it’s about three thousand Egyptian pounds. I took one thousand to my mother and the rest I kept for myself, to buy drugs, to buy food and some clothes”.

Me: “How long did it take for you to spend all of the 2K?”

Hisham: “only four days”” (Abu El Reesh, November 2019)

Hisham’s dream was to have two thousand pounds to spend; and whether they were actually there or he was hallucinating due to his consumption of drugs; in his dream; for four days; he was the rich man he dreamt of becoming. He did not have to work, for four days. He did not have to worry about providing for his mother. And he did not have to worry about buying drugs. The drugs make up a different reality, a completely different city; Cairo becomes the city

in which a street child; no matter how poor and abandoned; becomes rich and capable, strong, and happy. They use the drugs to escape the reality of their every day; every day that is limiting, tiring, and scary.

Walter Benjamin writes on Hashish; he begins his essay "Haschisch In Marseille" by giving a description of walking the city after smoking Hashish. He describes the city as humorous; and his spatial and temporal senses begin to become diluted. "And behind these immense dimensions of inner experience, of absolute duration and immeasurable space, there remains a strange and serene humor, particularly related to the contingencies of the spatial and temporal world" (Benjamin, 134). Benjamin goes on by describing how beauty kept stemming from things he would have seen; if not intoxicated, as ugliness; but most importantly; he described seeing the face of people he knew on the faces of strangers. "Did I keep myself company?"; he wondered. He spoke of intense imaginations, where the streets of his city were no longer boring; and where pleasure and happiness literally colonize the person's flow of emotions. Something else takes over; the fear that once the Hashish's effects leave one's body; unhappiness and solitude would reemerge. The street children speak of consuming a wide range of drugs. They smoke Hashish as much as they smoke cigarettes. But they also smoke Strox, sniff kola and drink beer. The drugs, therefore; allow the street children to get out of the every day as much as it instills happiness, and a sense of pleasure in the violence they endure daily. Benjamin's piece argues that there is more than one spatial and temporal reality. Thus, through the consumption of drugs; my interlocutors have been choosing an alternative spatial and temporal reality to the one they already live in. In this alternative reality; dreams become possible, and possibilities are no longer just dreams. Through the drugs, the work is endured and the every day becomes a space of intensities in the deleuzian sense. In bodies without organs; Deleuze and Guattari argue that we should move beyond pre socially prescribed ideas of what the body can do and what the body is capable of. If we describe the bodies of street children in the Deleuzian sense; they would be

suicidal bodies; ones that know no direction, no order, and no fixity. The experimentation with the drugs in the every day prove that many potentialities stem from the bodies of the street children. These potentialities pave the way of a construction of a life that is deemed as non-normative; but that still lives despite everything. And by being the suicidal bodies, they also use the drugs in order to be able to labor for long hours and to sustain the harsh circumstances of being homeless. The potentiality of being a body without organs help the street children discover what their bodies are capable of sustaining that is different from the socially constructed idea of a body; they discover that they sustain long hours of labor by consuming drugs.

Philippe Bourgois's work with drug addicts in the US in "Righteous Dopefiend" helps illuminates the interjection of being homeless and a drug addict on the streets. Although his work was concerned with older American crack addicts; I find great parts of his arguments well situated in what I have been studying on the streets of Cairo. "The community of addicted bodies on Edgewater Boulevard ironically offers a refuge in a hostile world, even though its moral economy is set within a context that looks like the self-inflicted torture of sociopaths to many outside observers" (Bourgois, 365). The Street does become the refuge for my interlocutors; and is often spoken of in terms of a "home" that is encompassing and inclusive when everything else is not. He builds on Primo Levi's notion of the gray zone; where "good, bad, love, betrayal, and solidarity are intertwined" (ibid) Are the street children the victims of harsh everyday working conditions or are they non-self controlling drug addicts who live a life of violence and crime? Are they to be shamed for choosing the streets over their original kin? Are they at fault for skipping school, for selling their bodies for money, and for voluntarily choosing to engage in sexual relations outside of the boundaries of marriage?

I believe that the street children are stripped from their rights of freely choosing how to live, where to work, and what to do with their bodies because they are no longer the calculative subjects who can be completely captured by the neoliberal state. Although the rights discourse is

always a hegemonic discourse, spoken of by states and governmental institutions; I use it in my thesis because it is also appropriated by the street children themselves. They do not have the liberty to roam around Cairo; as they make it ugly and they misrepresent the "good faithful Egyptian figure". Their lives and their choices are to be judged, for their lack of productivity, and their labor that is nonbeneficial to the greater society. The body is never free, to do drugs, to have sex, or to choose its labor. The body is always relational; to the pack, to the society, and even in rebellion it is in relation to the normative idea of fixity. So what does the drugged body do? How do the street children use drugs to live/work- and especially when their life/work distinction isn't so clear? They find joy in living the streets of Cairo through forming relationships with each other and with the city through the imaginative space that drugs allow. Their labor becomes less hectic, less tiring; The street children are not the only laborers to use drugs as a means to sustain the working day. Many precarious workers (such as truck drivers) use tramadol to be able to stay awake for long hours driving across Egypt. Walt Curnow (ABC NEWS, 2018) explores the tramadol world by working with donkey and horse barbers in Cairo who use tramadol daily, arguing they need it to sustain the animal bites and the long working and tiring hours. To think of a condition of laboring that makes everyone dependent.

<u>The production of the self; the production of the city:</u>

"يسبقني غدٌ ماضٍ. أَنا مَلِكُ الصدى.

لا عَرْشَ لي إلاَّ الهوامش. و الطريقُ

هو الطريقةُ. رُبَّما نَسِيَ الأوائلُ وَصْفَ

شيء ما، أُحرِّكُ فيه ذاكرةً وحسّا

تُنسَى، كأنَّكَ لم تكن

خبراً، ولا أَثراً... وتُنْسى"

(محمود درويش، تُنسَى، كأنَّكَ لم تكن)[31]

Young Marx argues in the economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1884 that; “The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He feels at home when he is not working, and when he is working he does not feel at home” (Marx, 30) But what happens when the workplace is the same space that one considers home? What happens to the street children who take the streets as their homes and on which they labor? It is still forced labor; forced by capital’s necessity for one to have money in order to live; but also forced by the society which deems anything/anyone which/who is not productive as a failure. But man produces himself; for Marx “that his own life is an object for him” (Ibid, 31) and “Through this production, nature appears as his work and his reality. The object of labor is, therefore, the objectification of man’s species life: for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he sees himself in a world that he has created.” (Ibid, 32) If I were to argue that the street children do produce, not actual products; but the value to the city; they actually produce something else, and in this case; in accordance with Marx; this is when the production of the self takes place. The production of the self through laboring on the streets of Cairo is not by being alienated from their labor; in fact; my interlocutors feel as if they own the streets through their laboring. In the case of AbdelAzim; who has been living on the streets for more than ten years; he told me that he takes pride in the fact that; “El Manteaa di betaaty” which translates to “this neighborhood belongs to me”. Thus, through his labor; he reproduces himself; as a subject of power and through this production of the self; a production of the city becomes a possibility. AbdelMaliq Simone argues in people as infrastructure that, “… the ability of residents to engage complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices. These conjunctions become an infrastructure—a platform providing for and reproducing life in the city” (Simone, 408). Through

[31] A past tomorrow surpasses me. I am the king of rust. No throne for me but the margins. And the way is the way. Maybe they forgot to describe something that I stir the memory and the senses in. You forget. As if you were never. A news or a trace. And you forget.

owning the space (and in this case the streets of Cairo); we can see that a production of the city that incorporates the street children, and becomes a produced "home" is possible through the interactions of the street children with one another and with their laboring on the streets of Cairo. "Particular spaces are linked to specific identities, functions, lifestyles, and properties so that the spaces of the city become legible for specific people at given places and times" (Ibid, 409). There is an "inseparable connections between places, people, actions, and things" (ibid). The inseparable connections that I found on the streets range from connections between the children themselves; coming together to form alternative families; sharing food, money, clothes and places of sleep; connections with the spaces themselves; connections to their labor and connections to things they own. Randa, a 17-year-old street child living in Maadi; recounted how she always shares the money she gains with her "chosen family on the street"; whenever anyone is short on money, she never hesitates to share with them. Sawsan, an 18-year old I met in Manial; referred to everyone I met with her in our short encounter as a sister/brother. When I asked her if they shared the money they gain from their labor, she answered that they share something much more important; protection and love for one another; "love that we did not receive from our kin, and the protection one needs on the street." The connection to the space itself was an intense one; I met a family of four generations on the street; a grandmother, a father and a mother, their sons and daughters, and their grand (or grand-grand) children. This family is very well established on the street, and has been living in the same spot in Dokki for decades; working as Soyas, and have taken over a certain corner where they have a sofa bed, a cupboard, a mirror, and an armchair. This is their home, even though they do own an "apartment" which they rarely visit. "In this multiplicity of connotations, it is always possible to do something different in and with the city than is specified by these domains of power" (Simone, 409). And Thus, I argue here that although the domains of power condemn the laboring and the living on the streets of Cairo; the city as well as the self, are still produced, and reproduced; through this condemned labor producing relationships and values in and of the everyday life in Cairo.

Conclusion:

"قال: إلى أين؟ قالوا: إلى أَين!

نمشي كأنَّا سوانا. كأنَّ هناك / هنا

بين بين. كأن الطريق هو الهدف

اللانهائيُّ، لكنْ إلى أين نمضي، ومن

أين نحن إذن؟ نحن سُكَّان هذا

الطريق الطويل إلى هدف يحمل اسماً

وحيداً: إلى أين؟"

(مجمود درويش، الطريق الي اين)[32]

All the children who live on the street work. Either their parents force them to live on the street to work and then take the money they gain or they are forced to work in order to support one's self. The children work for long hours, probably at night; thus, they get very little sleep. Work is divided between selling tissue boxes, cleaning cars, helping cars park (boys only), selling imported toys (Fanoos Ramadan/Ramadan lantern for example), creating bracelets and selling them (very few girls have the money and the skill to do that), and finally collecting garbage (collecting recyclable material to sell to big factories for few pounds). All of these jobs are under the informal economy; they are not taxed nor monitored. The laborers are thus precarious bodies contributing to the economy without benefiting in return from the economy that only exploits them. The street children are always scared to lose their jobs, to not gain enough money to feed one's self (and probably support another family member) and to be captured by the police while working (For their jobs are not authorized). Thus, there is an ongoing state of fear due to the precarious job they need; which renders their every day a violent event.

[32] He said: To where? They said: to where? We walk as if we are together, as if there is here.In between, every road is the ultimate goal.But to where?And where are we from? We are living in the here. But the road is endless, to one goal; to where?

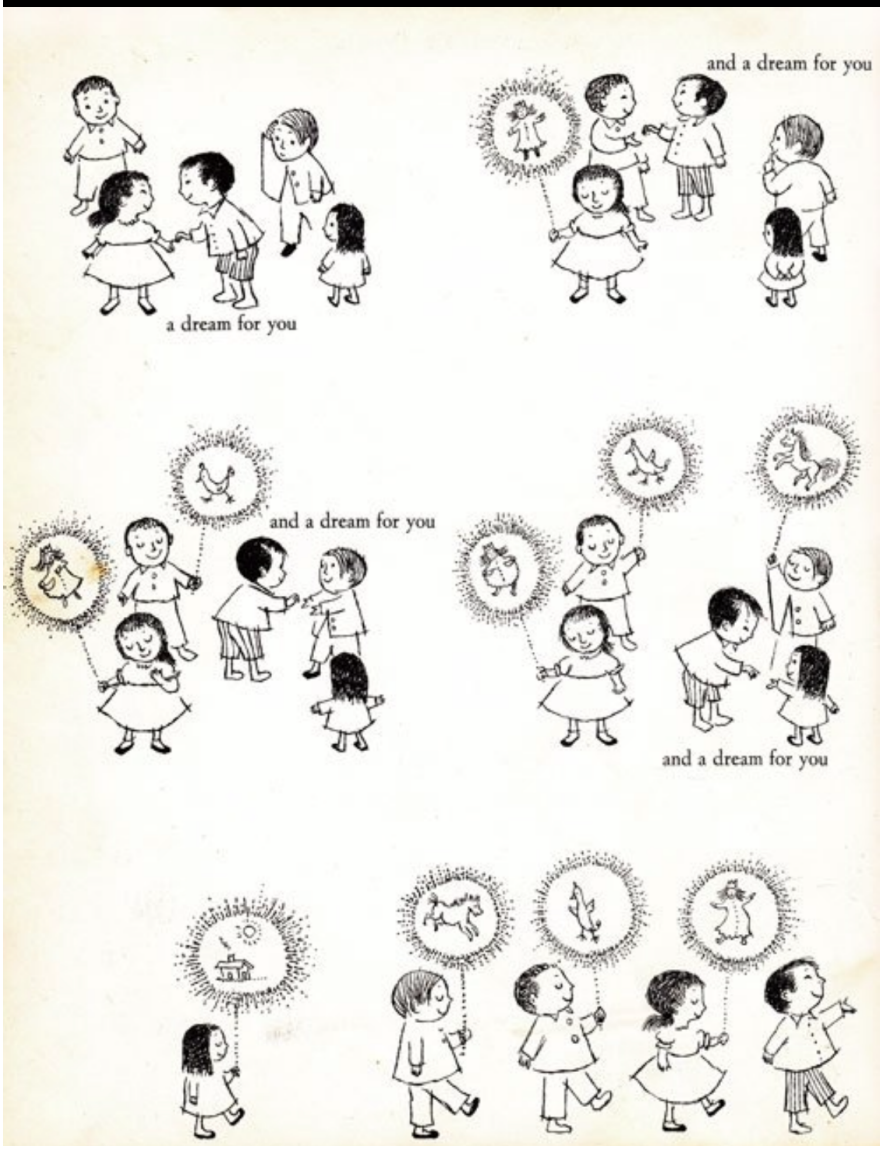
Marx spoke of serfdom, and how making value in the world is always held on the back of some people. The time spent by the street children cleaning cars or collecting garbage is never valued, they are exploited in every sense; and thus, they become slaves to the economy. How? They are contributing to the making and shaping of the streets; helping cars park, cleaning cars, collecting garbage. Without those informal jobs, the streets would have looked completely different. Yet, they are often not paid, scolded for touching one's car, or in the case of collecting the garbage; paid very little for the time and effort spent. The value exploited of the child laborers keeps expanding as they keep working with very little in return. This is the perfect example of the economic value as trauma; how neoliberalism as a system instills violence in the lives of street children every day by just making sure that they are not fairly paid for their work. Instead, the state intervenes as to create a convincing rhetoric against street children being parts of gangs and that no one should pay them anything at all. Thus, as a concluding argument; laboring the streets of Cairo an exploited work, work with no definite payment, work that is often chased by the police, and work that is precarious.

I conclude with Marx's argument that the entire phenomenon of value always has at its roots violent traumatic experiences. We go back to the idea of the beneficiary; all the goods that we need, to have a good life; are based or are all sediments of other traumas. Our material life is built on the lives and the sufferings of others. In this chapter; I aimed at highlighting the repetitiveness of the every day in Cairo; the labor (including the sex work and the drugged body), then running away from the police, and the rhetoric of the categorization of the street children under a police state for the purpose of describing the violence that is intertwined with the potentialities of the everyday. I argue that the production of the self that is also a production of the city and the relationships in that city. Cairo, in its everydayness; is always produced and reproduced by the street children who are also always reproducing themselves amidst the trauma and the potentialities

Love and Becoming on The Streets of Cairo;

"و انت الامل في العيون"[33]

(محمد منير)



(From the book I'll be you and you be me by Maurice Sendak)

Introduction:

"Malak started talking to me about her husband who is now imprisoned;

""عارفة يا ابلة، اول ما جوزي يطلع هعمل ايه؟ هحضنة

—"Do you know what will I do once my husband gets out (of prison)? I will hug him"

"Will you only hug him?" (A social worker jokingly asked her)

"No, I will definitely kiss him too." (Malak responded, not shyly)

"طب ما تعمليلوا الكريسماس"..

"Why don't you do him the Christmas?" -Laila, a 15-year-old intervened

[33] You are the hope in the eyes.

"هو ايه الترسماس ده؟"

"What is this "Terismas"?" Malak answered

"ده حاجة كدة هتخاوي بيها ابنك التامن"

"This is something that will help you get the child number nine" Laila replied

"الكريسماس ده هو راس السنة"

"Christmas is what you do on new year's"

"ايوا اعمل ايه يعني؟—"

"So, what do I do?" (Malak)

"يعني تلبسيلوا قميص بابا نويل، مع كوزين بيرة و سجارتين حشيش و كله هيبقي هايس."

"You wear Santa Clauses' nightgown, with two beers and a Hashish cigarette and everything will start off excitedly" (Laila)

Malak laughed, and turned to me to tell that this is her fifth husband, and that she does have eight children, but is currently raising only two.

She swears she is not the reason why she marries a lot; يعني واحد مات و التاني ابنه غزني بمتوه، و كان في واحد كويس والله و ابن حلال بس مكنش مالي عيني فا سبته

"One died, the other; his son tried to poke me with a knife. But there was a good one who did not satisfy me so I left him." (Malak)

"Ya Abla, I just want to have someone to hug at night." (Malak said; as her smile turned into a small frown)

"I have no furniture in my apartment and the balat gets very cold, I am sure one day I will wake up to find one of my children dead from the coldness and the hunger. I have no food and no clothes nor blankets for them. I think I will put them back in the institution.

"Why did you take them out?" (I asked)

"In the institution; they told me I can visit them but can never tell them I am their mother; I just thought it's unfair; I am their mother!

They also used to beat them." (Malak Explained)

-So you don't beat them? (The social worker asked, referring to a prior meeting with Malak where we saw her newborn with blue and red bruises from her mom's beatings)

Of course I beat them; but only out of love, and maybe sometimes out of frustration when I am high on drugs and I have nothing to provide for them." (Malak continued)

What does love do on the streets of Cairo? How does love affect the temporality of the city? How is love constructive of the spaces in which the street children live? Is desire mistaken for love? Is pleasure a social construct to keep one feeling human? Is it necessary for that the abandoned feel excited for something, wait for it, dream it and learn not to give up before they find it? Is "love the illusion of the abandoned"? (Biehl, 99). These questions were on my mind during my months of fieldwork. This chapter is dedicated to understanding how life is constructed by the children on the streets of Cairo. I argue that indeed life is constructed, produced, and reproduced; through notions of love and becoming.

"To carve out life chances from things too big, strong and suffocating" (Biehl, 45). To only want a hug, that would make up for all the coldness and the pain of sleeping in an empty house. To dream of a kiss, to dream of hands holding her, and caressing her hair. To understand protection in a lover's tender embrace; this is what Malak dreamed of; amidst the coldness and the hunger; while facing the death of her own children to the cold; she wanted a hug. Not asking for money and blankets and a better/fairer economic system. All she asked for was a hug. Biehl argues that in abandonment; there was no love. "The worst part of Vita was the nighttime, when she was left alone with her desire" (Biehl, 54). I see Catarina and Malak; sitting one day; both

shunned as crazy, as ungrateful, as ill-behaved; both yearning for love, for sex, for a hug. I see them becoming friends, talking to one another throughout this chapter. Catarina writing about love through the stories of Malak. This chapter started from an imagined conversation with Beihl's Catarina and my interlocutors. I begin by asking;

What does love do on the streets of Cairo?

The three of us sat on the pavement with an empty coca-cola bottle and played "truth or dare"; they call it "saraha" —honesty.

All of the questions revolved around love.

"Who do you love?" (I ask)

"You know…I'm shy to say out loud" (Ahmed)

They both giggle.

"I want to know this secret!" (I insist playfully)

"If we tell you, do you promise to keep it a secret?" (Gana)

I nod

"We are in love" (Ahmed admits)

"Have you ever been in love?" (Gana asks)

"I am in love" (I say, shyly)

"Who is he?" (Gana asks excitedly)

"His name is Mostafa" (Maryam)

"oooh, Do you want to marry him?" (Gana)

"Haha, yes!! Do you guys plan on getting married?"(Maryam)

"Umm, yeah, yes. When I can buy her a house overlooking the sea" (Ahmed answers)

"Will you invite me to your wedding?" (Maryam)

"YES! It will be the biggest wedding the street has ever seen" (Ahmed)

This is what love does on the streets of Cairo. This was love. Felt at that moment immensely, with both children looking at each other in admiration intermixed with shyness. I opened myself to them too; talked about my love and shared with them a side of me that I had never shared during fieldwork before. That day, I had discovered a whole new perspective of the streets; I found love, dreams, and hope for a better future. Gana and Ahmed were both becoming through their dreams and aspirations to get a house and have a big wedding so much more than the category of "the street child". The streets of Cairo have overdetermined constraints that I have spoken of in different chapters; from death, rape to heavy policing; but in this chapter; I want to speak of all the underlying possibilities and becomings that do exist on the streets of Cairo that help the street children endure and survive them. "It invokes the capacities of people to endure and live on as they reckon with the overdetermined constraints and resources of the worlds into which they are thrown, while also, crucially, calling on their ability to approach the open-ended, to imagine worlds and characters that do not—but may yet—exist" (Biehl, 9). Complete homes were structured on the streets; and families thereafter. We have a saying in Arabic; " "فاقد الشي لا يعطية Those who lose something, cannot give it. I, however; found the exact opposite from my interlocutors. The children embody so much love; for anything and everything. My interlocutors' eyes light up when I approach them for a small chat; they get super excited, and they passionately start recounting their stories. "Out of the world of the living, her desire was for language, to be talked to" (Biehl, 54). To be listened to, to be cared for, to be seen. To have one's desire as a legitimate desire; to scream "I am human" in the face of everyone who dehumanizes them; these are among the daily struggles for the street children. The street children are often theorized as the ones always asking for food, blankets, and beginning for money. This chapter is to introduce something else at the very top of the street children's priorities; they want the small things, love, intimacy, sex, and hope; just like anyone else.

On hope:

I met an eight-year-old boy called Kareem with the NGO Samusocial. He was a funny boy, joking and laughing; with a blue torn t-shirt. I could see through his torn t-shirt; all the blisters and cuts and dirt on his skin. The social worker gave him a new orange T-shirt and a new pair of new balance shoes. He started jumping up and down from happiness; literally and not figuratively. I wore my orange shoes that day; and we talked endlessly about our love for that color. He walked the streets full of himself; in love with his new belongings; and very protective of them. He hesitated when we asked him to throw his old torn T-shirt. He refused, eventually; and said he will get it fixed. Biehl in his chapter of the anthropology of becoming speaks of Bloch's notion of hope. "He calls hope "the most human of all mental feelings"" (Biehl, 114). I saw that Kareem's protectiveness of his old torn T-shirt is the real embodiment of what hope is on the streets of Cairo. "hope is an "excessive" and "explosive" force often interchangeable with anxiety and hunger. He views these dynamic qualities as necessary for motivating human efforts to "venture beyond" the "negative aspects" of the present" (Ibid). Hope is desire, it is love, it is becoming. Hope, desire, and love exist on the street of Cairo; amongst the most vulnerable street children; in a wish for a hug or in the protectiveness of one's belongings; as a way of becoming a human; facing the constant dehumanization, constant deadening, and constant categorization. Hope is an optimist; in holding to the orange T-shirt as holding to one's life, in wanting to find love, in believing you are worthy of a hug, in yearning for intimacy and sex. Berlant (2011, 2) argues that all attachment is optimistic; and that all optimism is irrational, and cruel. What is it like to find one's self in a condition of profound threat that is also confirming? The cruelty resides in the possibility of the loss of that hope or desire; and on the streets of Cairo; there is always the possibility of loss. Loss of a loved one to death, to prison, or to a shelter. Loss of money collected and dreamt of as changing one's life. Loss of a home, a family, and care. Loss of love, of friendship, or of a blanket. Loss shapes the streets of Cairo; but always in interjection

with hope and optimism; and in this; I can believe that the streets are cruel in their generating of possibilities of hope. “Cruel optimism is the condition of maintaining an attachment to a problematic object in advance of its loss.” (Berlant, 21) Hope on the streets of Cairo, is not hope in the futuristic sense; it is embedded in the very present moment of wanting to be happy, in love, and playful.

A home is also a street:

“و غاب الطريق في الخطوط و الدوایر”[34]

(نجم و الشیخ امام، اذا الشمس غرقت)

Part of this categorization is to deem the street children as unworthy; as discussed in previous chapters; street children become the killable bodies, the exhausted bodies; that live in exhausted spaces. This unworthiness makes them also unworthy of even being on the streets of Cairo. Here there is a diluted perspective on what is the public space; and an important question arises; why can’t the street children make use of the abundant and unused public space? Massey argues that; “Such ‘public’ space, unregulated, leaves a heterogeneous urban population to work out for itself who really is going to have the right to be there” (Massey, 152). The children argue that they have the right to the streets; calling certain neighborhoods as their own, and calling them home. There is a making-of what once was understood as private into the public. What are homes on the streets of Cairo? Are they private, public, or open spaces? Who has the power over these spaces? The streets of Cairo are negotiated as public spaces in which the children are not welcomed to live, but in which they live anyway. The street does not end at being a physical space, but rather a “mental, personal, relational, and cultural space” (Fahmy, 117). Life is formed on the streets of Cairo by the street children; no matter how chaotic and unstable. Life is shared on the streets of Cairo, and therefore a home, a school, a job and a culture is constructed. “It is in the streets that they live their

[34] Even if the road is lost in the lines and the circles.

fears, their anguish, and their revolts, as well as their friendships, passions, and loves" (Ibid). The children are not orderly bodies, and Cairo is nothing but a chaotic space. Derrida argues that; "This chaos and instability, which is fundamental, founding and irreducible, is at once naturally the worst against which we struggle with laws, rules, conventions, politics and provisional hegemony, but at the same time it is a chance, a chance to change, to destabilize" (Derrida, 84). Thus, how challenging is a body; an unruly and unordered body; in a chaotic, destabilizing can be to the state? And what are the chances that the children find in these public spaces on which they build homes?

"I prohibit her from coming back to this neighborhood. Ya Doctora she was the one who decided to make out with others while I am in prison. In this country; you have to have power (Mestyar) in order to survive; otherwise, you will be eaten alive" (Samir, Dokki, January 2019)

I had similar conversations like the one above; where whole streets were deemed forbidden by some street leaders to street children. The public space here is owned and becomes private; Asmaa; who could never return or pass by Dokki; was stripped from her right to space by Samir. Samir works as a Sayes, and claims he owns the street. We once saw him beat up AbdelSattar almost to death because AbdelSattar sat on a car and scratched it. Samir claimed that people trust him with their cars, and that he has very good relations with the neighborhood that now AbdelSattar is ruining. I discuss the chances of constructing homes on public spaces in the upcoming sections of this chapter.

Relationships and the construction of life:

"علي كتف صاحبي باتكي

وبابكي لو جوايا دمع يتبكي

انا ما فرحت الا بكي

ولا بكيت الا وكل الكون بكي

وحياتي مشوار الرحيل

منك لكي

يا طيبه

يا قاسيه القلب

في سكتك حتي العذاب يتحب"[35]

(علي كتف صاحبي باتكي، الابنودي)

There are many families who have built homes on the streets of Cairo. What does it mean to build a home on the streets? Physically; mattresses, blankets, large pieces of carton, or pavements make up for the bed. One small plastic bag for the clothes (and in very rare cases a full-on cupboard); I have seen several chairs but the overall majorities sit on pavements or on low fences surrounding small parks. Parks; under trees, or in between two large trees; can make up for rooms; taking advantage of the tree trunk to rest one's back on it; and its leaves to obscure the sun rays. But socially and emotionally; the family is so much more than what physically looks like a room, or a bed. The fact that the children call themselves brothers and sisters; younger children call older children "Baba/Aboya" and "Mama/omi"; says a lot about the complex relations that form on the street.

G: "Ya miss, I want you to meet my son, Adam"

M: "Gameel, You're too young to be a father"

I look at the son; who is eight years old, while gameel is eighteen; the maths does not add up.

M: "You had him when you were ten years old Ya Gameel?"

G: "I've been always strong ya Miss"

Gameel was not joking, he considers Adam as a son, and Adam calls him baba; Gameel protects him, gets him food and clothes; and makes sure that no one bothers him on the streets. When I asked him why he was doing so; he answered that Adam reminds him of himself when

[35] On my friend's shoulder I lean, and cry if I have tears in me. I was never happy without you, and never cried without the whole universe crying. My life is the journey to leave. From you to you. You kind soul, You stone hearted. Even on my way to you, torture is loved.

he was young; so uncared for, so lonely without protection. When we speak of the streets we speak of complex relations forming; but these complex relations only form due to the plasticity of the nature of surviving the streets of Cairo. Biehl describes plasticity as part and parcel of becoming; "The anthropology of becoming is about the plastic power of people, worlds, and thought—that is,"The power of specifically growing out of one's self, of making the past and the strange one body with the near and present" (Biehl, 4). This plasticity; to get out of one's self; is where I found potentialities in the stories of my interlocutors showing me how they insisted on living despite everything going against them to make sure they do not. Biehl echoes Deleuze's "Everything has a story"; by saying that we, anthropologists; tell stories of making life; " tell stories with instances of human becomings: people learning to live, living on, not learning to accept death, resisting death in all possible forms" (Beihl, 394). Learning to live is what interests me here; no one is born ready to survive the streets of Cairo. But the street children told me stories of the necessity to learn how to maneuver and survive the streets of Cairo. Karima recounted me her story;

"I am not a beggar, I have never been on the streets before I married him. He told me he was rich, he told me he comes from a good family. We got married and once I got pregnant; he told me I have to work and showed me how to work on the streets, how to beg. I do not belong here, but I learn every day. I was imprisoned for 4 months for Tasawol (begging); and I was torn while imprisoned because I left him, my babies. But do not worry about me, I have a plan. I am going to travel to Dubai."

—Maryam: "What will you do in Dubai?"

Karima: "I will work in a light stop in Dubai, to sell flowers. I need to make some money for my children and to get rid of my husband. I will travel with a friend who made 40000 pounds in only two months working as a flower seller."

—A social worker interrupted her, "Are you sure you would be selling flowers at light stops?"

Karima: "Yes, I swear. She is not into these things, and I am definitely not into these things (she meant prostitution)"

S.W: "Let me tell you this, no one sells anything at light stops in Dubai. This is definitely a scam"

Karima did not believe us, she insisted on the potential that she would get from going to be a street worker in Dubai. He gained experience from the streets, the potentialities that the streets of Cairo have given her; would all shatter if she would believe that being a flower street seller in Dubai is no longer a possibility. "People's transformations and varied agencies, and to the ways in which power itself is shifting and contingent—less a solid, stable entity than a product of manipulation, systematic falsehood, and ongoing struggle, and constantly punctured and put to flight by people's becomings. In this way, anthropology makes space for un-finished-ness, and bodies, power, and things do not remain frozen in place" (Biehl, 6).

The children always form groups; coming together for protection and solidarity; I never met a street child roaming Cairo alone. Therefore; on the streets, collectives form for a reason. Locke in the anthropology of becoming argues that; "The collective is an open space of ambivalence and contestation, where there is room for difference to be affirmed, tentative bonds to be formed, and shared frustrations to cross entrenched boundaries and mark out new ones." (Locke, 65) He also speaks of the people to come (Ibid); when I first met Hasnaa; she was holding a child; and speaking of her daughter, I assumed that the child is hers. But she later told me that the child is her friend's (Salwa) who is recently imprisoned. Salwa trusted Hasnaa with her own child; she did not trust her own original kin, and instead; thought that Hasnaa would be a fit carer. This showed me; the kind of relationships that form on the streets; new kin, new homes, and new people whom they consider siblings. Janet Carsten argues in an interview that kinship is "really about people's everyday lives and the way they think about the relations that matter most of

them." She extends her argument by abolishing the understanding of kinship as the biological or the secular family, and rather says that anyone can become kin, what matters is the relationship that is forged.

But complex relations do not form only between the children. It came to me as a shock; the kind of relationships that the children have with policemen. These relationships were based on exploitation; but also allowed the street children to maneuver their ways on the streets of Cairo. Bahaa recounts the following:

"I do not smoke Hashish on the streets, because it will only put me behind bars. I smoke one cigarette in the morning before I leave my home and the other when I get back. We rent this place from el Hay (municipal) for parking, we pay them by the hour. I, for example; have a shift from 8 am in the morning until 1 or 2 am of the following day; so I pay them 150 pounds per day; 100 for the morning shift and 50 for the night shift. We all gather the money and give to one of us to pay the government; so we pay around 15000 pounds a month. Some other people have a shorter shift; so they pay 75 or 50 or 100 pounds a day only. So we all agree on who will take which shift; we agree bel Hob (with love) because we are all brothers here. I do not wear what other Soyas wear; I am the Basha (boss) here (referring to a colorful vest); No one, and I mean no one can talk to me here. But when the Omanaa (policemen) pass by; they take money too. Maybe 50 pounds every time they pass. And if someone is taken to the precinct to wash the floors or clean; he takes five pounds from each one of us because he will miss his shift and will go clean the precinct; so it's unfair that he pays to the precinct on his own. We are all brothers here" (Maadi, July 2019)

What Bahaa told me reveals the relationship between the street children with the police; how the potentiality of labor only exists through their exploitation; but also how; they find true notions of coming together in supporting each other facing this exploitation. I believe that without the constant exploitation and policing; the street children would not have come together;

in support and in protection. The mere fact that they know what is it like to be exploited; to have your money taken from you after a long shift, to have to pay your exploiter money when illegally captured to clean a precinct; brings the street children closer.

But the same policemen sometimes, allow the street children to do things due to knowing them well. Sabrine, for instance; visits her husband every day in his cell in Sayda Zaynab precinct; with food and everyday street earnings. Every day, for the past year and a half; the private (the precinct, and the heavily policed) becomes inseparable from the public. Her husband gets to see their baby, every day; gets to eat different dishes, and is gaining money while imprisoned. This could only be possible because the policemen build strong ties with the street children; and this, allows for uncounted possibilities.

Embodiment of dirt and space of care:

”و الصوت الشايل فكرتنا

بتراب الشارع متحني“[36]

(الشيخ امام، اغنية حنغني)

When Cairo accumulates on your skin; you are the city, you are abandoned, and you are chaotic. “dirt is essentially disorder” (Douglas, 2). Dirt drives the passersby away, it makes them scared to touch the street child; scared to shake his/her hands. Cairo is made of dirt; you can smell it in the air, and feel it on your skin if you stay exposed on the streets. Aya Nassar’s article ‘Where the dust settles: fieldwork, subjectivity, and materiality in Cairo’ becomes crucial to understanding how dirt makes the city. She argues that she tells the story not of dust, but with dust. This echoes my quest for this section too. I used to know if my interlocutors have been recently cared for; for instance if they have been going back home or to a daycare center or to a shelter; from how much dirt is seen on their hands and bare feet. But dirt is also social, it’s what ties the street children to the

[36] The voice that supports our ideas is tattooed with the dirt from the streets.

city and what ties the city to the street children. It is social because it also brings the street children together. To not have clean skin is a form of abandonment. Both the city and the street children are abandoned, left to suffocate in the dirt. But the compiling of dirt on their skin also signifies the inability to access water, collectively. The dirt and therefore lack of water; lead to scabies, sores, lice, and cuts. Their bodies become sites of abandonment and lack of care; but they become bodies suffering together of the same condition; the embodiment of Cairo's dirt. "The sore on my body is not my sore" (Povinelli, 46). The scabies, the lice, and the sores are transmitted by touches, by close interactions, by being and living together on the streets of Cairo. The fact that most of the children on the streets of Cairo suffer from the above means that they are all living in close proximities; and coming together; making love, hugging, kissing, playing and sleeping next to each other despite knowing that this will result in bodies that are aching, itching and unwell. Douglas argues in Purity and Danger that; "purity and impurity create unity inexperience" (Douglas, 2). As dirt brings the city and the street children closer; it also brings the street children together; to form a unity; to be dirty and accepting of that dirt; to love one another despite the dirt that acts as a compulsory separator. "Our idea of dirt is compounded of two things, care for hygiene and respect for conventions." (Ibid) The society rejects those who are dirty, those who are living on the streets and are uncared for but who also never cared for dirt. Love and intimacy on the streets are not formed or based on looks or hygiene. The street children love, non-judgementally, and in spite of the dirt.

"I see Shaymaa el Kataa getting out of the mosque, she looks tired. I look closely, and she has a tiny baby on her ill arm; her Abaaya (Dress) is infiltrated with blood and what looks like white mucus. She is holding the umbilical cord on the other hand, and is looking for a knife to cut it. She walks towards us, and my first thoughts are —infections, baby too dirty, did she just give birth? She did. She gave birth in the bathroom inside the mosque. My tummy rumbles as I picture the act; she must be infected. She will get sick and the baby will die. But I later know this is her fifth birth in this bathroom, they're all fine; she argued. Sabrine convinces me that this is the

only space where Shaymaa can have her baby safely. She told me that all the women on the streets are there for whoever is giving birth. She said the hospitals do not take us, we are fine in the bathroom and we all stand with her; hold her hands, and help her push the baby out. A week later, I ask her about the newborn and she says he was kidnapped, the day before by someone whom they thought of as a friend. Shaymaa looked okay, she was used to this; not her first baby to be kidnapped" (Sayda Zaynab, December 2019)

The scene of giving birth in a mosque's bathroom is horrifying, a true crisis if we think of the conventional. I was thinking of all the risks of giving birth in a dirty abandoned bathroom as a crisis; yet what Sabrine was trying to tell me is; they were all there for each other; holding hands, breathing in and out; and bringing the baby into life. I walk the streets of Cairo during my fieldwork, I am encompassed with dirt and car exhaust making me unable to breathe. I find Omar sleeping on the floor; on the lap of his father smoking a cigarette. His face is at the same level as the car's suffocating fumes; with the cigarette smoke and the dirt on the street; I wonder how can he breathe while sleeping. I stare at his chest, and I wonder how small can a chest be, with his father's hand caressing his dirty hair; his chest goes up and down in a slow and an uninterrupted rhythm; as if the streets and the noise and the dirt and the smokes and fumes do not exist; they do not matter. He was sleeping on his father's lap; that was all that mattered at this point.

Dirt or dust becomes pivotal to understanding also the temporality of the city. "Dust is what remains after, even if it is usually what is not accounted for in the future" (Nassar, 2018). People usually throw away things they have outgrown; give books away to charity and dirty clothes to less privileged bodies. The dirt on the bodies of my interlocutors portrayed the disposability of the bodies which no longer needed. "In Arabic one of the meanings of dust (ghabara) is to pass, to grow old, and to be in the past" (ibid). The street children become the archives; their bodies carry out the stories of telling the city. The dirt that passes from the city to

their bodies, and from one's body to the other; ties them together and reserves memories and stories and writes histories that shall not be forgotten.

Affective feelings and the potentials in the ordinary:

"مالك باليل و الويل و الرعب

خليك يا حمام عايش للحب"

(احمد فؤاد نجم، اغنية في الليل)[37]

I have spoken of what constitutes the every day; in its repetitiveness and in how it is shaped on (and shaping) the streets of Cairo. But the every day is also about the ordinary; in which the street children daydream, feel, expect, and encounter things, all sorts of things. "The ordinary is a shifting assemblage of practices and practical knowledges, a scene of both liveness and exhaustion, a dream of escape or of the simple life" (Stewart, 2). Affective feelings become the mere factor of a continuation of the everyday life. Without those things; the production of life stops. Stewart argues that the every day, or the ordinary; is life getting by until something stops it, and then it gets by again. "We dream of getting by, getting on track, getting away from it all, getting real, having an edge, beating the system, being ourselves, checking out." (Ibid, 10) I wonder how the street children get by, what is their ordinary? Do they get real? Do they want to beat the system? Do they fight for being themselves? I want to challenge the notion of the ordinary in Stweart's "Ordinary Affects" while arguing that indeed the ordinary exists on the streets in Cairo for the street children; yet it is a completely different notion of an ordinary. The ordinary affect on the streets is in a realm of daydreaming, a pause, or an intimate moment. The ordinary affect is in the attachments to the small things, and the big things too. It is in the exhaustion of having to let go, always; of these daydreams and attachments and intimate moments. It is in the unliveable but animating desires (Ibid, 7); the constant desire of asserting one's humanity. The ordinary is affective and in its affectedness it is ordinary; it is in the daily enduring of the streets that life is formulated. Here the lines are blurry; is

[37] Why do you care for the night and the screams and the horrors? Please stay alive for love.

this chapter about optimism that I experienced on the streets of Cairo or the reality of its cruelty? I want to argue that I have found both optimism and cruelty; and that I echo Belrant's point of the optimism being itself cruel. The ordinary affect on the streets of Cairo varied from falling in love, to being raped and tortured. All ordinary, and all affective. Affect is an intensity, a force in which potentialities take place; I saw this the minute that the street children start to protect me from being questioned by a policeman on the streets; risking themselves, for me; it is a pause in time, an intimate moment of pure solidarity, in which they stand up for someone they barely know. The intensity also presents itself in the moments they choose to make love midst the noise of Cairo and its always awake streets. The park they choose or the roof of any abandoned building is a space of care; a space that is ruined yet yearns something intimate and beautiful. The street children have learned how to transform ugliness into beauty just as they transformed an abandoned roof into a space of love. Their affective feelings also grow stronger in their waiting, always waiting together, waiting for someone, something; a promise. Nada waits for her lover to be released from prison, for her baby to be born, and for her father to learn how to accept and love her. She is not waiting for the state to fall or for a big house and loads of money; her ordinary is spent waiting for what makes up her own life. She lives the every day, waiting for the next one; because the next day may bring her what she really dreams of. "extensive threats to survival are said to dominate the reproduction of life" (Berlant, 7). Nada's life is produced, and reproduced; through her every day in waiting. As Nada waits for the next day, other street children hold on the present moment; they do not want the day to end, they do not want to know what the next day will bring; because this precarity is threatening; and exhausting, and therefore; living each day as it passes is the force or the intensity they need to formulate a life, a different life; every day. "The present moment increasingly imposes itself on consciousness as a moment in extended crisis, with one happening piling on another." (Berlant, 7) Understanding the ordinary as an ongoing crisis; an extended crisis; found itself in my every conversation on the streets of Cairo.

Kamal: "My leg was swollen the last time you met me, remember? But it became better on its own; and then I discovered that I have a tumor under my neck. But I cannot go to Al-Asr El Einy (a governmental hospital) because all of the policemen know me there. I have to go to the Dokki precinct for a three-year parole sentence."

Maryam: "So you do not go?"

Kamal: "Of course I do not go; Ya Abla, the parole here needs money every day because I have to spend 12 hours inside eating and drinking and bribing everyone. It is a whole different story. I cannot even get any bershama (pills/drugs) to sell inside. I cannot risk another three years of my life for a pill. As long as I mind my own business, collecting garbage; no one approaches me and the time is passing until the three years are over. I have a year and a half to go and I am minding my own business and so I cannot go to the hospital even when I am hurting this much."

Social worker: "But you are risking so much by not going to the hospital and by being on the streets so near to the precinct! You can get caught!! Why don't you go somewhere else and work there?

Kamal's face turned red with anger; "This is my work!! We are collecting the garbage ya Doctor, يعني كمان هنتحبس و احنا بنلم زبالة؟ *(So we will be imprisoned even when we are collecting garbage?)"*

This is an ordinary event on the streets of Cairo. A crisis; of a dying child with cancer, who insists that his aim in life is to get past the next year and a half; and then, only then; he can go to the hospital and get treated. It is a crisis in all the ways that a crisis is. A crisis that is ongoing, extended; and ordinary. Berlant argues that the ordinary is a space for inventing new rhythms for living. In the case of Kamal, the new rhythms that create and produce his life are his labor; his collecting of garbage, and in these rhythms he speaks of getting to make friends who support him and who protects him when the police are near. He is living on the streets of Cairo, collecting its

garbage, escaping parole. So he was furious when a suggestion of an interruption of these rhythms was on the table. He was furious too, to be told, or reminded that he can go back to prison. Why would he? He must have thought. He wants to be left alone, neglected as much the city he helps clean is. “Crisis is not exceptional to history or consciousness but a process embedded in the ordinary that unfolds in stories about navigating what’s overwhelming” (Berlant, 10). The interjection of crisis and ordinariness; is what makes it possible to go through and survive the everyday.

The presence made through the absences:

”فى كل يوم بنزور مكان

وكل يوم بنزيد عدد

وكل يوم نفتح بيبان

وكل يوم بنزيل سدد

وكل يوم يطلع بُنا

وكل يوم ينزل هدد

وكل يوم نحبل غنا

وكل يوم نولد مدد

جوا السجون

برا السجون

إحنا كده

لازم نكون“

[38]” احمد فؤاد نجم ،اتجمعوا“

I started the chapter on mapping Cairo with the story of AbdelSattar daydreaming that he is Al Mahdy Al Montazar. I saw AbdelSattar again, mid-January 2019; I went to greet him and he did not

[38] In everyday we visit a place. In every day our number increases. In everyday we open doors. In everyday we remove dams. In everyday we build. In everyday ruins fall. In everyday we are pregnant with singing. In everyday we give birth to help. Inside the jails or outside; this is who we are. This is how we should always be.

remember me. He started talking right away and stopping mid sentences saying;

"You will certainly not understand me… What should I say? What should I say?" I tried to tell him that I do believe him and that he should keep on talking if he feels like it.

"I have seen Mohamed (Prophet) wearing a black attire, and in his hands was a phone with a touch screen ((āny rāyt mḥmd yrtdy rdāʾ āswdāٮw kān māsk fy ٱydh mwbāyl tātsh

"Do you want to know more? I have seen Shayateen (devils)

Want me to tell you something more? The Kabaa will be demolished and we will find underneath it a lot of water.

See, I told you. Let's stay the same and everything will go right"

The conversation beamed with life, or death; in how AbdelSattar sees the future, or sees himself in the very present moment; as someone who is not to be understood, as someone out of this world. He has constructed a life in which he lives, and in what seems like his "craziness"; he has been surviving the streets of Cairo.

But he told me he wanted out.

"See how the land has become? How can we grow any crops here? When I am in control I will make everything right again.

Do you know that El Masheekh El Dagal has a sign on his hands? I am telling you I will rule the earth.

What do you (in a collective tone) want? Why do you embody so much evilness?

I sleep where the dogs sleep. I get beaten every day. I will not go home because I am poor. I cannot face my family with my poorness. I know you will tell me to go to the shelter. Will they allow me to smoke Bango (weed) in the shelter? I do not think so.

Can you get me a piece of land? An empty one? I will harvest the land, grow my food, and my Hahsish and my Bango, and If I ever tell you I am hungry leave me there to die. I want to live

there to harvest and smoke Bango only. If I ever get hungry I will stick a knife in any rabbit and wait a bit and then eat and live my life to the fullest."

AbdelSattar was dreaming of the simple life, a life out of Cairo, away from the every day in poorness and in beatings. Stewart argues that the ordinary is "a dream of the escape or the simple life" (Stewart, 2). I want to argue that AbdelSattar was absent from Cairo. He was haunting the city with his dreams; he existed yet he did not; but he pushed himself into presence. Avery Gordon (2008, 135) in *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* argues that haunting is " an encounter in which you touch the ghost or the ghostly matter of things: the ambiguities, the complexities of power and personhood, the violence and the hope, the looming and receding actualities, the shadows of our selves and our society". AbdelSattar was haunting the city though being somewhere between the actual and the imaginary; the present and the dream, the now and the future. Naisargi dave (2017) argues that in the anthropology of becoming on his chapter Witness; "To witness, then, might best be understood as a radical interpenetration of life and death: to maintain a disciplined presence to violence that opens up a death that then compels a new kind of responsible life in a previously unimaginable skin" (Naisaragi, 158). AbdelSattar was dead; for the city, for the passersby, for the government that did not even want imprison a crazy person. He was dead and he was lonely; the only interlocutor who does not live in a group. Yet, he found life; in the realm of the dreams and beliefs he has been holding. He found and constructed a life; far away from the uncaring and uncared for the city; the city left in ruins; and in which his body also became a site of ruins, of beatings and of craziness. His life starts with his daydreaming of owning the world, or owning a small piece of land where he can smoke Bango and be left alone. AbdelSattar was the ghost haunting the city, he symbolised what is missing by holding on to his dream of escape. He represented loss that is intertwined with hope. For "the future is always experienced as a haunting: as a virtuality that already impinges on the present, conditioning expectations and motivating cultural production" (Fisher, 16).

AbdelSattar painted a city in crisis; one where he believes no crops will ever grow and which can produce no goods. Yet, this same city in crisis was constructed as a space in which dreaming becomes a possibility for an otherwise. A crisis suggests an ongoing state of affairs (Weeks, 2), and a non-linear time/space in which both crises and hopes exist and through which life can also be constructed.

Insisting on Love:

"ما احلى الكلام الحب اوقات الشقا"[39]

احمد فؤاد نجم

Catarina in Beihl's Vita wrote that; "I make love in my mind to scare the cold"(Biehl, 325). Making love, finding love, and falling in love are pivotal to the understanding of the streets of Cairo. Love, in my opinion; was always needed to survive the streets; my interlocutors live for so many things, but they cannot live without love. Love is a force fighting abandonment. "We don't know what it means to be alive except for the following fact, that a body is something that enjoys itself" (Lacan 1998:23). In love, in sex, in writing, "Catarina approached the reality of being a thing left to die" (Beihl, 122). Aymon Keril (2016) in his article 'territories of desire: a geography of competing intimacies in Cairo' argues that love is a desire that can be found outside the realm of the Egyptian families. In a later book called 'Reinventing love? Gender, Intimacy, and Romance in the Arab world' he argues "Romantic love has the ability to reshape pre-existing family order and group boundaries" (Keril, 17). Insisting on love on the streets of Cairo meant a reshaping and a restructuring of socially constructed ideas of love within certain nuclear families.

Every Street child I met had a love story they always brought up; like in the case of Gana and Ahmed wanting to get married and have the biggest wedding on the streets; their story did not end there. He told me on another filed visit that he was too sad for not always being able to

[39] What's better than love talk in times of hardships?

protect Gana; and that he feels like a failure; a failure in his love to Gana, because a night before she was harassed "A boy put his hand in her butt while she was sleeping. I felt like I failed because she has no one to protect her, she has no home; and I really love her, I do; but I cannot protect her all the time". Later that night, we were coloring and they exchanged their painting, promising to keep them forever in their pockets. Ahmed constructed his life around his love to Gana; she gives him a reason to be, and with her; he plays the role of the protector, the friend, the listener and the lover; a role he was never offered before and in which he can give her things he, himself, never got from his family who abandoned him. Badiou argues that love is in threat; precisely for its denial of its importance. But the street children know the importance of love, of an intimate touch; that they sometimes do whatever it takes to keep feeling loved, and through that; to be able to survive Cairo.

I met Samar in Agouza on one field visit; and she decided to recount her story of being in love; with two men. Why love was so important for Samar that she could not live on the streets of Cairo without it?

"I married Sameh four years ago, and had two kids with him. It was an official marriage and I felt I was one of the lucky ones. He told me he will bring me the world, and loved me dearly. I loved him too. We used to work all day together, holding hands, kissing behind trees, and running around to steal one or two moments of intimacy. But I asked him for a house, isn't it my right? He could have asked his family for rent money, we could have even lived with them. When I got pregnant with my first child, I could no longer stand the streets. He started not showing me love. I don't know what to tell you or how to explain this. Men El Akher, Batal Ynam Maaya (Put bluntly, he stopped sleeping with me.) I wanted to feel loved, I wanted sex. I told him we should have a divorce… But he refused, for two years I begged him to let me go. I did not want to do something bad like the ones we hear about; this lady killing her husband or the other giving him poison. By that time, I had met Mohsen, who loved me truly. I loved him too, and I started

sleeping with him. I got pregnant from him, while my husband thinking it was from him; he never doubted me although we slept together once a year. But he did not love me, he did not care for me. Finally, my mom persuaded him to divorce me, she begged and begged. And he did. Now I am married to Mohsen, but his son is not his son, on papers I mean. I cannot change the papers because I had him when married to Sameh. Do you get me? They will imprison me for Zena (adultery). But I am happy now, with the man who loves me and who cares for me. He showed me another world. Can I tell you something? Anything? Tell me first are you married?? No? Okay, I will tell you anyway; what I enjoy the most in sex is when he plays with me… you know, with his fingers. He tells me he loves me. Over and Over again. He tells me he cannot live without me. I cannot live without him too. I am loved and I am happy. Do you know what I am talking about?"

Love was pivotal to the street children because it made them feel wanted. To feel wanted is important to the street children because they are always dealing with being abandoned by their original kin. My interlocutors were seeking love in every opportunity that they had, I felt it deeply, in how my interlocutors treated and looked at each other. Love made them fell human, protected, and happy. With everything that is preoccupying their lives; love was a pause in time in which everything else stopped. Love made the city slow down. I believe by now I have established how traumatic it is to live on the streets of Cairo. What love does, is to rupture this ongoing and repetitive traumatic experience; making the city, the streets worth living. Although it is important to say that love can be traumatic itself. I have spoken of instances in my thesis where relationships on the streets end and break the hearts of those who were involved. Love can be both traumatic and it can help sustain the traumas of the every day life in Cairo. Berlant adds; "Trauma confounds the subject's censor, substituting its own wild aesthetic of distortion and repetition, and at the same time provides for the now impossible subject a counter-traumatic grandiosity that both harms and preserves her" (Berlant, 155).

I am interested in what love does to street children. What does love offer that is different from hope for instance? Love was about the present moment; feeling happy now, protected now, and satisfied now. Hope had a futuristic temporality that the street children appreciate, but do not really look forward to as much as they do with love. The temporality of love in the present constructed the city that is also worth living in the present, with a total nonchalance of a future. Berlant's point on misrecognising love for something else stayed with me at the beginning of my ethnography; "Mis-recognition describes the psychic process by which fantasy recalibrate what we encounter so that we can imagine that something or someone can fulfill our desire: its operation is central to the state of cruel optimism. To mis-recognise is not to err, but to project qualities onto something so that we can love, hate, and manipulate it for having those qualities—which it might or might not have" (Berlant, 122).

Was I mis-recognising trauma for love? Abandonment for intimacy? Emptiness for Desire? I wasn't. All of these existed on the streets as much as trauma, death, abandonment and emptiness existed. They existed because of each other and not in spite of each other. Everything exists in relation to another; Love, hope, and desire exist because trauma, abandonment and emptiness exist. I remember Sabrine's tattoo with her lover's name; she had experienced love, desire, and hope by being in a relationship with el Berazili, but also, she talks about knowing love in relation to abandonment. She would tell me how she expected that El Berazili's love would make up for all the abandonment and the trauma she experienced in her life. Life is reproduced because death is also reproduced. If death is fast-paced, life is made slow through those moments of love I have spoken of in this chapter. Love makes the rhythms of the city worth living. The broken bodies of street children are restored when falling in love. Samir, a twenty-year-old I met in Heliopolis, told me he wishes for nothing but to stay in love with his girlfriend. This narrative repeats itself in almost all of my conversations with my interlocutors. Love makes life on the streets of Cairo a lot less traumatic, and a lot more hopeful.

Badiou argues against the mythical interpretation of love as “a magical moment outside the world as it really is” (Badiou, 30). He speaks of the impossibility of lovers becoming one, and not two different persons and argues that in fact, love is a construction that needs time, a duration, for it to flourish. But the kind of love I saw on the streets was the mythical love we see in movies; emotions are so strong momentarily but changing all the time. The freedom that the street allows is also a freedom from the capitalist notion of the commodified love that lasts, forever; which ends with marriage and a bunch of kids. Love on the streets; may not “triumph lastingly, sometimes painfully, over the hurdles erected by time, space and the world” (Ibid, 32). Love was easy and falling in love, or out of love was an event that happened interchangeably and differed each day. I met interlocutors who told me one week they were extremely in love, to the point of planning a life together, and then met them a week later; saying they were now in love with a whole different person. The city’s rhythms slow down; and it’s no longer absconding anymore; because even when one love story ends, the potentialities of the streets allow for another. But I can never argue that it is not real love. Sabrine tattooed her arm herself with ink from an old pen and a rock to make the blood clot, with the name of her lover; el Berlazili. When we met she told me how much she used to love him, but that she no longer did, and was proudly in love with another man. In one moment, for the street children; this feeling of love felt more real than anything. And in another moment, they felt like they are no longer in love, and needed to have that feeling with someone else. Badiou argues that the time love is endured is what matters. “Love invents a different way of lasting in life. That everyone’s existence, when tested by love, confronts a new way of experiencing time” (Ibid, 33). Love recreates life; on the streets of Cairo; in short periods of time or in long ones. It did not stop being love; and it never will.

Space of Care and Indifference:

”لما الليالي بيتخنق فيها القمر

يمشي الصديق في الظلمه
يخبط في الصديق
والسكه بنت الخطوتين
تاخذ سنه"
"احمد فؤاد نجم ،اتجمعوا"[40]

"It hurts to live always undone and unfinished. It is heart-breaking. It is heartbreaking even when the impossibility is joyful or you catch a glimpse of a life outside that inflexible weight (McKittrick and Weheliye, 28). This is how AbdulMaliq Simone starts his "The Uninhabitable" in improvised lives. "Life needs to be held, supported" (Simone, 4). How is life held on the streets of Cairo? Is life really undone and unfinished? Are moments of love, desire, and intimate moments of impossibilities? Moments of ruptures that are eventually always captured? Life is held in focusing on the everyday. Not focusing on what is coming tomorrow or what might not becoming. This is exactly what the street children do in order to endure a life, even when improvised; on the streets of Cairo. Simone goes on by arguing that; "the uninhabitable as a method to think about these rhythms of endurance" (Ibid, 10). And the street children endure a lot, they endure life and death with everything that comes in between. How they endure is what is important for me in this chapter. I argued earlier that they endure because they find spaces and moments in which they find love, desire, and intimacy. But the streets are also spaces in which care can be carved out. "It is a care that makes it possible for residents to navigate the need to submit and exceed, submerge themselves into a darkness in which they are submerged but to read its textures, its tissues, to see something that cannot be seen" (Ibid, 20). And care on the streets of Cairo is only an option through those improvisations of lives; going every day as the day goes, not thinking about anything but the current moment. Finally, it is important to echo Biehl's point on care opening up new possibilities of "interpersonal relations, desire, imagination van sometimes, and against all odds, result in surprising

[40] When the nights which the moon suffocates, the friend walks away in the dark, tabs on every friend, and the journey that only takes two days, will take a whole year.

swerves and futures, even when our liberal projects of the good life writ large have turned into "cruel optimism." (Beihl, 43)

"We play poker at night. I know you will say it's haram. But I swear we play it only after breaking our fast in Ramadan.

This is how we make money while having fun" (Kareem, July 2019)

I see that coming together to play poker is one way in which the children endure and survive the streets of Cairo. Kareem's argument was clear; they wanted to play but at the same time not feel too guilty about not making money. In other stances; I found care proliferating without me asking about it; there was no need for me to look for how care is constructed on the streets of Cairo and in groups of street children;

"Tentacky, Tentacky!! Today we eat Tentacky" Amir ran to Maryam; who was working across the street. His happiness of getting some leftovers from KFC was all over the space. What he got, I later knew; was two halves of eaten sandwiches, a pack of fries that was cold and mushed and almost a quarter of a Pepsi can. Probably food that people could not eat and were too reluctant to throw away. What is the difference between the trash and the hungry street children? I am sure the passerby felt good about himself making those children happy. But what caught my attention was; the fact that Amir shared the food with Maryam when he could have eaten it on his own and she wouldn't have noticed. But he wanted to share the meal; they sat across from each other on a pavement, and got all the food out. They ate quickly, drank quickly; smiled and then started running after each other playfully. I would like to think that these moments are the moments where care is shown without having to pronounce words of love or of intimacy. Sharing a meal, playing together, and taking care of each other was all that was needed to make a hard day's work on the streets of Cairo a liveable day, a day the children can endure.

If love is momentarily, and if care is improvised; then it must be done through indifference. The Street children's other method of endurance is the indifference they have towards many

aspects on the street; many of them would argue they do not care about moving around different spaces, about finding a new group on the streets, about falling in love with a different person. This indifference gives room for a recreation of life when one plan fails or when one day goes wrong. The indifference lies in the temporality of the now; knowing that every moment passes, and in hoping that the next moment would be better, kinder, and liveable.

Conclusion:

”و الخامسة الي افتري حتما يبات مغلوب

الظلم يوم لو حكم و الحق يوم لو هان

يحرم عليك المطر و الفي والعمران

النور يغور من السماء، وجه القمر ما يبان

و الشوف يضيع في السما و الضلمة و الاحزان“[41]

(احمد فؤاد نجم، العنبرة)

Hope is a dangerous thing. But it exists on the streets of Cairo; cruel; but its cruelty is stemming from the fact that it is easily captured. The street children accept this capturing, because they care about the very moment in which hope hits them; stemming from inside of them; in a collective moment; and with it indifference arises; if it ends it ends. Hope manifests itself in falling in love, in constructing spaces of love, spaces for making love, for constructing a home, for constructing a family. Samuli Schielke (2015, 227) in his book ‘Egypt in the Future Tense: Hope, Frustration, and Ambivalence Before and After 2011’ argues, “having power over one's condition, being able to do something in a world of overwhelming powers and unpredictable destiny, is an authentic human desire”. The street children hold on to the desire of having the power to love. The author also traces the hopes of his interlocutors, and one of these hopes is to find love. Love gives

[41] And fifth, the exploiter will certainly sleep be defeated. If the injustice ever rules, and if the justice was ever underestimated; the rain will never belong to you. The light goes from the sky, the face of the moon never appears. The sight will be lost in the sky and in darkness and in sadness.

the street children a reason why, every day; they choose to make a life instead of submitting to the deaths worlds. “The intensity of erupting events draws attention to the more ordinary disturbances of everyday life” (Stewart, 74). Events on the streets are indeed intense; so many stories and hopes and desires; all crushed and captured but made and remade; always, and every day. The institution that cares is the same institution that kills. The shelter that acts as a safe haven for the children to go and escape the cruelty of the streets is no more than a prison (According to most of my interlocutors) in which hope, excitement, and optimism no longer exist. What would you get excited for being confined into an institution of rehabilitation which believes that everything that is wrong with this world is embodied in tiny bodies they call and categorize as “children in street situations”. On the contrary; the streets are spaces of freedom; where anticipation, excitement and surprises take place. They are spaces that even when being chased by the police; regardless of how scary; makes the children thrilled with adrenaline. The streets of Cairo are spaces in which lines of flight exist; where improvisations, freedoms, captures, love, desire, and intimacy do exist; interchangeably. Falling in love, desiring, and being hopeful are all feelings that are coming from inside of the street children; they are feeling that they own, and that no one else can appropriate. The powers (State or society) cannot touch what’s inside of their hearts; they cannot capture it indefinitely; because it is aways produced and reproduced in different shapes and different temporalities and spaces. To be able to still love, despite everything; is what makes life possible on the streets of Cairo.

Conclusion:

But The Story Never Ends:

”و الحكاية مبنتهيش، لطفل جوايا كان نفسه في يوم يعيش“[42]

(Hany Adel, from the movie Tito)

I wish time could slow down, or rewind. I certainly do not want this to end. I learned, and always believed; that my fieldwork would never leave me. But what do I do now? In times of crises; what is expected of me, as an anthropologist in the making (under-construction in the Deleuzian sense), a researcher, and a human being connected to a street, an interlocutor; whom I can never really help? Biehl in the anthropology of becoming argues that; “anthropology makes space for unfinished-ness, and bodies, power, and things do not remain frozen in place” (Biehl, 6). This thesis brought about a range of arguments that I believe produce an understanding of Cairo that was not explored before. Cairo was written and produced from several groups constituting the city, but it was never told from the point of view of the street children. My main aim for this thesis was to reconstruct and rewrite the production of the city from the point of view of the street children. I argued that to do the latter I needed to map the city. I started by asking who are the street children and how do they construct the city? I then argued that tracing death on the city could help the readers understand how the street children are constructed as a category. After unpacking and mapping death and life on the streets of Cairo, I asked what is labor and how does it help the readers understand Cairo? Finally, I was interested in understanding what love, hope, care, desire do for the street children and the construction of the city. I traced the temporality and the spatiality of the city throughout my arguments.

But the story never ends, for the kid in me that just wanted to live. [42]

There is little to almost no writing on the historical emergence of the street children as a category, or even when was the term invented. Fahmy (2007) argues that in 1993, Egyptian officials did not recognise the term as a phenomenon worthy of study. The concerns of the UNICEF and ILO were trivialised and the officials argued that, "there were only a limited number of children and youth to be found roaming the streets of Cairo; they were well known to security officials and the situation was under control" (Fahmy, 89). Due to the limited resources on numbers ever since, Fahmy could only induce that in 1993 there were 2.5 million children who live under poverty line (out of a total of 5 million Egyptians living under poverty lines) and hence constitute a pool for generating a street children phenomenon. I believe that this is worthy of study, of investigating, and of not getting to be dismissed.

Being on the streets, hearing the stories, listening, and writing this thesis —I like to believe; created the open space of becoming that Beihl spoke of. The open space of becoming is that every story in this thesis has a continuation; even in death; there is always something extra happening. My research was of an ethnographic matter; through which I tried to stay connected to "open-ended, even mysterious, social processes—a way of counterbalancing the generation of certainties and foreclosures by other disciplines" (Ibid, 10). I could not have done my research any other way particularly because when I started thinking about my topic; I had several beliefs that turned to be far from the truth. I had believed that the children would feel confined in open spaces. My very first day on the field I discovered that they seek confinement; always trying to get in the NGO van and wanting to close the door. I later discovered that I was creating a theory in my head, that sounded interesting but was not true whatsoever. This is why ethnographies are important; we get to see a world that shatters all our strong beliefs about life. This is why one needs to be brave enough to admit when wrong, and to accept his/her world-shattering. I chose Cairo because it acted as mutual space between my interlocutors and I; and we both delved in a long journey of understanding the city; the conquerer, the Almighty. I want to move beyond

Cairo, and the idea of the street children as only bare lives. I believe this thesis should be moved beyond the story of place and Cairo; it should be the focus of anyone who wants to understand the non-linearity of time; the rhythms of death that make life possible. This thesis explores the duration in which hope gets to be constructed as present and yet to realise, in which dreams are haunting, creating spaces of potentia midst the layers of privileges that are taken away from the street children. The stories shared in this thesis are both the silences and the screams, that rupture and change the fixity of spaces, and the linearity of time.

"It is time to attribute to the people we study the kinds of ambiguities and complexities we acknowledge in ourselves, and to bring these dimensions into the critical knowledge we craft and circulate" (Biehl, 42). As a subject in the greater realm of things; and as an anthropologist in the making, I anticipated and invented; and hence, my desires and the desires of my interlocutors were one. If we do not get out alive from the killer virus, I would be certainly glad that I got to meet Cairo, even if shortly; however, I would be enterally grateful for getting to meet those who made me see and understand Cairo, the street children.

My thesis was the product of an ethnographic fieldwork on the streets of Cairo aiming at understanding how the street children live, die, work, and comprehend/see the city of Cairo. In my first chapter I start by mapping the streets of Cairo by tracing exhaust of bodies and spaces. I had noticed during my fieldwork that there was an entanglement of bodies and spaces in which both feel exhausted. I wrote about dreaming in exhausted spaces, about marginality in exhaust, about the fear that turn spaces exhausted and about waiting that is also always producing notions of exhaust. In the chapter "Mapping Cairo, Mapping lives"; I am interested in the category production or the production of the subject that hegemonic discourses succeed in doing with the street children. This chapter also traces exhaustion as a rhythm that produces exhausted bodies of

street children in exhausted spaces (Cairo.) I argue that the bodies of street children are both precarious and marginal, but they find spaces in which they dream and create an alternate reality, the otherwise. I propose that the bodies of street children are then turned into archives to traumas, as well as memories. Fear is also an integral part of understanding and reproducing the city; and the spaces in which the street children live are full of moments if fear, waiting, and exhaust. Concluding this chapter; I reconnect with the dreaming and the possibility of the creation of another world that is not accepted by society. This other world is a world of freedom, one that does not abide by the societal's rules of how one should live.

My second chapter "Mapping death on the city of the dead" traced the rhythms and the infrastructure of killable bodies. I asked what is a death world and how is it created on the streets of Cairo? I then introduced the street children as the killable and ungrievable bodies living the streets of Cairo. I argue that death and life are both precarious; but they merge, they meet in their precariousness, always. I end this chapter by introducing the potentialities that arise from being the killable body and in living the death world. How can you live death? How does one feel while dying? Does someone know that they are dying? These are the question I would indulge in in the future; when expanding on this chapter. Am Masnour told me about that kid who died on the street, his eyes flipped, his body twitched, and his mouth leaked saliva and foam. His brother had to take a video of his last moments alive. This encounter with death inspired me to later build on my chapter.

My third chapter "The Everyday Cairo: Labour, Discipline, and Drugs on the streets of Cairo" argued that labor was always an integral part of living on the streets of Cairo. So in writing about labor, I started with an overarching idea of the everyday. I studied the repetitiveness of the every day in Cairo. I delved into an understanding of discipline and securitization that is constructed by both time and space, an understanding of inequality on the streets of Cairo; being a sex worker, or having sex forced on your body. I also highlighted drugs

as another integral part of the working every day on the streets of Cairo; and I wondered what do drugs do? Do they create an alternative world, a way out? Or do they make the body able to survive the working day; numbing it; as much as the city does? I end with creating an understanding of how the street children produce themselves and their city respectively through their every day laboring experiences. This chapter on labor can be expanded by researching other modes of work; the limitations of the short time of fieldwork only allowed me to see laborers who work as beggars, Soyas, car cleaners, tissue box sellers, sex workers, and garbage collectors. I want to know if other labor opportunities arise on the streets and what happens as they age on the streets; what is the kind of labour they do? I also briefly argued that there are children who live on the streets but do not work; I have seen only one or two children who were able to do that because this was not the focus of my fieldwork. I believe that by focusing on this aspect of living without work; new perspectives of living the streets of Cairo can also arise.

My fourth and last chapter "Making life: Love and Becoming on The Streets of Cairo" is the chapter I referred to at the very beginning of my conclusion; the chapter on becoming and love on the streets of Cairo. I wrote this chapter after almost a whole month of a lockdown; and in a lockdown all sorts of emotions are entangled with the void and silent space that is my room. My main argument was that there is love and becoming as much as there are struggles. I argue that I do not see them as separate but rather as formative of each other. It is only due to the struggles that love and becoming and making a life on the streets of Cairo were possible; but not in the sense that struggles and hardships are combated with love and hope; no. Crises coexist with becoming. If I were to personify them; I would see them walking the streets of Cairo, holding hands, hugging, and cuddling themselves to sleep. I am by no means romanticizing rape or abandonment or precarity; But I am only arguing that these notions all exist in relationship to love, hope, and intimacy. How can we ever know what abandonment is if we had never experienced love? In this final chapter; I decide to speak of the instances of constructing a life

midst the ruins. I write about hope that is momentarily and only concerned with the very present moment and not interested in a far fetched tomorrow. I also write about the notion of home; what does it mean to construct a home on the streets of Cairo? How and when can the private and the public overlap? I am interested in the notion of the ordinary; what are the affective feelings that can be found there? I tie this to the notion of dirt; which is pretty ordinary and in its ordinariness it is tying the street children to the city and to each other. I ask how relationships are formed on the streets; constructing groups and families, but also making friends of their enemies; the policemen. I also ravel upon an understanding of what is love, sex, and intimacy on the streets of Cairo? My overall argument is to unpack what love does to the street children and the construction of the city of Cairo. Through which I unpack notions of both care and indifference on the streets of Cairo.

In moments of a pandemic; new questions and quests of understanding the streets of Cairo arise. Is death the same? Is love the same? Is the holding on to life, and the creation of a life the same? I believe we write from specific moments of time, and I do not want to turn my thesis into a speaking of a moment of history that indeed affects but that will also soon stop. But since also this conclusion is written in a specific moment of history; I cannot but think about questions of privileges, class struggles, and poverty. These are not things I particularly pay attention to in my thesis for the limitation of time, fieldwork and publication size; but they are concepts that I believe are important, and will be important in a couple of months when we move past the fact that we had just been through a pandemic. Since all moments exist in the same moment; what will matter in a few months or years matters now and mattered in the past. Understanding the notion of privilege is not a result of the pandemic but it intensifies with it. Who has the privilege of a lockdown, of abiding to curfews, of getting into a hospital? What are the class notions here; in which certain classes are expected to have the rhythms of their lives unchanged; so they continue to serve the superior classes staying home? How does poverty still

exploit, kill, and create the ungrievable bodies, not only the state; but the mere fact that one is living in dire poverty also means that one gets to be killed, and become ungrievable? These are questions that are the products of this moment and every moment that I wish I get to answer one day. Lastly, I decided to put poems before each section in each chapter that speak to me throughout writing this thesis. The poems are in Arabic; they bring me back to the reality of my fieldwork, all conducted and felt in Arabic. I hope the poems speak to the readers what they spoke to me, and make them feel what they made me feel; overwhelmed with the accuracy of my voice being echoed in poems written so many years ago.

Afterword:

It is three am in the morning. Although in a lockdown one starts losing track of time, and days and spaces. I sleep in my room to wake up and find myself on the couch. I feel lost. I open up my laptop as I open my eyes. My laptop is my new best friend; I take it with me wherever I go and it makes me feel rested and rooted when the world doesn't look the same anymore. I am writing about love on the streets of Cairo. My eyes start to water and I try to hold back my tears. "How can you do this?" The voice in my head is angry. How can you write about love when the children are dying to an enemy they cannot see to even stand up against? I delete the word love and decide to write about hope. Tears are streaming down my face. "You cannot be seriously writing about love and hope and sex when you do not know what is it like to be on the street right now, with nowhere to be lockdown in, with no protection, with no care whatsoever." I leave my laptop, unable to write a word. I read on twitter "This is the first time in so long that everyone around the world is feeling the exact same thing welcome to the first democratic virus". Bullshit. I say out loud this time. Bullshit. Our lockdown cannot be compared to being left on the street, abandoned; hearing about a killer virus, and knowing that sooner or later you will be killed; if not by the state or the abandonment or the state of abandonment; it's by the virus you'll never know infiltrated your lungs and made it harder for you to breathe. I am now on the bathroom floor; crying my eyes out and hoping no one will hear me. I feel helpless. And I do not want to thank God for being locked up at home. I want to ask God too many things; why and when will this end? Not for me but for them. Not about the virus, but about life. I am crying and unable to breathe; is this how one feels dying with a virus colonizing one's lungs? How is this virus any different from the dirt and the smoke and the car exhaust that colonizes their lungs? I try to stop myself from crying by saying they were always dead. And when this is over they will always be dead.

I wake up the next day, and leave my faraway isolated and protected home. The streets stay unchanged. The virus must have not visited yet. Or better yet, it must have visited but found too many deaths and abandonment and indifference and life that it thought; "there's no place for me here. My work is long done". I park my car and one of my oldest interlocutors comes running to shake my hand. My body did not hesitate for that interaction although in my mind the voice grew stronger; "you're getting your dad sick". I shake her hand and we talk for a bit. More street children join and shake my hand; I ask them if they know about the virus and they nod, indifferently. I ask them what do you do to take care of yourself "We try to leave work early; around five pm" My face stay unchanged, angry and worried I ask; where do you go? "We go back home, in this park"; they laugh.

A man comes out of the supermarket, he is wearing a face mask and gloves. He is giving Salah money for the parking spot. The man is sweet and wants to say thank you; so he lowers his mask and kisses the money and gives it to Salah. Salah takes the money and kisses it back, and then puts it in his pocket.

Maryam, who is only four years old, gets one pound from a passerby; and the first thing she does was put the whole bill in her mouth.

I ask them what does the police do to them during the Curfew?

"They go around trying to catch us"

"Has anyone been caught yet?"

"Most of our friends are. That's why we hide in the park"

The situation remains unchanged. I cry more than usual but that is okay. I try to get my writing done and pray for my interlocutors not to die just yet. I go back and write about love and hope and sex; because life on the streets stays unchanged. The virus is only scaring the rich.

If the world is really ending; I am glad I am writing this. The problem was always us. We are scared because we do not know what tomorrow brings; which is exactly how the children have been living; but never caring about what tomorrow brings. I have always dreamt of a revolution that topples all systems, that changes life as we know it. I do not know what this virus brings. The only thing I know holding hands with the virus is the notion of loss. And with every revolution there's always the risk of loss, right? I know I am scared for my interlocutors as I have been scared since the very first day of fieldwork when I have already heard the word death more than any other word. I was always scared to lose them. And my fear was in place. I have faced the death of interlocutors (and children whom I like to call friends) more than I thought my body is capable of. My short journey on the streets of Cairo also taught me that life and death are always in a conversation with each other. This is why I started with death and ended on life; in a revocation of how I thought the order of things is. But it came to my realization that there is no particular order of things; life or death are just words or concepts or theories we think we know; yet, soon enough we realize that there is no order whatsoever.

This thesis also has no order, and I still do not know how or when it was written. What I know is; I cannot bring myself to conclude it. I have thought that my aim is to bring the stories of the street children to life; but what actually happened was that their stories revived me. The stories were and will always be living in me and in this thesis; but they stay open-ended; there still is room for change and potentialities and fights to be fought. This thesis is the product of so many tears and laughs and shocks. I will always be grateful to the things my interlocutors have taught me, and will forever wish that they at least remember me.

We shared Cairo, as a home; more theirs than it is ever mine. Yet, I have seen a completely different Cairo during my fieldwork. Cairo, the abandoned city; the city that is always under construction, under renovations; raped with too many bridges that do not connect, but rather separate; resonates with me, stays in my heart; and is loved; despite its ugliness and constant

exhaustion. I believe this love grew stronger during my fieldwork, as I got to meet a Cairo that was different from the one outside the windows of my car. I was introduced to the Cairo that is a home for abandoned street children, who are also always abandoning structures they feel confined into. The Cairo I got to meet; did not always accept me. I remember days of being stuck in traffic, anxious I won't make it to the NGO that connects me with my interlocutors on time. It was suffocating, with the dirt and the ants crawling over my body for sitting too much on pavements. And my body did not accept it as well. My body was furious; too cold on winter nights and forcing me to wear too many jackets to be able to go through fieldwork, and too hot, sweating on summer nights; dwelling on a dream of taking a shower. It ached, for days; and revolted by making itself numb; literally with anxiety crawling into my nerves and making all sensations stop. I was numb, and made myself numb; on the inside as well as on the outside; to be able to go through this journey. While I talked about stories of rape, I apologized to my school mates about having to listen to me; but never really felt the magnitude of everything until the very moment of having to conclude this. Now I recall the stories and cry, endlessly; as if I was holding myself from feeling anything. I have this heavy feeling on my chest, and then remember how I went home every day; unable to breathe, and then numbing the pain away, and breathing regardless. We always breathe, regardless.

Maryam Hisham

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