Beyond Partition: A Topology of *al-Shatat* in Post-Palestinian Cinema

Robert G. White

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Kingston University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

February 2019

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of seven years' work, and its successful conclusion is down to the support of many. First of all, I would like to thank my supervision team, Dr Hager Weslati and Dr Corin Depper, whose support, guidance, time and generosity steered me through sometimes rough seas to completion. Colleagues at the London Graduate School also provided invaluable feedback and advice throughout the research process.

My thanks also go to the filmmakers featured in this thesis, who have been generous with both their time and access to their films, for which I am eternally grateful.

Finally, my loving thanks to my family, who have sustained me through the ups and downs of a part-time PhD for the best part of a decade. To my parents, Carole and Paul, whose support has been unwavering. And of course, to my wife, Gaia, who endured this sometimes unruly 7-year houseguest, and whose love, patience, inspiration and clear-eyed sense of perspective was invaluable.

Thesis abstract

This thesis argues against two persistent tendencies in scholarship on contemporary Palestinian cinema: the reductive framing of Palestinian subjectivity as an 'image of resistance', and the framing of Palestine-Israel as radical enmity. Departing from the notion of the 'untimely' in 'contemporaneity', the corpus of films in this thesis displaces 'images of resistance' from a unifying (and homogenising) cinematic aesthetic and politics to the topological field of the 'resistance *of* the image' and 'resistance *to* partition'. The congruence of these resistances lies in a double critical deconstruction of the Israeli state and Palestinian Authority, both for their respective empty signifiers of oppression and resistance, and their bureaucratic management of the status quo. The proposed shift from images of resistance to resistance of images disrupts a binary opposition of Palestinian cinema to its Israeli counterpart.

The theoretical framework developed in this thesis is interdisciplinary in its scope. The concept of a resistance of the image draws on both a literary genealogy (Emile Habiby, Ghassan Kanafani, Edward Said and Jean Genet) and on a cinematic genealogy (the PLO's Palestine Film Unit and Godard and Pasolini's 'resistant images' of Palestine). The question of resistance to partition is framed through the photo-essay of Edward Said, the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, and the critical work of Ella Shohat and Gil Hochberg. The relation between law, territory and partition is framed through the work of Giorgio Agamben, Eyal Weizman and Stuart Elden.

The films discussed in this thesis, their shared film aesthetics, allow for a thinking of the political *otherwise*, insofar as they explicitly question the contemporary political stasis—in the Agambian double sense of both political stagnation but also a taking of factional stands—underscoring a logical impossibility of the very idea of partition.

Drawing on theoretical insights from the topological orientations in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Giorgio Agamben, the thesis is organised around what I call 'a topology of *al-shatat* (dispersal), a spatial methodology to think both the non-identical and continuous relation of discrete territorial topologies of Palestinian cinema and the liminal zone of indistinction between Palestinian and Israeli cinema. The topology of *al-shatat* situates the cinematic spaces and subjectivities of Palestine-Israel in a four-fold topological field: the interior (*al-dakhil*), the West Bank, estrangement (*al-ghurba*) and the camp (*al-*

mukhayyam). Each element of this topology is explored through a selected corpus of post Second Intifada filmmaking, including the work of Kamal Aljafari, Annemarie Jacir, Elia Suleiman, Amos Gitai and Udi Aloni. The *encounter* between *Arab al-dakhil*, the exilic/diasporic Palestinian and the West Bank Palestinian in conjunction with force of law reconfigures the cinematic 'territories' of contemporary Palestinian cinema, not merely as topographic locations, but also as fluid topological processes.

The thesis concludes with a reflection on the emergence of a 'post-Palestinian' consciousness in contemporary Palestinian cinema between the Occupied Territories, the camp, exile and the interior— one which embraces extimacy—that is, a topological continuum between interior and exterior—as a critical position from which to resist the idea of stasis.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1:

Introduction

Existing research on Palestinian cinema is still trapped between the *telos* of the nation-state yet-to-come, and the dwelling on the *arche* of a founding trauma. Paradoxically, in both cases there is neither past nor future, but a present bereft of the latter and the former.[1] Similarly, a traditional image of Palestinian cinema evokes fears that Palestinian identity is constantly under threat of becoming one day extinct, to the point that it is unwittingly misconceived as a cinema-museum, some sort of virtual space where the Palestinian is allowed to live a second life. Moving beyond this, more recent efforts to unmoor Palestinian cinema from the national ideal, territorial sovereignty, and the traumatic event of the *Nakba* fundamentally misread the concept of territory and its impact on producing discrete, discordant cinematic subjectivities.

This introductory chapter examines the contradictions and problems inherent in current approaches to theorizing Palestinian cinema through the lens of national, transnational and postnational cinema theory. It argues that these categories are inadequate for dealing with an emergent tendency in *contemporary* Palestinian cinema, and with the notion of contemporaneity the selected corpus of films in this thesis articulates.

This first examination of existing critical frames in the field will allow me to highlight the aims and scope of the present research, namely how the selected body of films under study exceeds and ruptures the putative boundaries defined by those critical approaches to the study of Palestinian cinema. In this chapter, the aforementioned emergent tendency in contemporary Palestinian cinema, which is the object of study in the present research, is initially articulated as a distinction between 'images of resistance' and 'resistance of the image' in past and more recent cinematic depictions of Palestine and Palestinian-ness. The chapter suggests that the question of partition, the entanglement and intertwining of Israeli and Palestinian cultures, denote prominent concerns that override the traditional focus on the political demand for a

[1] This is not to suggest that the 'dream' of national unity or the dream of 'return' is an illegitimate claim on the Palestinian side. The reference to the 'telos of the nation-state yet-to-come' underscores radical political slogans that would put an end to the state of Israel as a historical reality. The films under study in this thesis do not subscribe to such claims and mostly deem them utopian and historically unrealistic. Similarly, the reality of the trauma is undeniable as will be discussed in chapter 5, but its temporality disconnects past, present and future. It is also worth noting that utopia, like trauma, cannot be spatially located, and the same way they lack time, they also lack space.

Palestinian state or on the suffering caused by the traumatic event of the Nakba. Central to a distinctive group of Palestinian and Israeli filmmakers and literary critics, the question of partition, I suggest, is perhaps re-orienting Palestinian cinema towards a future that is not determined by the past. Despite the doubts that the filmmakers studied in this thesis have openly expressed about the founding project of the Palestinian revolutionary cinema, their work is perhaps in many ways a continuation of this project of which they are, paradoxically, critical. For that reason, their work appears to be more poignant in depicting the vitality and resourcefulness of Palestinian cinema.

1.1 Palestinian cinema as a means of resilience

The present work does not seek to provide a broad historical overview towards a genealogy of contemporary Palestinian Cinema. Rather, it hopes to underscore the specificity of the said contemporaneity in a selected corpus of films, which, as the thesis suggests, constitute a significant break with the generic label: Palestinian cinema.

'Chronicles of Palestinian cinema,' and the suggestion of a linear, uninterrupted historical continuity between the past and the present are premises central to Hamid Dabashi's collection of essays, *Dreams of A Nation: On Palestinian Cinema* (2006), as to Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi's *Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma and Memory* (2008). Widely established in the field for presenting an English-speaking readership with notable attempts to theorize the latest developments in Palestinian cinema, these two major founding texts situate the more recent corpus of films they focus on in an established tradition of filmmaking that is believed to be peculiar to Palestinian identity and its distinctive political history and culture as a whole way of struggle.

Despite being the obvious reference point in any project situating a theory of contemporary Palestinian cinema, Gertz and Khleifi's study contains an overarching problematic, not to say paradoxical, tendency. On the one hand, it individualizes the figure of the auteur, and on the other hand, it homogenizes the filmmakers under study into a collective resistant voice.[2] The first tendency is reflected in the structuring of the book, with individual

[2] This tendency is present in numerous other works, namely that of Haim Bresheeth who situates Palestinian cinema within a conceptual framework of 'traumatic realism'. The theoretical flaws in existing scholarship in the field, along with problems arising from understanding Palestinian cinema through the prism of national cinema theory will be the focus of the remainder of this introductory chapter.

chapters focused on the films of Michel Khleifi, Rashid Masharawi, Ali Nassar and Elia Suleiman. The discussion of individual filmmakers is, nonetheless, paralleled with the critical urge to conflate their multi-vocal and complex works into a single voice, that of *sumud* or steadfastness, a struggle for national self-determination that co-opts their individuated voices into a collective struggle. More importantly, Gertz and Khleifi's tendency to homogenize more than individualize the filmmakers discussed in their book extends beyond the cinematic frame to project a sense of unity and solidarity around the 'Palestinian cause'. Their intentions are explicitly outlined as follows:

> To a large extent, the new directors have joined forces to protect Palestinian unity and identity in the face of the threat of extinction [...]. In their films, they strive to construct a single national unity, which is strong and secured, by integrating different sections, groups, minorities and political stances. Thus, the diversity of the Palestinian society, the everyday and the personal, all eventually unite in these films under a single homogenous national identity coping with collective hardships and struggles (Gertz & Khleifi 2008, p. 135).

As such, the complexity and diversity of 'Palestinian society' is muted, not to say overlooked, in approaches that seek to homogenize the *sumud* or endurance of Palestinian cinema. But what if this same approach, which is self-justificatory in the name of 'national unity', is stifling the very reason that accounts for the vitality and steadfastness of both Palestinian cinema and Palestinian society?

The intertwining of the fate of the cinematic and the real, the Palestinian on and off screen, a whole way of life and a whole way of struggle, remains an important characteristic of Palestinian cinema. The fears of 'threat of extinction' evoked by Gertz and Khleifi are perhaps as much about the loss of Palestinian 'unity and identity' as they are about the loss of Palestinian cinema itself. Such fears are, however, misplaced insofar as they stem from a certain reading or, as I will argue, a *mis*reading of cinematic consciousness emerging from Palestinian revolutionary cinema, which Nick Denes (2014) has criticized in part for its overt focus on suffering in these films, at the expense of their formal experimentation.

A further criticism of the homogenization of differing subjectivities into a collective *coping* in the face of hardships and struggles is that it accepts the neo-colonial, biopolitical parameters of the contemporary political stasis. Rather than articulating a resistant subjectivity, it engenders a *resilient* one that stoically accepts suffering as its perpetual and unchanged fate. This is what Julian Reid identifies as a troubling discourse of contemporary

neoliberalism, one that evolved from the colonial project as essentially a security project. Resilient subjects are defined as:

> Subjects that have learnt the lesson of the dangers of security, in order to live out a life of permanent exposure to dangers that are not only beyond their abilities to overcome but necessary for the prosperity of their life and wellbeing (Reid 2012, p. 145).

Resilience thus defines itself in opposition to resistance, and even destroys the capacity of resistance to both resist the status quo but also imagine it otherwise. In foreclosing a possible alternative to survival of the status quo, resilient subjectivity can only aim to survive the threats and dangers of contemporary (biopolitical) life.[3]

Gertz and Khleifi (2008), like Denes (2014), comprehensively trace the emergence of Palestinian revolutionary cinema to 1968 and the PLO's Palestine Film Unit, the cultural arm of the revolution backed by Fatch. Denes's work in particular summarises the evolution of this genealogy as a radical progression from formal experimentation to conservatism, as the free-form early work of *The Palestinian Right* (1968) and *With Soul, With Blood* (1971) gave way to the reverent *Palestine in the Eye* (1977), in which, writes Denes (2014, p. 238), 'the 'revolutionary content being transmitted appears to be a study in discipline and order.'

The emergence of a revolutionary Palestinian cinema is often contextualised in the wider anti-colonial movements of the early 1970s. Cinematically, it crystalized in Getino and Solanas' manifesto *Toward a Third Cinema* (1969), which called for a decolonization of both image and mode of production. Denes's work on early Palestinian revolutionary cinema, highlighting its openness, experimentation and essay-like form, arguably points to a lost emergence of a different logic of resistance, a questioning and critical practice that can also be located in contemporary Palestinian cinema. Problematizing this lineage of a homogenous image of resistance is useful in reframing a thinking of resistance as critical practice that can be traced through the corpus of films studied in the present thesis.

1.2. De-framing Palestinian-ness: nation, identity and identification

A scene towards the middle of Kamal Aljafari's *The Roof* (2006) dramatizes the complexity of positioning the contemporary Palestinian cinematic subject. The film is an

[3] The double genitive here suggests both the subjects adapting to survive, and the essential permanence of the status quo.

essayistic blend of documentary, historiography and memoir that employs a reflexive and ironic register in the tradition of Emile Habiby.[4] Its focus is the Aljafari family homes in both Jaffa and Ramle,[5] the latter providing the missing titular roof.

During a telephone conversation with Aljafari, Nabieh, a friend and fellow former inmate who is now in Beirut, suggests that he visits Lebanon or Syria.[6] 'I can't enter the Arab countries' comes Aljafari's reply. This is due to Aljafari's complex legal status as an Israeli-Arab (his only passport is an Israeli one) who identifies as a Palestinian filmmaker based in Germany, where he studied. In fact, the filmmaker himself, following Adorno's comments on literature and exile, has referred to cinema as a 'homeland' (Aljafari, 2010). In the same conversation, Aljafari evokes his longing to hear Beirut's sea, a sight/sound he is unable to access, denoting a fluidity of place that articulates just some of the subjective and territorial complexity of the contemporary Palestinian subject; one who is legally a citizen of Israel, educated in Germany and homesick for the sea in Lebanon, a place which—through force of law—he can only visit in his imagination.[7]

This scene encapsulates some of the problems facing any attempt to theorize a Palestinian national cinema. The very notion of a stable Palestinian identity is deeply problematic when underpinned by a complex network of identifications, be they cultural, legal or spatial. Elia Suleiman takes particular issue with a notion of Palestinian national identity, claiming:

> I may adhere to [a form of] identification, but not [to] an identity. The experience of my films does not construct or adhere to what an identity can be defined as. Expulsion? Expulsion is shared by so many histories. A *kuffiyeh*? A *Kuffiyeh* became a political symbol in *Intifada* times. (Suleiman 2010, p. 4)

---

[4] Along with Ghassan Kanafani, Emile Habiby is perhaps the best-known Palestinian novelist. He remained in Israel, helping found the Communist Party and sitting on the Knesset. His best known work is his 1974 novel *Al-Waqā'i' al-gharībah fī 'khtifā' Sa'īd Abī 'l-Naḥsh al-Mutashā'il (The Secret Life of Saed the Pessoptimist).* The literal translation of Habiby's novel: 'the strange events leading to the disappearance of the man known as father of the bad omen, the pessimist-optimist'.

[5] Translation note: The town of Ramle is officially known as 'Ramla' within the state of Israel. Aljafari's use of Arabic, *ar-Ramlah* is transliterated into English as Ramle, which is how his film, and I refer to it throughout.

[6] We 'learn' of Aljafari's incarceration during the first Intifada in the ambiguous opening scene.

[7] The shores of Lebanon indicate a place evocative in the Palestinian imagination as a lost homeland in exile. Aljafari's passport means the only Arab country he can visit in the region is Jordan.

Echoing Suleiman's words on the distinction between identity and identification, Helga Tawil-Souri highlights the importance of acknowledging the complexity of Palestinian identity, arguing that:

> [Palestinians] can signify people living in Jerusalem with an Israeli ID card, or in the refugee camps of Lebanon. A Palestinian could likely be residing in Paris with Canadian citizenship, in the U.S. with an Egyptian *laissez-passer*, or in a rural West Bank village with Jordanian papers. Palestinians can be Muslim or Christian, or, even atheists; their political views can be radically different and opposed – Communist, Islamist, Secularist, One-State Solutionist, Globalist, to name but a few. They can speak Hebrew, or Arabic, or neither at all. Indeed Palestine or Palestinians are more aptly to be understood as hybrids rather than a place or a people easily defined (Tawil-Souri 2005, p. 113).

Despite the clarity of the diagnosis, Tawil-Souri's work echoes a wider problem in the existing scholarship on contemporary Palestinian cinema, namely, a critical blindness towards the significance of a spatial and territorial consciousness— a consciousness that occasions a radically discrete (and discordant) experience of time, space and movement. Nasser Abourahme, working within the context of critical geography, highlights this discordance, posing rhetorical questions:

> Can anyone say that Gaza, besieged and on the constant threshold of catastrophe, and Ramallah, where a building boom marks the city's integration into international circuits of aid and exchange, share a temporal order? Or, for that matter, the latter with its refugee camps? Or that these times-places have not been radically sundered from one another? (Abourahme 2011, p. 455)

In the case of Palestinian *cinema*, Palestinians within Israel and Palestinians in the diaspora add to that subjective discordance, as the filmmaker Basma Alsharif (2018) has noted. While there is growing focus on hybridity in contemporary Palestinian cinema, the study of these discrete territorial subjectivities and the cinema they engender is often diluted in the more pressing concern to project an image of national unity.

Palestinian cinema poses a number of challenges to a discourse of national cinema that is still, to a large extent, historically framed in the context of nationalism, and the nation-state. This lineage, as Schlesinger (2000, p. 22) recognises, can be traced back to an understanding of national identity posited in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983), which he believed was instrumental in providing 'the theoretical starting point for most recent writing on national cinema.' A long history of the conflation of a political

conception of nation as nation-state has led to a reductive conception of national cinema, which, up until recently, has clear borders and a limited (and limiting) understanding of what constitutes a 'national' identity. 'The guiding interest' writes Schlesinger (2000, p. 29) 'lies in what a national cinema *is* or *might* be and is broadly connected to the political project of constituting the national collectivity.' In its radical problematizing of the terms state, nation and territory, any discussion of Palestine and cinema poses a challenge to the rigid discursive boundaries of national cinema theory, and an idea of the national itself. As Tawil-Souri (2005, p. 113) states, 'to discuss Palestinian films puts us in the quandary of dealing with the notion of the "national".'

1.3 Beyond the national

This section will briefly summarize recent attempts to situate Palestinian contemporary cinema beyond the discursive boundaries of national cinema theory. Starting with Hamid Naficy's groundbreaking work of postcolonial cinema, *An Accented Cinema* (2001), it will examine attempts to frame Palestinian cinema through a variety of lenses 'beyond' the national. Peter Limbrick focuses on transnationalism from a somewhat different angle, foregrounding a transnational aesthetic in Kamal Aljafari and Elia Suleiman's work, rather than focussing on finance and transnational modes of production. Helga Tawil Souri's (2005, 2014) attempts to move beyond the national by decoupling nation from territory, so as to frame Palestinian-ness as a deterritorialized structure of feeling. Kay Dickinson (2016) frames transnationalism through the concept of travel, focussing on Syria, Dubai and Palestine. For Dickinson, the 'Holy Land' is a space produced by ideology, pilgrimage and power. The breadth of her approach, like Naficy's, mean that the focus on Palestine is narrowed to the road as leitmotif of movement/stasis in Second Intifada filmmaking. Ella Shohat, in a similar approach to Dickinson, frames the space of Palestine-Israel as produced by Orientalist ideologies, which other and marginalise both the figure of the Arab-Jew and the Palestinian. Shohat (2010) dedicates a large section of the postscript of her *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* (1989) to the liminal space of Palestine-Israel, prompting a relational discussion of the two cinemas which presupposes the impossibility of partitioning them. While each of these approaches is not without merit, this thesis argues that the corpus of films under study exceeds both their theoretical and historical limits, calling for a new approach with which to think questions of nation, territory and subjectivity.

1.3.1 Naficy's post-colonial hybridity and the accented style

National cinema theory has had to evolve over the last fifteen years, within the context of globalisation. In this respect, Naficy's landmark work *An Accented Cinema* (2001) has brought post-colonial and transnational filmmaking into the discussion. Naficy's work marked an attempt to chart the emergence—in response to the contemporary experience of displacement—of the hybrid post-colonial filmmaker, the 'interstial' filmmaker[8] who works between cultures, languages and institutions. Naficy (2001, p. 10) highlights a common 'liminal subjectivity' while making clear that these filmmakers constitute an eclectic, heterogeneous group. He does, however, categorise three types of film that constitute the accented style, which he calls: exilic, diasporic and ethnic. Within these categories, Naficy (2001, p. 22) highlights a 'double-consciousness' that marks the filmmakers' relationship with home and the host society.[9]

The hybridity that became central to the critical work of Naficy and Tawil-Souri in the early 2000s, can be traced back in the Palestinian context to the work of Edward Said (1986) who recognised a long tradition of cultural hybridity and linguistic jamming among Palestinians, citing Emil Habiby' s 1974 novel *The Secret Life of Saed the Pessoptimist*, which combines the Arabic *mutafa'il* (optimist) with *mutasha'im* (pessimist) to form the portmanteau *mutasha'il.* According to Said (1986, p. 26), the word 'repeats the Palestinian habit of combining opposites like *la* ('no') and *na'am* ('yes') into *la'am.*' Said wonders whether this hybridity may stem from a paradoxical obliteration and integration of distinctions.

However, and despite their emancipatory potential, the notions of hybridity and diaspora in the context of postcolonial studies carry deeply problematic de-politicizing tendencies, highlighted generally by Ella Shohat's (1992, 2010) work on the postcolonial, and specifically with Joseph Massad's (2000) work on the problematic intersection of postcoloniality and coloniality in Palestine-Israel.[10] Naficy, perhaps the pre-eminent figure at the intersection of postcolonial studies and film studies, is also mindful of the de-politicizing aspects of thinking diaspora in this manner, and warned against 'the temptation to engage in

---

[8] A term Naficy draws on from Homi Bhabha (1994), and one Naficy (2001, p.46) defines as 'to operate both within and astride the cracks of the system, benefitting from its contradictions, anomalies, and heterogeneity.' It is in this position of internal liminality, rather than at the margin, that Naficy places the accented filmmaker.

[9] 'Double-consciousness' is a term Edward Said returns to throughout his later work through his contrapuntal method, which will be examined at the end of this chapter.

[10] Both of these critiques of postcolonial theory will be examined later in this chapter.

postmodernist discursive tourism' (Naficy 2001, p. xx). However, I argue that the elasticity of the 'structure of feeling' approach, which Naficy himself takes to his corpus, means that there is both an unavoidable structural lean towards the universal at the expense of the situated and a tendency towards hybridity as a liberatingly transgressive practice.

Two problems of categorisation can be identified within Naficy's work. The first is that the accented style is stretched to encompass so much that it loses its rigor. Drawing on a lineage of third cinema and auteur theory, it attempts to identify an accented style through an enormous corpus of films, analysed through plot, character, mise-en-scène, and mode of production. While this is an admirable attempt to move beyond the confines of national identity politics and the straightjacket of a reductive national cinema label, it risks universalising, or even fetishizing the margin. A further issue is the elasticity of Naficy's theoretical approach at whose core still lays a binary relation between homeland and host society, particularly in the focus on diaspora and exile as contemporary conditions. It should be noted that, in a separate essay in the edited volume *Dreams of a Nation* (2006) Naficy does acknowledge the specificity of the case of a cinema of Palestine, and how its territorial and subjective complexity might pose problems for his 'situated but universal' (Naficy 2001, p. 10) categorization of accented filmmakers:

> Palestinian cinema is one of the rare cinemas in the world that is structurally exilic, as it is made either in the conditions of internal exile in an occupied Palestine or under the erasure and tensions of displacement and external exile in other countries' (Naficy 2006, p. 91).

Nonetheless, the acknowledgement of structural exile does not begin to articulate the complex and radically discordant modes of Palestinian-ness, which occasion an overtly spatial, territorialized and interconnected forms of citizenry: citizenry of *al-dakhil* (Palestinians in Israel), non-citizenry of the camps (which is often indistinguishable from the sundered Territories) and the global citizenry (Palestinians 'elsewhere').

A further problem that links Naficy and his post-colonial transnationalism with Gertz and Khleifi (2008) and Dabashi (2006) with their overt focus on the national and national self-determination *through* film is the absence of a discussion of a cinema of Palestine-Israel. This theoretical lacuna, a key issue this thesis addresses, will be examined later in this chapter, and situated within a topological structure in the subsequent chapter.

1.3.2 Peter Limbrick: transnational cinema between festivalization and loss of meaning

While Naficy's project situates the transnational in largely logistical terms, focussing on funding and production, Peter Limbrick takes a different approach. In his chapter entitled 'Contested Spaces' in a collection on *German* cinema, Limbrick highlights the transnational aesthetics of the films of Kamal Aljafarai, arguing that:

> His two latter films are completely embedded in Palestinian locations and politics while remaining transnational in their finance, their personnel, and even in their aesthetic which [...] deploys the kind of aesthetic beauty and 'spectacle' that Galt identifies in some European transnational cinemas. Yet, (...) whatever his films' indebtedness to a European cinematic frame, his work studiously refuses Euro*centrism* in that it avoids an orientalising gaze from the position of a Europe looking out to 'its others' (Limbrick 2012, p. 219).

Limbrick's comments point to a somewhat problematic discursive framing. There is, it could be argued, a certain Eurocentrism at work in assuming 'indebtedness to a European cinematic frame.' This assumption presupposes that abstraction, narrative non-linearity, and a static frame are the property of the cinematic language of European Art Cinema. There is also the very real logistical dependence of Palestinian cinema on what might be termed a 'festivalization'; that is, the reliance on favourable performances at international festivals such as Berlin, Venice and Locarno to aid international distribution. The somewhat crude binary opposition of Art Cinema/Hollywood Cinema is still a reference point, and this is undeniably problematic insofar as it raises the question of what Paul Willemen (2006), referencing Mikhail Bakhtin, terms 'projective appropriation,' i.e., the application of a theoretical framework or world belief onto a text outside that sphere. However, in the case of Palestinian cinema, this also highlights the additional issue of reception and spectatorship. While questions of spectatorship are beyond the scope of this thesis, the tension in address does raise interesting formal questions of slippage, what Said (1986, p. 6) refers to in writing as 'double vision'.

In the absence of a domestic industry, the question arises as to the prospective audience of these feature films. Arguably, the films' aesthetic choices reflect the concerns of both 'international' and 'festival' audiences. It might be argued that this leads to a hybridity in the cinematic language employed. Not just hybridity, but perhaps even a political subversiveness. This is precisely the gist of the argument Peter Limbrick makes with regard to the work of Kamal Aljafari:

> Like the work of Elia Suleiman (another Palestinian filmmaker raised in Israel and based in Europe), Aljafari's films utilize their European Art Cinema affiliations to expose and subvert Western discourses on Arabs and Arab locations especially as those collude with Zionist narratives of Israel as a model of a liberal democracy (Limbrick 2012, p. 219).

While Limbrick raises a fascinating question, the rest of the chapter does not follow it through in any satisfactory way apart from some references to empty spaces in Antonioni's *The Eclipse* (1962) echoed in *Port of Memory* (2009). Further (albeit outside the focus of his chapter), he misses an important point on the subversive use of an established 'European' aesthetic. Particularly in the cases of Aljafari and Suleiman, it can be argued that there is a subversive hybridity to the cinematic language, a complex codification that speaks overtly to a festival and international audience, and covertly to a Palestinian audience. This *double-entent* (as in the French transliteration of double-hearing) or dual register is best illustrated in a scene from Elia Suleiman's *The Time That Remains* (2009).[11]

Around an hour into the film, outside the Nazareth gift shop. E.S. and his two friends are sitting around a table outside the shop when a newspaper boy walks by, shouting out the prices of his papers. The title of one of the free papers 'Kol al-Arab' (All Arabs) contains a pun that was lost in translation. The title of the newspaper, along with a colloquial expression, lends this seemingly quotidian vignette an implicit political critique of pan-Arabism.[12] This scene would speak to a 'local' audience in its use of colloquial dialogue, seemingly codified in a cinematic language that speaks to a critical festival audience.

A comparison might be made with the work of Douglas Sirk. Working within a formal framework of melodrama, Sirk covertly worked modernist critical techniques into the mise-en-scène of his later work, particularly *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) and *Imitation of Life* (1959). These Brechtian 'boomerang' techniques were used to critique the audience viewing them, holding up a cracked mirror to their idealised society. In the work of Suleiman and Aljafari, the position of critic and viewer might be somewhat different from that of Sirk. One might argue that the overt linguistic register is addressed to the critic-festivalgoer, who is highly fluent in the language of the European art cinema. Yet covertly, these films are highly codified with jokes and cultural references for a specifically Palestinian audience. This shows

[11] Edward Said hints at a similar duality in what he (1986) terms the 'double vision' of exile

[12] This scene is examined in detail in a focus on the cinematic representation of Nazareth in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

a complexity of addressees in the language of Palestinian cinema, a complexity that understands the range of spectators it can engage.

1.3.3. Helga Tawil-Souri: the post-national and the territorial trap

Highlighting the complexities in Hou Hsiao-hsien's 'Taiwan Trilogy', Chris Berry (2006) recognises an enduring problem in national cinema theory. Berry (2006, p. 148) argues that a 'national cinema approach is too invested in territorial nationalism to adequately account for films such as these.' Initially positing the emergence of a 'postnational' cinema as a way around this, Berry (Ibid, p.149) admits that 'like 'national cinema, the term 'postnational' is still too deeply tied to the ideology of modernity—which only acknowledges the territorial nation-state—to account for the contemporary upsurge in both the transnational and the national.' This upsurge, the former in globalisation, the latter in political nationalism, is precisely, Berry argues, what calls for a re-thinking of the national.

A decoupling of 'nation' from 'territory' is how Helga Tawil-Souri (2014) responds to this call in her article 'Cinema as the Space to Transgress Palestine's Territorial Trap'. In this article, drawing on the work of Raymond Williams, Tawil-Souri (2014, p.173) posits a conceptualisation of Palestinian cinema as a 'structure of feeling', defined as 'one of negotiating a shifting spatiality.' This is based on a structure (a set of historical questions), in this case 'the specific historical conflict over territory' (Ibid, p.173), while 'feelings' are unmoored, fluid and negotiated positions for Palestinians 'no matter 'where'" (Ibid, p.173). In a further break with the political-territorial concept of the national, Tawil-Souri argues that 'we should not mistake the territory itself or its "loss" for the nation' (Ibid, p.173).

Stuart Elden (2013) recognises that territory is relatively uncontested and under-theorized as a term, too often taken for granted as a bounded space and applied retroactively to historical cases, where no such term existed contemporaneously. Further he notes a privileging of 'territoriality' as a term that suggests active process, while territory itself is taken to be the object of this process, a stable container. Elden argues against this relation, recognising that:

> Strategies and processes toward territory—of which territoriality is but a fraction—conceptually presuppose the object that they practically produce. It is therefore more fruitful to approach territory as a concept in its own right (Elden 2013, p. 6).

Problematically, Tawil-Souri (2014) defines territory in bounded, fixed terms, treating it as a static object contrasted with 'territoriality' as a dynamic process of power, claiming (2014, p. 173) that 'territory refers to a portion of land that is claimed or occupied by a person, group of people or institution; [while] territoriality is the process of what we do with that land.' To these terms, she counters the 'altogether more expansive' (Ibid, 174) terms space and spatiality. By relegating territory to a mere object of territoriality, and then subordinating both terms to space and spatiality, she arguably falls into a trap of her own, neglecting territory's role as an active, productive and political process, one that encompasses geographical, political, legal, technical questions, and is arguably more accurately a relation between people and political processes, rather than a purely bounded portion of land. This is how Elden rethinks the notion of *polis*, less as a mere marker of place, but rather something fluid and relational, with meaning shifting greatly in different historical contexts. Territory is a similarly complex concept, which Elden attempts to define thus:

> Territory is not simply an object: the outcome of actions conducted toward it or some previously supposedly neutral area. Territory is itself a process, made and remade, shaped and shaping, active and reactive. Just as David Harvey argued we should think of the urban process, so too should we think about territory as process or the territorial process (Elden 2013, p. 17).

As a process, territory involves a range of techniques that frame it as a 'political technology' (Ibid, p. 17). Taking his cue from the Greek *techne*, for Elden territory can extend from the technical instruments of measurement and control to broader practices, including 'legal systems and arguments; political debates, theories, concepts, and practices; colonization and military excursions; works of literature and dictionaries; historical studies, myths'. As such, this makes territory a key political process for understanding how communities both produce and are produced by power relations. Territory can extend far beyond a state's putative borders and form subjectivities. As such it is in and of itself a process of constant re-articulation.

By framing territory as bounded and inherently stable (both as a concept and object), Tawil-Souri (2014, p. 185) creates a false dichotomy between 'a rooted, moored or territorially anchored body' and 'a constant negotiation,' when in fact territory itself is the latter. As a process or practice, it can emerge in a number of contexts, through enunciation, force of law, myth and imagination. As such, this thesis argues, that territory functions topologically, constantly drawing and transgressing borders between the interior, the

occupied territories and the diaspora. Consider the following anecdote from Kamal Aljafari, on the making of his short film *Balconies* (2009). 'He asked me: what are you filming? I said, the balconies. He reacted by saying: 'you see all these balconies, they are mine' (Aljafari, 2012). The process of territory emerges in the enunciation of a claim, patently absurd, in an individual speech act in Ramle. Territory also governs the logic of the law that provides a generalised sense of encagement in Hani-Abu Assad' s *Omar* (2013), its logic of lying and guilt ensnaring characters. Indeed, the function of Law, located both no-where and everywhere, is fundamental to understanding territory as topological force and process that works beyond and without the geopolitical borders of the Palestinian 'territories'. This, along with the political technical aspect, makes territory a far more complex and important term than its common usage in existing scholarship on Palestinian cinema allows for. It is a category for thinking Palestine/Israel and the relationship between place and power; one that constantly draws, redraws and erases boundaries between place and people, inside and outside, friend and enemy, home and exile.

As said earlier, Tawil-Souri, in attempting to negotiate the 'trap' of the territorial-national falls into another trap. In stating that 'it is film which breaks our prison-world asunder and allows us to "travel"' (Tawil-Souri, 2014, p.186), as in her claim that cinema provides an 'a-territorial space' (Ibid, p.186), she risks de-politicising the disruptive potentiality Palestinian cinema has for posing questions of 'the national' *through* cinema. By positing cinema as a quasi-utopic space—a transgressive space of negotiation in which to enact a liberating im/mobility—Tawil-Souri succeeds in unmooring Palestinian cinema from the national-territorial, but in doing so, loosens its capacity for questioning the national, not only the territorial space, but also questions of temporality and spatiality. These questions regard the notion of the 'citizen' and how this concept is problematized throughout contemporary Palestinian cinema, reflecting an inherent instability of wider thinking of the national and citizenry.

Some of the discrete temporal and spatial orders that mark contemporary Palestinian cinematic language are primarily a product of place, as Abourahme (2011) has recognised. The discrete spatio-temporal orders of those inside Israel (*al-dakhil*), those in the diaspora and those in an inexistent 'Palestine' mean that an engagement with territory is inevitable, as is, in the case of the *al-dakhil*, a blurring of boundaries as to where a Palestinian film ends and an Israeli one begins. Although Tawil-Souri (2014) acknowledges Shohat's (2010) relational discussion of Palestine-Israel, she fails to go as far as exploring those complex, controversial boundaries.

1.3.4. Travelling Palestine with Pier Paolo Pasolini and Kay Dickinson

Sopralluoghi in Palestina (*Location Scouting in Palestine*, 1964) records Pasolini's quest to uncover the faces and places of his biblical imagination. Pasolini's location scouting exercise is essentially a narrative of the collision between an over-determined representation of imagined Palestine, and the Palestinian real. What Pasolini sees in contemporary Palestine-Israel (and his framing requires interrogation) is a space both too modern and too archaic.

Pasolini's search for faces and places mirrors a long tradition of both colonial exploration and biblical tourism in the Holy Land, particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Kay Dickinson (2016) refers to the 'place-myth' of Palestine-Israel, the historical intersection of crusades, colonialism and tourism to the region, and corresponding claims of ownership and practices of occupation, a space of image and idolatry. These narratives of and journeys to Palestine, for Dickinson (Ibid, p. 82) 'do not just describe the land, they have created it.' In this way, they have created an image so dense as to merge with, cover and transform the actual landscape, like Borges's map. It is this 'image of Palestine' that Basma Alsharif both interrogates and inverts in *Ouroboros* (2017),[13] by turning this 'way of seeing' back on Matera.

Matera as commodity image in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

[13] This work, a complex topological structure of estrangement, will be the focus of the latter half of Chapter six.

Sopralluoghi in Palestina exists as relation of images in tension. That is, between Pasolini's archaic images, and the interruption of these by the specular landscape of European modernity that interrupts and displaces these images. This is evident from the film's opening scenes. The film opens around 50 km from Tel Aviv, as Pasolini's voiceover informs the viewer that after spending all morning travelling through countryside 'modern and very similar to Italy,' he finds a scene that corresponds to his biblical archaic vision, as a peasant is separating wheat from chaff. Pasolini looks on, satisfied, as Don Andrea, his religious advisor, refers to the significance of the scene in Matthew 3:12 of the New Testament where John the Baptist addresses the Pharisees.

An archaic image in *Sopralluoghi in Palestina* (1964). ©Arco Film (with the courtesy of Arco Film)

This biblical congruence of face, place and gesture that Pasolini hoped to find dissipates from this point on, as Pasolini's longed-for archaic, biblical land is instead, he bemoans, 'contaminated by the present.' The scene also betrays the continuum between colonial exploration and the process of location scouting, a link Basma Alsharif identifies and critiques in *Ourorboros*. This scene is the first of several where Pasolini frames the non-Jewish figures in Israel through a distinctly Orientalist gaze.

The image as Orientalist cliché in *Sopralluoghi in Palestina* (1964). ©Arco Film (with the courtesy of Arco Film)

'Archaic', 'savage' and 'primitive' all occur in descriptions of Arab and Druze populations, as Pasolini scans their faces in search of correspondence with his preconceived image. This dense layering of myth and cliché has a history of obscuring the actual lived experience of Palestinians from the frame, as Edward Said has noted in Jean Mohr's photographs of peasant workers in *After the Last Sky* (1986):

> The unadorned fact that they show working people of the peasant class is constantly compromised by bits of prose floating across their surfaces. 'Shepherds in the field', says one such tag, and you could add, 'tending their flocks, much as the Bible says they did.' Or, the two photographs of women evoke phrases like 'the timeless East', and 'the miserable lot of women in Islam (Said 1986, p. 92-3).

Pasolini's language and ideology often serve a similar process of compromise, often obscuring what is in front of him. He captions a scene strikingly similarly to the mode Said warns against, seen below:

Image as biblical cliché in *Sopralluoghi in Palestina* (1964). ©Arco Film (with the courtesy of Arco Film)

Pasolini's way of seeing frames the landscape, to paraphrase Benjamin (1940) as one of pathological modernity embedded with shards of archaic time. Just three minutes into the documentary we find Pasolini again lamenting the disjuncture between reality and expectation, as being driven towards Nazareth one encounters 'a landscape contaminated by the present.'[14]

A landscape contaminated by modernity in *Sopralluoghi in Palestina* (1964). ©Arco Film (with the courtesy of Arco Film)

[14] Although the words Pasolini uses in Italian, *'un paesaggio contaminato dalla modernità'*, translates more accurately as 'contaminated by modernity'.

Pasolini's obscuring of Palestinians via clichéd biblical imagery, along with his layering of South Italian landscapes over those of Palestine-Israel and his repulsion toward the modern, hint early on in the film at his forthcoming displacement of the Holy Land to Basilicata. In the houses Pasolini sees such examples as 'you could easily find in the Roman countryside or Switzerland,' in the mountains, he sees Crotone, in the olive groves, Puglia. His companion, Don Andrea, on hearing Pasolini's doubts over representing the Holy Land and rectifying the discordance between his imagination and the landscape itself, proposes the idea of displacing the film elsewhere, albeit for different reasons. Seemingly drawing on the incompatibility of religious representation and the plastic arts, he advises Pasolini thus:

> No image can be created here. It has to be absorbed and reinvented elsewhere. The specific purpose should be this: condense and absorb the spirit. Then, possibly, relive it, rebuild it, invent it perhaps; in another setting, another place.

If the places and the impact of industrialisation present a problem of representation, his search for faces leads him to another aporia; what he terms 'the irresolvable problem of extras.' Pasolini's double vision leads to him reading faces as either too modern, or too primitive, untouched by modernity or scarred by it. Thus in Ashkenazi Jews, Pasolini sees faces 'deeply scarred' by 'all the contemporary culture from Romanticism on.' These faces are included in Pasolini's own Graeco-Judaeo-Christian tradition, yet useless to his biblical imagination. By contrast, the faces of non-Jews are rendered outside of history, too archaic or other to suit Pasolini's image of the biblical world. In this way, close-ups of these faces betray Pasoloni's colonial gaze, as Arab, Druze and Bedouin all betray 'pre-Christian, savage and happy' features.[15] This is strikingly illustrated in a scene that occurs in a village just outside of Nazareth in Galilee. Engaging with the village children, Pasolini asks: 'what is your religion, are you Christian?' to which a boy replies: 'yes, Christian'. Pasolini is visibly surprised, and then seems comforted when an older man, with better English, corrects the boy that they are

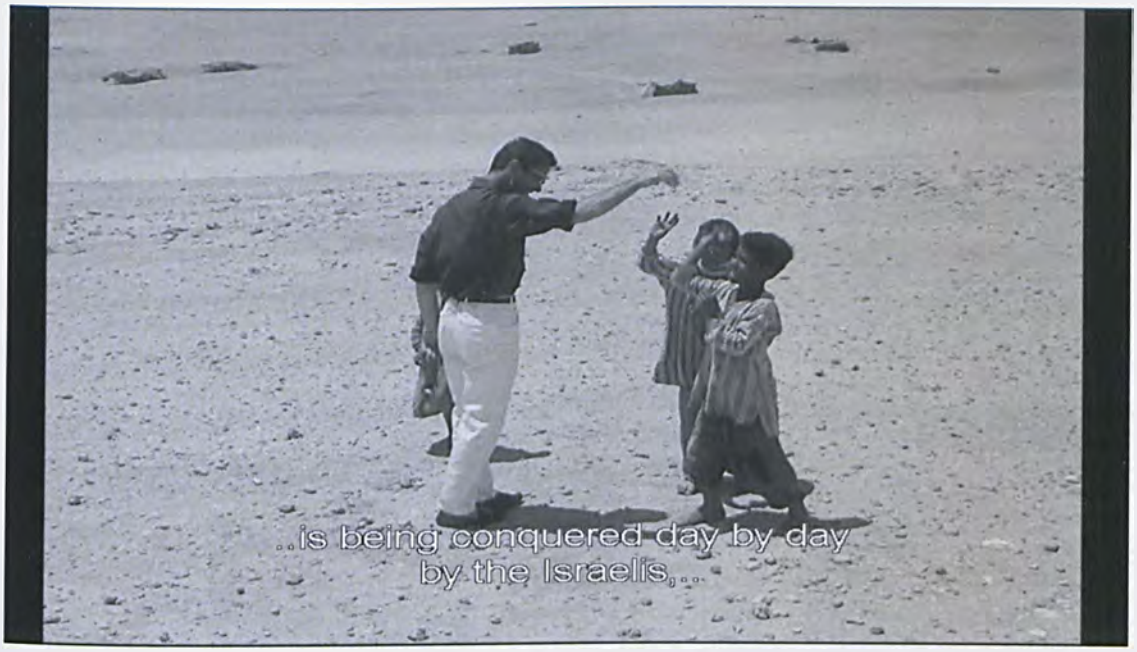
[15] Deleuze and Guattari discuss the face/landscape relation at length in *A Thousand Plateaus* (2004 [1987]) when theorizing their concept of faciality. Particularly, how faciality functions not in a Levinasian ethical manner, where the face is the site of universal recognition, but rather with a machine like, inhuman process. Faces are 'engendered by an *abstract machine of faciality (visagéité)*' (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 187) For Deleuze and Guattari 'Christian education exerts spiritual control over both faciality and landscapity (*paysagéité*)' (Ibid, p. 191). The faciality machine (in which the face is the face of the White, Christian European) is a means through which colonial and racist discourses can be read, since this is a machine 'which never abides alterity' (Ibid, p.197) and only recognises faces that diverge from this model as ones that 'must be Christianized, in other words, facialized.' (Ibid)

in fact Muslim. This confirmation of his suspicions precedes the voiceover accompanying the scene illustrated below.

©Arco Film (with the courtesy of Arco Film)

Here Pasolini reflects on the unsuitability of such faces, faces 'that have not been touched by the teachings of Christ.' However, the demographics of where Pasolini is, suggest another blind spot in his perspective. In addition to being Israel's only majority Arab city, Nazareth in particular, and Galilee in general have significant historical and contemporary Christian populations.[16] This elision of Galilee's Christian population seems to be another manifestation of Pasolini's Judaeo-Christian Western tradition that frames Palestine-Israel's non-Jewish population as non-European, and as such pre-modern and necessarily pre-Christian. Despite his seemingly colonial outlook, Pasolini does display some ambivalence toward Israel's displacement of its non-Jewish population, noting the plight of the Bedouin in the Negev, a desert 'being conquered day by day by the Israelis.'

[16] Nazareth's population consists of 30.9 per cent Christians, according to the 2009 census. Source: CBS (2013) *Nazareth Census 2009* [online] Available at: http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications11/local_authorities09/pdf/254_7300.pdf



Monotheism cannot tolerate nomads: The striation of the desert in *Sopralluoghi in Palestina* (1964). ©Arco Film (with the courtesy of Arco Film)

The notion of settling, or striating the desert is one that has a strong resonance in the Israeli imagination, one involved in the construction in Zionist mythology of the Sabra as a figure both tough and hardy yet at home in the harsh non-European environment,[17] while retaining the allegorical capacity to 'bloom' in the desert. Ella Shohat (2010, p. 31) has identified this trend in early Israeli filmmaking, a mastering of the land which both provides continuity with Biblical Israel and a 'dramatic rupture with the Diaspora Jew.' It is arguably this rupture that reinforces a need to striate the desert, to impose sedentariness on the nomadic. The desert is a transitory, nomadic space. A space in which striation and forms of self-organization are evident, yet nonetheless, it is a space one both *passes through*, and which *moves around* one. As Deleuze and Guatarri argue, the nomad holds smooth space as the desert advances, and nomads 'make the desert no less than they are made by it' (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p. 421). As such, the Bedouin of the Negev pose a challenge to the logic of the Israeli State; a state founded on a notion of an end to wandering and diasporic experience. 'Monotheism', writes Laura Marks (2015, p. 150), 'cannot tolerate nomads.' Zionism's need to both settle Palestine and striate the desert stems from a similar intolerance. Alongside this allusion to 'conquering', Pasolini highlights the Kibbutzim outside of Nazareth as constituting 'zones "colonized" by

[17] Literally 'prickly pear', a plant that thrives in harsh landscapes but has a sweet interior. The term, arising in the 1930s refers to Jews born in Mandate Palestine (or Israel after 1948), as opposed to those who had immigrated. The modern Hebrew term comes from the Arabic *sabr*, meaning perseverance.

Jews,' an allusion to the seemingly paradoxical synchronic postcolonial colonialiality of the State, as recognised by Joseph Massad (2000). However, it is also another manifestation of the modern which Pasolini finds so abhorrent, with modern buildings looking 'institutionalized' and trees a product of 'reforestation'.

A more recent attempt to deal with the contradictions of the national and transnational without getting 'trapped' in the national-territorial comes in Kay Dickinson's *Arab Cinema Travels: Transnational Style in Syria, Palestine, Dubai and beyond* (2016), which, in a strikingly spatialized introductory chapter, claims:

> I could have headed down pathways like 'the global' or 'the transnational' to figure contexts like these, and most certainly do draw on those theoretical paradigms in what follows. However, focussing on travel offers something further. It opens us out to the actual experience of moving through, as well as perceiving and reconfiguring space (Dickinson 2016, p. 2).

The notion of perception is crucial to Dickinson's project, which is underpinned by a notion of space as constructed, belying the inherent fiction of the nation state, with 'Syria, Palestine and the Gulf being understood as international constructs established through travel' (Ibid). Interestingly, Dickinson, like Said (1986), Khatib (2006) and Weizman (2007) before her, frames Palestine as always already over-determined, a projected space of myth, violence and colonial conquest. Drawing on John Collins' thesis in *Global Palestine* (2011), namely 'a Palestine that is globalized and a global that is becoming Palestinized' (Collins 2011, p. x), Dickinson posits that far from being a recent phenomenon, 'this 'becoming Palestinized has been 'taking place' for millennia, detailed and discussed with great bearing and use-value within pilgrimage accounts' (Dickinson 2016, p. 82). Thus she sees Palestinian cinema as using this image of Global Palestine in a dual role, both 'implicating us, but also more centrally, forging affinities between us' (Ibid, p. 83).

Dickinson's approach bears an obvious debt to Laura Marks' *Asphalt Nomadism* (2006), albeit with an expanded focus on the contested site of travel, 'the integral role travel and its discourses have played in achieving and maintaining the occupation/ownership of Palestine for centuries and by different parties' (Ibid). However, a weakness in both approaches—perhaps necessary in choosing a corpus of films to support their theses—is the focus on roadblock movies, which Marks names explicitly, while Dickinson refers to implicitly, with the exception of *Route 181*, (Michel Khleifi and Eyal Sivan's documentary

journey along the green line of the 1947 UN resolution). Dickinson's overt focus on the West Bank, through the prism of movement/stasis, elides the differing ways of seeing from other Palestinian perspectives. While travelling and interrupted movement are common tropes, particularly in the post Second Intifada films with which Dickinson is concerned, this focus neglects the heterogeneous spatial consciousness of a more discrete topography, while also eliding any consideration of the liminal space between Palestine and Israel, a space which, with the exception of Shohat (2010), has proved *resistant* to critical focus.

1.3.5. Ella Shohat: the Arab-Jew and the problematic (post) colonial

There is, I argue, an explicit conversation around statehood, criticality and resistance that can be discerned in the works of Elia Suleiman, Udi Aloni and Juliano Mer Khamis which can be further extended into the films of Kamal Aljafari and Amos Gitai. This project will engage with this conversation in an attempt to articulate Ella Shohat's notion of a 'polyphonic' cinema, and situate it in relation to the political stasis of the contemporary moment.

Ella Shohat, in both her work on the discursive problems of the 'post-colonial', and her work on Israeli cinema, urges caution towards a postmodern trend that situates both hybridity and diaspora as globalized conditions of nomadism, a way of thinking mobility beyond borders. Shohat recognises a particular problem in the genealogy of postcolonial studies in Israel (but a wider problematic tendency in thinking the postcolonial) that often elides neo-colonial practices or acts of contemporary colonial violence, stating that:

> Notions of 'oppression' and 'resistance' nowadays are too easily dismissed as binarist simplifications, irrelevant in a new all-embracing space where the colonizer and the colonized perform mutual mimicry. Passing off 'hybridity' as always already 'resistant' appears to sanctify the fait accompli of colonial violence (Shohat 2010, p. 268).

A significant amount of Ella Shohat's intellectual project involves tracing the figure of the Arab-Jew as one that collapses constructed binaries of East/West and colonial/postcolonial. It is this disruptive entity that, as a remnant, remains stubbornly resistant to political attempts to disentangle the proper nouns 'Palestine' and 'Israel'. Shohat's work is also particularly useful in problematizing attempts to frame the question of Palestine and Israel through post-colonial discourse. Shohat (1992) highlights the fact that postcoloniality shares a discursive emergence with a series of conceptual movements 'beyond' outmoded theories, but is discrete in that it implies 'a movement beyond a specific point in history, that of colonialism and Third

World nationalist struggles' (Ibid, p. 101). For Shohat, the post-colonial is problematic in that it implies a temporal break, 'undermining colonialism's economic, political, and cultural deformative traces in the present.' A further issue is that of its universalising potentiality, and the flattening of difference and neutralisation of disequilibria of power that this could have. Shohat writes:

> Since most of the world is now living after the period of colonialism, the 'post-colonial' can easily become a universalizing category, which neutralizes significant geopolitical differences between France and Algeria, Britain and Iraq, or the U.S. and Brazil since they are all living in a 'post-colonial epoch' (Ibid, p. 103).

In this way, the post-colonial is rendered both spatially and temporally problematic to the extent that Shohat (Ibid, p. 106) wonders 'whether the term "neo-colonial" will become more pervasive than "post-colonial".' Neo-colonialism implies a movement beyond colonialism, but allows for thinking 'repetition with difference' (Ibid, p. 107) and implies 'both oppression and the possibility of resistance' (Ibid).

The potential de-politicisation in its 'ahistorical and universalizing deployments' (Ibid, p. 99) leads Shohat to contend that 'the "post-colonial" must be interrogated and contextualized historically, geopolitically and culturally' (Ibid, p. 111). Similarly, both Anna Ball (2012) and Patrick Williams (2010) have argued for a framing of the post-colonial not as a marker, but as an on-going process, with the latter positing 'an anticipatory discourse, looking forward to a better and as yet unrealized world' (Williams 2010, p. 93).

Bart Moore-Gilbert (2018) highlights some theories behind postcolonial studies' historical reticence over Palestine/Israel; ranging from a bracketing of Edward Said the cultural critic from Edward Said the exilic Palestinian, a hostility in the Anglophone world to criticism of Israel that opens critiques of Zionism to accusations of anti-Semitism, and a lack of proficiency in Hebrew and Arabic among English departments—which in turn means a reliance on translation. Moore Gilbert cites Joseph Massad's (2000) 'The "Post-Colonial" Colony: Time, Space, and Bodies in Palestine/Israel' as a turning point in postcolonial studies' engagement with the region, and the discursive challenges it presents. Massad's work, mirroring Shohat's engagement with the disruptive figures of the Mizrahi and the Palestinian, both of whom topologically distort the space of Israeli cinema, highlights the problematic 'synchronicity of the colonial and the postcolonial (as discursive and material relations) in Palestine/Israel' (Massad 2000, p. 312). Massad's deliberately provocative and

paradoxical title stresses the anomaly of Israel emerging as a State at a time of anticolonial struggle thus aligning itself with this struggle, despite Zionism itself aligning itself with earlier European colonial ideals. The very act of naming transforms the power relations of how the space is understood. Exploring these contours, Massad asks:

> What constitutes the difficulty in naming it [Palestine/Israel] in relation to colonialism? Can one determine the coloniality of Palestine/Israel without noting its poscoloniality for Ashkenazic Jews? Can one determine the postcoloniality of Palestine/Israel without noting its coloniality for Palestinians? Can one determine both or either without noting the simultaneous colonizer/colonized status of Mizrahic Jews? How can all these people inhabit a colonial/postcolonial space in a world that declares itself living in a postcolonial time?' (Ibid)

Anna Ball, in *Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Feminist Perspective* (2012), acknowledges a debt to Massad's synchronic reading of time, space and bodies in her own nuanced usage of the language of postcoloniality while also acknowledging Ella Shohat's recognition of the discontinuities Zionism had with colonialism, in that it 'constituted a response to millennial oppression, and in contradistinction to the classical colonial paradigm, it had no "mother country"' (Shohat 2006, p. 369). Following Massad, Ball (2012, p. 6) explains that:

> I sometimes use the term '(post) colonial' (rather than simply 'colonial', 'post-colonial' or 'postcolonial') [...] in contexts where I wish to denote something of the ambivalent synchronicity of Palestine's colonial conditions and postcolonial desires.

The question of postcolonial desire is one Bart-Moore comes back to. If Palestinians have postcolonial desires, then what is it they desire? If what they desire is a state of their own, then the question of how such a state would manifest itself is a pertinent one. Moore-Gilbert (2018, p. 30) is particularly critical of what he sees as postcolonialism's 'long-standing commitment to the model of an independent, ethnically and territorially coherent, nation-state as the most desirable redress for colonized peoples.' It is this Westphalian nation-state model that Bart-Moore sees as problematic in general, particularly so in the case of Palestine-Israel.

1.4. Palestinian cinema: from the image of resistance to resistance of the image

The existing frameworks discussed above fail to account for the complex contemporaneity of the films under study in this thesis. Attempts to move beyond national cinema theory have critiqued it as too bound up with the idea of a stable, territorially bounded nation-state to respond to contemporary demands. Discursive movements beyond the nation, be they temporally driven in the case of 'postnational', or spatially driven in the case of 'transnationalism' proclaim the diminishing significance of the territorial nation-state in the face of what Ezra and Rowden (2006, p.4) proclaim a 'complexly interconnected world-system.' While any claim of the 'boundedness' of the territorial borders of the nation-state in the case of Palestine-Israel would patently be absurd, the specificity of the question of territory and state remain irreducible to such all-encompassing approaches. In the case of the former, a thinking of territory as political process allows an engagement with the questions of law, body and space reflected in the spatial contemporaneity of the corpus of films under study. In the case of the latter, this thesis argues that an overt focus on the nation, as seen in Gertz & Khleifi (2008) and Tawil-Souri (2014), misses the crucial question of statehood. It is a critical relationship with the notion of statehood, I argue, that marks a contemporary mode of resistance in the corpus of films under study. This relationship extends, on the one hand, to the *obscenely* present—in the Baudrillardian sense—Israeli state embodied by Netanyahu and Likud. On the other, there is a critique of the Palestinian Authority, a near simulacrum of a state, carrying the empty symbols and signifiers of the PLO and performing bureaucratic gestures of the state while essentially managing the occupation. It is resistance to both this political stasis and a commodified static revolutionary image that the films in this thesis articulate, and it is this re-articulation of resistance that constitutes my first research question.

The horizon beyond which Gertz and Khleifi were unable to see has something to do with a reductive unified Palestinian image, as an *image of resistance*. This approach leaves out of the picture serious questions about, on the one hand, the notion of authority, and on the other hand, issues pertaining to the representation and commodification of Palestinian subjectivity—both cinematic and real. Conversely, the present project identifies the work of

the 'new directors' with a different form of resistance, one that is not a pre-determined or fixed image of resistance that speaks in the name of national identity and national unity, but a politically situated position that challenges and resists this very image of resistance. I propose to call this position: *resistance of the image* rather than an image of resistance, and this is what I hope to develop and engage with in the present thesis.

Resistance of the image, I suggest, is the underlying theme of contemporary Palestinian cinema and the defining characteristic of its very contemporaneity. While the chronological history of Palestinian cinema as an image of resistance appears in the opening chapter of Gertz and Khleifi's book, and continues to be the established frame through which all discussions in the field are undertaken, I argue for a history of the present in the Foucauldian sense of the term, [18] to study the resistance of the image (of resistance) as prominent feature of contemporary Palestinian cinema.

The present research acknowledges that historical and political interpretations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are outside its scope. However, and without making any judgement on the political situation, the selected body of films for the purpose of this study speaks to the political deadlock characteristic of the region, or perhaps more accurately, *questions* it, demonstrating cinema's capacity to think the political *otherwise*. Some familiarity with the historical context in which the corpus of films included in this thesis emerges is, nonetheless, significant. The initial political hope stemming from the Oslo Accords (1993-95), which dissipated through the death of Yasser Arafat in 2004, and the internal schism within the Palestinian Authority that became apparent in 2007 have hardened into an emergent 'pessoptimistic' thinking of the possibility of bi-nationalism. This line of thought has been articulated in the late work of Edward Said and in the last decade of Postcolonial Studies. The literature of Anton Shammas and Mahmoud Darwish, alongside the critical theory of Gil Hochberg and Ella Shohat acknowledge the impossibility of partitioning Palestine-Israel, and all argue, to some extent, that the figure of the Arab and Jew dwell within one another. It is the topological structure of this dwelling that allows a thinking of the non-identical and the continuous of these two figures.

[18] Foucault first uses this term in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) towards the end of the first chapter. When reflecting on why he is writing a history of the prison, he poses the rhetorical question: 'Why? Simply because I am interested in the past? No if one means by that writing a history of the past in terms of the present. Yes, if one means writing a history of the present.' (Foucault 1977, p.31) This marks a shift in Foucault's thinking towards the emergence of his genealogical method; that is, an analysis (or uncovering) of how (often forgotten) historical struggles and power relations emerge in contemporary practices.

The emergence of a contemporary Palestinian cinema that dares to distance itself from the radical demands of its earlier counterpart, framing Palestinian lives and struggles against and beyond partition is a contentious and politically charged subject not only for students of Palestinian cinema but in a wider geopolitical context. The silence of the critics about the cinematic depiction of this specific issue was one of the main motivations behind undertaking the present research.

The contemporary stasis post-Oslo, has led to much criticism of an ineffective and corrupt Palestinian Authority (PA), both from exilic figures like Edward Said, but also from a camp as militant as Jenin. In Adam Shatz's article *The Life and Death of Juliano Mer-Khamis* (2013), contempt for the bureaucratic PA is expressed from a number of angles. Khamis' partner, Jenny Nyman (a member of the Freedom Theatre), who states that 'After Oslo, the whole NGO business became extremely corrupt, and basically meant lining your pockets and lining the pockets of your friends' (Shatz 2013, p. 8). Zacharia Zubeidi, who had featured in Khamis' *Arna's Children* (2004) and was an admired militant in the camp, also 'spoke warmly of Arafat but otherwise expressed contempt for the PA, Mahmoud Abbas in particular' (Ibid, p. 6). These pessimistic post-Oslo views were also echoed, most famously in the essays and newspaper articles of Edward Said.

Writing in the aftermath of the Accords, Said referred to what he saw as the capitulations and concessions of Oslo as a 'Palestinian Versailles' (Said 1995, p. 7). Said's pessimism post-Oslo, and of wider Arab nationalisms (alongside Israel's occupation) he saw around Palestine morphing into autocratic regimes, led him to a general scepticism around the state-building project. Said's criticism of the various claims to Palestine's future extends to both Israel and the Arab states. This is apparent in his pre-Intifada work, *After the Last Sky*, in which he speaks of the Palestinian 'interior', which 'is always to some extent occupied and interrupted by others—Israelis and Arabs' (Said 1986, p. 53), before reflecting on the deferred promise of Pan-Arabism:

> This in turn has allowed the entire apparatus of the modern Arab state, tyrannical and lustreless in equal parts, to propose itself as the legitimate guarantor of the future and, more important, the legitimate ruler of the present. Israel has tried to do the same thing, but for Palestinians, the Jewish state has no moral legitimacy. Because they keep promising a very bright future, Arab states do have some, but it is dwindling fast (Said 1986, p. 70).

This 'promise' arises in cinema as the subject of criticism in both Elia Suleiman's *The Time That Remains* (2009), with its implicit critique of the Arab 'neighbour' and *Salt of this Sea* (2008), which presents a Palestinian Authority of impotent bureaucracy and an injunction to 'be patient' as 'things will improve' dismissed with the response '*hilm al-'Arabi*' ('The Arab dream'). By the time Said had seen the initial results of the Oslo Accords, his initial scepticism toward the state building project had transmuted into trepidation:

> After all the excitement celebrating "the first step toward a Palestinian state," we should remind ourselves that much more important than having a state is the kind of state it is. The modern history of the post-colonial world is disfigured by one-party tyrannies, rapacious oligarchies, economic ruin (...) Mere nationalism is not, and can never be, "the answer" to the problems of new secular societies. Potential statehood in Palestine is no exception, especially given so inauspicious a start, where alas one can already see the lineaments of an unappetizing marriage between the chaos of civil war in Lebanon and the tyranny of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. (Said 1995, p. 16)

This view is reiterated in Elia Suleiman's interview 17 years later. Reflecting on what he sees as his national identification, as opposed to identity, Suleiman is cautious as to the direction potential statehood may take:

> Let's say the Palestinian state raised the flag, built the borders, and we had a certain amount of freedom, a certain amount of less oppression — what if this state is not necessarily the kind of state we'd adhere to, in terms of justice and democracy, even though it achieved a liberation of some sort? Will I still be supporting a Palestinian state? No I will not. If it becomes another oppressive authority, I will be fighting to lower the flag (Suleiman 2010, p. 4)

Both Said and Suleiman see competing Israeli and Palestinian nationalisms as reductive if they take on a dialectic of Jew/non-Jew, with the former lamenting 'that each side fortifies the intransigent, ritualistic and therefore potentially empty nationalism in the other,' producing a vocabulary 'for reducing the world' (Said 1986, p. 112), while the latter warns that 'if we start to say "this is us, and the rest is them or other" that means we have put ourselves into our own ghetto and nailed ourselves to the ground' (Suleiman 2010, p. 4).

Mahmoud Darwish, in conversation with the Israeli poet Helit Yeshurun, articulates a dense and layered literary-cultural thinking of Palestinian-ness, forged from and enriched by

the cultures that have passed through. It is in such a space that the figures of Arab and Jew are composites of one another. Darwish writes:

> The Jew won't be ashamed to find the Arab element within him, and the Arab won't be ashamed to acknowledge that he is also composed of Jewish elements. Especially when speaking about 'Eretz Israel' in Hebrew and 'Palestine' in Arabic. I am the son of all the cultures that have passed through the land—the Greek, the Roman, the Persian, the Jewish, the Ottoman (Darwish 2012, p. 52).

It should be made clear that this thesis doesn't advocate a utopian co-existence as a solution to the political impasse facing Palestine-Israel. Rather, its topological method, in blurring the interior of Palestine-Israel into a zone of indistinction, refuses the very discursive parameters which construct Arab and Jew, Palestinian and Israeli as partitionable figures. Following Hochberg's (2007, p. 16) thesis, the liminal space which lies between these figures, and which Derrida names the Abrahamic, is the same symbolic or cultural space which allows a radical thinking of the political, which rejects the current political deadlock both preserved and strengthened by a false dichotomy which separates these figures in a historically constructed relation of enmity.

This chapter has demonstrated that contemporary Palestinian cinema, particularly the corpus of films under study, proves resistant to existing theoretical approaches. Indeed, it is theory into which the question of partition extends, beyond its established geopolitical resonance. That is to say, the partitioning of postcolonial and colonial is deeply problematic and continues, despite Anna Ball's (2012, p. 6) use of the parenthetical 'post' to designate a synchronicity of colonial present and postcolonial desire in Palestinian literature and film. Further, Despite Ella Shohat's (2010) and Yael Friedman's (2008, 2010) attempts at unthinking the partitioning of the cinemas of Palestine and Israel, their work (perhaps necessarily given its scope) enacts another partition. Their focus on Palestinians inside Israel, while a welcome focus on a neglected subject, partitions this group from three other discrete but connected topologies that this thesis examines. It is two central research questions, an emergent resistance *of* image and resistance *to* partition which this thesis will examine through my own conceptual framework, a 'topology of *al-shatat*'. The next chapter will situate the theoretical context which underpins this framework and explicate the dual questions of partition and image through which, utilising a topological method, a contemporary cinema of resistance can be re-articulated.

Chapter 2:

Topology of *Al-Shatat* and the Question of Partition in Contemporary Palestinian Cinema

The question of (and questioning of) partition is crucial to both situating the corpus of films under study and understanding how their critical resistance to the political status quo. Partition, understood here, refers most obviously to the Resolution 181, the 1947 partition plan which failed to establish two states from Mandate Palestine. The ghost of this partition line informs Michel Khleifi and Eyal Sivan's 2004 documentary *Route 181*, which traces the pathology of partition, the continued legacy of political and cultural attempts to partition Palestine-Israel. The spectre of partition which haunts this film is one which also haunts the writing of Edward Said, Mahmoud Darwish, Ella Shohat and Gil Hochberg, whose work on unthinking the historically constructed partitioning of Palestine-Israel and Arab-Jew informs the present work.

With this in mind, this chapter will examine the theoretical context within which a questioning of partition can take place, and introduces the primary contribution of the thesis to original research, a topological thinking of territory and image which will examine my two major research questions: Firstly, this thesis will question the rigid image of radical enmity that is Palestine-Israel, and secondly, it will suggest that a contemporary cinema of resistance can be located in the idea of resistance to partition. To that end, the authors, key texts and concepts discussed in this chapter include Said's contrapuntual questioning of the Palestinian image in *After the Last Sky* (1986), a text crucial to framing the resistance of image emergent in contemporary Palestinian cinema. The question of partition will be examined through Ella Shohat's thinking of the liminal citizenry of *al-dakhil* and Agamben's concept of the indivisible remnant in *The Time That Remains* (2005). Said, Zurayk, Agamben and Darwish will be used to philosophically interrogate the question of contemporaneity. Finally, Deleuze's (1989) work on the topology of the cinematic image and Agamben's (1993, 1998) topology of place situate this thesis' own topological method.

2.1 Everywhere and nowhere: Edward Said and Jean Mohr's *After the Last Sky*

In his 1986 photo-essay *After the Last Sky*,[1] Edward Said speaks of de-centeredness, and more pertinently, of an atonality characteristic of Palestinian experience. Said highlights the problem Palestine poses not just for discourse, but also for thinking space, time and identity. The atonal can be interpreted spatially, through the de-centred and non-hierarchical, but can also temporally be read as discordance, a going-against-the-grain.

Said's reading of the atonal both follows and marks a break with Adorno (1973) who situates atonality at the threshold of subjective temporality and modernity. For Adorno, atonality denotes the expression of authentic historical consciousness Adorno's own negative dialectics, which he defines (1996, p. 5) as 'the consistent sense of nonidentity' (itself a critique of Hegel's dialectics) is expressed in atonal music's relationship with time:

> By virtue of this[2] nonidentity of identity, music achieves an absolutely new relationship to the time within which each work transpires. Music is no longer indifferent to time, for in time it is no longer arbitrarily repeated; rather it is transformed. (Adorno, 2006, p. 47)

Conversely, Said's construction of *After the Last Sky* follows a spatial narrative that both problematises and opens up Palestinian-ness onto the tangled temporalities of past and the future in conversation with a fossilized present absolute, echoing his thinking of narrative as an act of positioning. Arguably, the atonal for Said occasions a series of double movements he sees in exile, from burden to liberation, subjection to subjectivity, exterior to interior. These positions are set up and deconstructed throughout the book.

In his essay *Reflections on Exile*, Said (2000, p. 148) describes this 'plurality of vision' as contrapuntal. These comments on the atonal and Said's lateral movements between the temporal and the spatial, exile and the interior in *After the Last Sky*, provide a framework which anticipates the topological method employed in this thesis. *After the Last Sky* was written in collaboration with the photographs of Jean Mohr, a freelance Belgian photographer associated with John Berger. The book is structured in four sections, entitled 'States',

[1] A collaboration with the Belgian photographer Jean Mohr.

[2] When discussing Schonberg's approach to variation, Adorno (Ibid, p. 46) writes that 'all is identical, "the same." But the meaning of this identity is reflected as nonidentity. The initial material is fashioned so that holding it fast means at the same time transforming it.' This relationship between continuity and transformation is one Adorno comes back to, reflecting on the likeness of Schonberg's use of classical bourgeois music to that of contemporary materialist dialectics uses of Hegel (Ibid, p.47)

'Interiors', 'Emergence' and 'Past and Future'. Seeing the images and territories of Palestine as elements of a topological field, discrete but interconnected, Mohr's photographs documenting Palestinian lives are often conceptualized as tools to unpack philosophical and political problems. Through the de-centred and atonal, Said invokes both a language of spatial displacement and temporal disjointedness, while also conjuring unruly bodies, out of time and out of space. Crucially, the importance of Said's work is that he recognizes the unsuitability of philosophical and narrative frameworks to articulate the Palestinian condition. Said's thinking of the Palestinian image, an image resistant to existent conceptual frameworks, is a key text in situating the cinematic project discussed in the present thesis.

Throughout his reflection on Palestinian existence, in the photo-essay *After the Last Sky*, Edward Said continually decentres the Palestinian subject, both in his reflections on identity and his reactions to the composition of Jean Mohr's images. Said, in both a reference to and departure from Adorno, refers to the 'atonality' specific to Palestinian experience. This is indebted to both Said's own background in music theory, but also to his struggle to find alternative theoretical frameworks to organise and understand his collaboration with Mohr. Said recognises this unmooring, a subjectivity cast adrift, in his own usage of pronouns. As he states, there is a slippage from 'we to you to they to designate Palestinians' (Said, 1986, p. 6).

The book is essentially an attempt to dislocate the Palestinian experience and seek an identity, which, throughout the book, Said recognises as both over-determined, through the constant requirement to show proof that validates Palestinian existence or the existence of the Palestinian subject, but also always already negated—as the other Arab in other Arab nation-states, the non-Jew of Israel and the non-citizen of an inexistent Palestine. Edward Said writes 'to', rather than just about, Mohr's photographs, while constantly striving to move beyond their frames. The primacy of the visual in *After the Last Sky* is a clear departure from his earlier work as a literary theorist. That being said, Said's literary background comes through the text, notably in its references to Bartleby and Habiby, the latter a recurring figure in his later work, not to mention the allusion in the title of the book to Mahmoud Darwish's poem.[3] Perhaps what is most striking, in what is primarily unsaid between the written commentaries

[3] The title alludes to Darwish's 1984 poem *Earth Presses Against Us*. The poem was written two years after Darwish left Beirut and became a wandering exile, living in Cairo, Tunis and Paris. In its second line the poem expresses the corporeal experience of a body politic shattered by exile, with the words 'to pass through, we pull off our limbs.' (2003, p.9) The title of Said and Mohr's book is taken from the poem's middle section, which poses the rhetorical questions: 'Where should we go after the last border? Where should birds fly after the last sky?' (Ibid). This language of Darwish's late style enacts, as Said (1994, p.115) himself recognizes, a thinking beyond both the contemporary moment and finitude. That is, 'survival after the aftermath.' (Ibid)

and their corresponding photographs, is that Said looks to a musical structure to construct the four chapters of the book. In conversation with W.J.T. Mitchell about how he selected and arranged Mohr's photographs, Edward Said underscores the notion of the non-representational in art as his primary element of composition:

> I felt I was actually doing it in a kind of abstract way. That's to say, I was really working according to principles that are much easier for me to deal with within the non-representational art of the Islamic world. You know, where there were certain kinds of patterns that you could see that were not representational in the sense, you know, that they had a subject, but they had some motif and rather a musical motif (Said & Mitchell, 1998, p. 16).

Said clarifies that there is an insufficient equivalent that he could draw on from narrative theory or philosophy. Of the former, that is, the problem of thinking narrative in Palestinian terms, he explicitly states that narrative is a spatial notion, 'not a temporal one' (Ibid, p. 26). Said defines narrative as 'speaking from a place' (Ibid, p. 26). This framing of narrative as a lateral act of positioning, as a relation between language and space, subject and object, interior and exterior, can also be seen in how Elia Suleiman thinks the Palestinian image. Not a stable image with a subject, but rather a 'de-centred' and 'de-authored' image, what he terms 'decentralization of viewpoint, perception and narration' (Suleiman, 2000, p. 97).

The chapter titled 'States ' opens with a photograph of a small wedding party, solemnly posing beside a Mercedes, an indeterminate space, which Said (1986, p. 11) describes as 'outside a drab Arab city, outside a refugee camp, outside the crushing time of one disaster after another.' He then reflects on the role of the car, a space that plays an ambiguous role in contemporary Palestinian cinema, notably in the work of Elia Suleiman:

> [The Mercedes, Said writes, is] something one uses for everything – funerals, weddings, births, proud display, leaving home, coming home, fixing, stealing, reselling, running away in, hiding in. But because Palestinians have no state of their own to shield them, the Mercedes, its provenance and destination obscure, seems like an intruder, a delegate of the forces that both dislocate and hem them in (Ibid, p. 11).

Said's description of the Mercedes in Mohr's photograph is striking for a number of reasons. It articulates the complex spatiality of the car as a network of contradictions, blurring binary distinctions; life and death, lines of flight and dead-ends, hiding and incarceration, are both dislocated and hemmed in. Said's reflection on the ambiguity of the car that is both a nowhere

and an everywhere bears a striking resemblance to the opening scene of Elia Suleiman's *The Time That Remains* (2009). The film opens in darkness, as E.S, the protagonist, is collected by taxi from Ramallah airport. A low angle shot punctuates the darkness, as the taxi driver opens the boot. He is juxtaposed with a bright, pastoral poster of Israel ('Eretz Israel'- Different Land) in marked contrast with the darkness of the mise-en-scène. The rest of the scene takes place in the car, which becomes a claustrophobic space, as a rain storm sets in and disorients the driver, while E.S sits in the back, shrouded in darkness. The car, rendered immobile by the elements and cast adrift from any destination, becomes in essence a dislocated and incarcerating presence in an utterly different, or 'other' land.

Perhaps what is most pertinent, both for Said's book and for the underlying spatial themes of contemporary Palestinian cinema, is a blurring of the categories of inside and outside, dislocation and hemming in, the everywhere and the nowhere. This notion of being trapped within but also abandoned to the outside permeates Said's conversation with Mohr's photographs as it can be similarly drawn from the framing of space in contemporary Palestinian cinema.

This notion of being-hemmed-in and being on the outside is articulated again towards the end of 'States', when Said reflects on a long shot of a village scene outside Ramalllah. The image is striated by tiers of terraces and houses horizontally, and vertically by thick trees and stairs. It is a relatively innocuous, pastoral scene on the surface, but Said soon discerns something else in its grid-like composition:

> As for those terraces and multiple levels: do they serve the activities of daily life or are they the haunted stairs of a prison which, like Piranesi's, lead nowhere, confining their human captives? The dense mass of leaves, right and left, lend their bulk to the frame, but they too impinge on the slender life they surround, like memory or a history too complex to be sorted out, bigger than its subject, richer than any consciousness one might have of it (Ibid, p. 48).

This reflection on the hidden and haunted, paths, passing time, bodies and objects that uncannily appear or terminate everywhere and nowhere, lurking both within and outside the frame, can render a seemingly innocuous photograph something more sinister and oppressive. A similar approach to the framing of a space suspended between the totality of the everywhere and the negation of the nowhere is prominent in the cinematography and mise-en scene of Kamal Aljafari's two features *The Roof* (2006) and *Port of Memory* (2009). The roof and port evoked in the titles of the films are respectively the unfinished roof of Aljafari's mother's house in Ramle, and the port of Jaffa.

In *The Roof* Aljafari, in a similar way to Said, speaks to the frozen frames of moving images. After opening the second scene with an establishing shot of Ramle, which tracks slowly from right to left across the cemetery while Aljafari narrates a history of dispossession, the film then sets up its thematic inversion. The past, the foundations and origins are not hidden in the ground where one might expect, but rather above, in the unfinished roof of the title, abandoned in 1948 and now lying above, burying the house below it. The beautiful skeletal roof acts as a burden of memory and holds the characters captive in the space below. A similar spatial language is at work throughout *Port of Memory,* where walls and windows striate the 'exterior shots' of Jaffa, compartmentalising the screen into a grid and giving the sense of open confinement that Said recognises in the pastoral scene in *After the Last Sky* (Ibid).

'States' is also largely a reflection on notions of the nation-state, the competing and tangled claims to the space that is Palestine, and the question of nationalism. More specifically, it deals with the question of Arab nationalism, or perhaps more accurately, deconstructs the myth of pan-Arabism. Speaking of the various negations of Palestinian identification, Said writes:

> We all know that we are Arabs, and yet the concept, not to say the lived actuality, of Arabism—one the creed and the discourse of a proud Arab nation, free of imperialism, united, respected, powerful—is fast disappearing, cut up into the cautious, relatively provincial Arab states, each with its own traditions—partly invented, partly real—each with its own nationality and restricted identity (Ibid, p. 34).

Later in the same chapter, Said (p. 35) recognises the inclusive exclusion that Palestinians experience as Arabs, when he states that 'thus we are the same as other Arabs, but different. We cannot exist except as Arabs, even though "the Arabs" exist otherwise as Lebanese, Jordanians, Moroccans, Kuwaitis, and so forth.' The exclusion that the Palestinian experiences in the midst of Arab nations—who simultaneously identify with, and speak in the name of, 'the Palestinian cause' as an emblem of resistance and Arab nationalism—is a theme prominently dramatized in Elia Suleiman's work, particularly in *The Time That Remains* (2009). The figure of the impotent neighbour, huffing and puffing, all words and no action, is a recurring one in a number of scenes throughout the film.

Said's chapter on 'Interiors' is particularly useful in the context of the work of Suleiman and Aljafari insofar as it highlights key cinematic themes in the depiction of *Arab al-dakhil* (Palestinians living inside Israel), and the relation of the domestic interior to subjective interiority. The notions of the domestic interior as a space of repetition and excess, a space where repetition both reveals and conceals rupture, a cluttered assemblage of pictures, ornaments and religious iconography that Said sees in Mohr's still frames bear a striking resemblance to the framing of interiors in Aljafari's and Suleiman's work, particularly *Port of Memory* (2009) and *Chronicle of a Disappearance* (1997). The framing of the home as a space of privilege and hemming in can also be seen in the circling camera of Amos Gitai's *Ana Arabia* (2013), which engulfs its subjects as it dizzyingly spirals deeper and deeper into an enclave of Jaffa, without offering any revelation or escape from its oppressive orbit. The fact that these three films speak to an experience of the Palestinian in Israel, the interior Arab that Said elicits from Mohr's photographs is no coincidence. I suggest that this particular kind of interiority has been critically ignored in the cinematic framing of Palestinians *in* Israel, an important point to which I shall return in the course of this thesis.

After the Last Sky draws a complex portrait of 'Palestinian-ness' that Said describes as both 'a dense and layered reality' (p. 47) and 'a desire for the perfect congruence between 'memory, actuality and language' (p. 75-6). Commenting on Mohr's photographs of a settlement near Ramot (p. 70), Said reflects on the rapid multiplication of abnormal cell growth, as the biological cell-like homes cluster and expand into the distance. Here Said sees a hidden congruence between the topological 'interior' and the biological 'interior'. These 'interiors' are layered onto the linguistic interior Said opens the chapter with, when he refers to speaking *min al-dakhil* – from the interior, to speak from a paradoxical space of privilege and entrapment.[4]

Said draws on two literary references while speaking to Mohr's visual texts, namely *Bartelby the Scrivener's* passive nihilism, and Emile Habiby's *al-Mutasha'il* with its linguistic and subjective hybridity. Notably, there is also a long reference to the cinematic towards the end of the chapter titled 'Interiors', as Said reflects on Khleifi's *Fertile Memory* (1980), noting an 'aesthetic clarity' (p. 82) to a gendered, female perspective of dispossession

[4] Said writes with a deep awareness of his own exilic position. Said, in conversation with W.J.T. Mitchell, defines narrative as 'speaking from a place.' (1998, p.26). The places from which Said speaks in *After the Last Sky* (at a great physical distance from Palestine-Israel, laterally to Mohr's photography, critically to the nationalisms of both Israel and the Arab states) problematize a notion of a stable Palestinian identity, an instability reflected in Said's slippage between pronouns (1986, p.6) and his textual de-centering of images of Palestine throughout the book.

which is at odds with Said's own; a dominant patriarchal narrative tradition of defeat and dispossession. However, references to photographic theory are perhaps implicit in the text. The following passage describes Said's reflection on Jean Mohr's portrait of an old peasant man from Baqa'a camp in Amman, Jordan. The man is looking intently over his shoulder into the camera:

> The things you can be sure of have to do with what he can do – he's a worker, a peasant – and where he comes from (his village, his family, his past and present movements). But he does not simply express the poignant, mute and enduring sadness of an archetypal peasant people, without politics or historical detail or development. In such a face we can now discern something different: the reserve of a force building up out of a long, intense history, frustrated and angry about the present, desperately worried about the future (p. 91).

With this passage, Said implicitly references the work of Roland Barthes, notably his concept of *studium* and *punctum*. These relations co-exist in the still image. The first, from the Latin for *study*, describes the arrangement and surface details one can take from a picture. The *punctum*, unlike the *studium*, is not sought by the viewer in the image, but rather comes from the image out. It thus punctuates both the *studium* and the viewer. It is outside of the photographer's intentions, something that occurs in certain images, pointing out the 'accident' that 'pricks' and 'bruises' the viewer (Barthes, 1993, p. 27). Barthes's language itself, the *punctum* as point or punctuation, invokes the spatial (a position) the temporal (a point in time) and the corporeal (that which pricks, bruises).

Perhaps the most striking link between Barthes and Said can be drawn from Barthes's reflection on Alexander Gardner's 1865 *Portrait of Lewis Payne*, who was to be hanged for an attempted assassination. The *punctum* that pricks Barthes in this case is explicitly temporal. Of the image, in which its subject, like Mohr's old man from Amman, looks directly into the camera, Barthes writes:

> The photograph is handsome, as is the boy: that is the *studium*. But the *punctum* is: *he is going to die*. I read at the same time: *This will be* and *this has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake (Ibid, p. 96).

This *punctum*, an anxiety about the no longer is and the yet to come, the dead and the dying, is the very same one that pricks Said's reflection on Mohr's photograph. But while Barthes was staring into the eyes of a man who is going to die, there is perhaps in Said's *After the Last*

Sky a more heightened apprehension about the inability to determine and locate the whereabouts of a Palestinian-ness that lives and dies everywhere and nowhere. Death in the philosophical sense of finitude is primordial to the definition of human consciousness and the very notion of the political.[5]

Reflecting on how he chose which of Mohr's vast range of photographs were to be included in the book, Said's words reveal how he actively prioritised *punctum* over *studium*.

> I wasn't really looking for photographs that I thought were exceptionally good, as opposed to ones that were not exceptionally good. I was just looking at photographs that I felt provoked some kind of response in me. I couldn't formulate what the response was. But I chose them (Said & Mitchell 1998, p. 16).

Said's inability to describe a response to these images betrays another level of resistance within the Palestinian image. *After the Last Sky* was published the year before the first Intifada. Its questioning of a stable Palestinian identity, along with its questioning of the mythology of pan-Arabism and its evocation and framing of the interior as both a space of privilege and confinement resonates profoundly with contemporary Palestinian cinema.

2.2 Locating *Contemporary* Palestinian Cinema

As explained in the previous section, one of the most prominent elements of composition that ties the photographic, textual and silent fragments together in *After the Last Sky* has something to do with the difficulty of locating Palestinian-ness. Edward Said's evocation of non-representational art resonates with his repetitive return to the dichotomy of the everywhere and nowhere throughout the book. The present section picks up and elaborates on this theme to substantiate what is at stake in the politics of situating and locating Palestinian cinema. For that purpose, I suggest that the notion of contemporaneity speaks precisely to the related concerns of resistance of the image (as opposed to the image of resistance), and to the depoliticised dichotomy of the all/ nothing, everywhere/ nowhere of Palestinian-ness.

Edward Said recognises the contemporary as a site of critique. The contemporary is often understood in terms of being a marker of periodization. In film studies it is often used

[5] In his 1933-39 lectures on the religious philosophy of Hegel, Alexandre Kojeve insists on dignifying political struggle and political opposition with a 'political death'. In his view, treating the political opponent of the state like a petty criminal and subjecting them to the rule of law would de-politicize their acts as a crime against the state. If, on the contrary, these subjects are put to death, their acts would acquire its full political meaning.

uncritically to frame a corpus of films within a certain distance from the present. Illustrative of this is the Brill journal *Contemporary Cinema*, whose remit statement claims (2005) 'a concentration on films released in the past fifteen years [...] to reflect important current issues while pointing to others that to date have not been given sufficient attention.'[6] Such an awareness of a critical engagement with the term contemporary is rare, and even here marks a discrete periodization and a focus on 'current themes'. This is perhaps a major oversight, particularly since the contemporary, as will be argued here, contains within it an essential dimension of criticality.

Rather than being a historical marker, the contemporary (and contemporaneity) marks a critical relationship with time. In his essay 'Arabic Prose and Prose Fiction after 1948', Edward Said credits Constantine Zurayk's *Ma'na al-nakba* (The meaning of the Disaster) (1948) as understanding both the criticality and the complex temporality of contemporaneity. The contemporary, Said recognises, much like Roland Barthes, is neither the past nor the present, but rather the *untimely* which is, of course, not one and the same thing as eternity or the eternal.[7] Unlike the eternal, the untimely retains its full political potentiality. As such, the term denotes disjointedness with one's own time. What is interesting is that Said, writing eight years before Giorgio Agamben, dealt with the question of contemporaneity in his 2008 essay *What is the Contemporary?* and similarly identified it with a breaking open of one's time so as to understand it critically. In other words, the contemporary is that which both unhinges time and attempts to recouple it. Said (2000) sees Zurayk's work as performing a double movement between past and future. When writing of Zurayk's contemporariness, his relationship with his time, Said writes:

> The paradox is that both these observations hold, so that at the intersection of past and future stands the disaster, which on the one hand reveals the deviation from *what has yet to happen* (a unified, collective Arab identity) and on the other reveals the possibility of *what may happen* (Arab extinction as a cultural or national unit). The true force then of Zurayk's book is that it made clear the problem of the *present*, a problematic site of contemporaneity, occupied and blocked from the Arabs (Said 2000, p. 47).

---

[6](2005) 'Contemporary Cinema' In *Contemporary Cinema*, Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill | Rodopi. available at: https://brill.com/view/serial/COCI (Accessed 15/01/18)

[7] Agamben (40) in his essay *What is the Contemporary* references a note Roland Barthes made in his Colleges de France lectures that 'The contemporary is the untimely'

The 'problem of the present' is key to thinking the contemporary as critical practice. As well as identifying it with Zurayk's thinking of *al nakba*, Said also reflects on the formal instability of the present, and as such a challenge to representation, in *After the Last Sky* (1986). For Said, the formal fragmentation is indicative of 'the elusive, resistant reality it tries so often to represent' (Ibid, p. 38). For Said then, the real is that which resists, and as such the challenge of the contemporary is 'the almost metaphysical impossibility of representing the present' (Ibid). Much like Said before him, Giorgio Agamben thinks the contemporary as a fracture, a break within time, a caesura that opens a space of critique. For one to be contemporary, claims Agamben, a critical distance is required:

> Contemporariness is, then, a singular relationship with one's own time, which adheres to it and, at the same time, keeps a distance from it. More precisely, it is *that relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism* (Agamben 2008, p. 41).

This disjuncture manifests itself more dramatically in Agamben's reading of a 1923 Osip Mandelstam poem "The Century". Agamben views the poet as the contemporary par excellence in that he sees his time as always already broken. The poem frames the century, and thus the poet's time as a beast with a broken back. The poet, Agamben (Ibid, p. 42) tells us 'insofar as he is contemporary, *is* this fracture, *is* at once that which impedes time from composing itself and the blood that must suture this break or this wound.' The untimeliness of the contemporary is precisely this breaking and attempting to heal time, to recognise the problematic site of the present, a time that 'is in fact not only the most distant: it cannot in any way reach us' (Ibid, p. 47). Much like Zurayk's double movement that articulated his experience of a *disastrous* contemporaneity, for Agamben the contemporary grasps their time 'in the form of a "too soon" that is also a "too late"; of an already that is also a "not yet"' (Ibid).

Mahmoud Darwish articulates what he sees as the duty of the poet to exercise a contemporary critical distance, indeed this being the natural position, when writing of his complex relation with the Palestinian leadership, stating 'I encouraged the leadership in its time of weakness. Now that they are strong, I'm allowed not to applaud. If a Palestinian State is established, I will be in opposition. That is my natural position' (Darwish 2012, p. 64).

Towards the end of his essay, Agamben (Ibid) connects the contemporary with the practice of archaeology; a philosophical archaeology that he would develop a year after writing *What is the Contemporary?* This practice is not focussed on the past, but rather an operative force that allows the present to be accessed for the first time, a present that has, as

Said sees through Zurayk, been blocked off by trauma and historical tradition. Agamben, following Nietzsche and Foucault seems to be framing contemporaneity as a 'history of the present'. The true meaning of the contemporary in a *Contemporary Palestinian Cinema* is thus that of a resistant critical practice; maintaining a critical distance, a capacity for critique that interrogates the problems of the present so as to render possible a 'return to a present where we have never been' (Ibid, p. 52).

2.3 The Remnant and the Liminal Cinematic Space of Palestine-Israel

Based on the previous discussion around the difficulties underscored in contemporary Palestinian cinema about its contemporaneity, its untimeliness, as well as its striving to locate itself beyond the frozen frames of the nowhere and the everywhere, I suggest that some of these issues may have something to do with the fact that the cinemas of Palestine and Israel have long been defined in opposition, with the notable exception of the recent work of Ella Shohat and Yael Friedman.[8] However, this project will challenge the rigid distinction between what is understood as a Palestinian and Israeli film focusing on the depiction of a historical resistance to cultural partition in the films under study. More importantly, this novel way of conceptualising Palestinian cinema arises from the complex topological configuration of the space/s depicted in and recognized as Palestinian filmic texts. There is a relation of common spatial politics between a number of filmmakers, particularly Elia Suleiman, Kamal Aljafari, Udi Aloni and Amos Gitai, which renders the interior of Palestine-Israel a zone of indistinction. This section will trace the lineage of thinking which blurs the discursive boundaries of Palestine-Israel to its roots in Palestinian literature, critical theory and postcolonial studies, before examining the lack of such an approach in film studies.

The contemporary work of Ella Shohat goes a long way to complicating how a cinema of Palestine can be thought, primarily through the issue of relationality. That is, a discussion of Palestinian cinema cannot ignore its Israeli counterpart, nor can a discussion of Israeli cinema ignore its Palestinian one. In the 2010 postscript to her landmark critical work 'Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation' (1989), Shohat examines both the emergence

[8] Shohat's 2010 Postscript to her landmark work *Israeli Cinema East/West and the Politics of Representation* (1989) includes an eight-page chapter entitled 'Palestinians-in-Israel: Cinematic Citizenship in the Liminal Zone'. See also Friedman, Y. (2008) The View from Inside: Recent Palestinian Filmmaking in Israel, Jewish Quarterly, 55:3, 58-61

of the Palestinian in contemporary Israeli cinema, but also the work of Palestinian filmmakers 'who grew up *fil-dakhel*' (Shohat 2010, p. 273), thus considering the Palestinian filmmaking of the interior a de-totalising figure to any homogenising notion of an Israeli 'national' cinema. In doing so, she problematizes both the separation of the physical space of Palestine-Israel, and the separation of the cinemas. Thus, (among others) the works of Elia Suleiman, Mohammad Bakri, Michel Khleifi, Hany Abu-Assad and Sharif Waked 'clearly merit discussion not only under the rubric of Palestinian cinema, but also in the context of writing about cinema produced *in* and *around* Israel, or in the zone between the two cinemas' (Ibid, p. 271).

Using the notion of a liminal zone, Shohat raises the problem of defining the cinemas in opposition, particularly when considering *al-dakhil*. Shohat's work has informed Palestinian scholars as in the case of Tawil-Souri (2014) who acknowledges the problems of separating Palestine from Israel, highlighting *Port of Memory* (Kamal Aljafari, 2009) and *Omar* (Hany Abu-Assad, 2013) as films that 'challenge the in/out dichotomies of the '*dakhil*' (inside Israel) by treating Palestine-Israel as a whole' (Tawil-Souri 2014, p. 179). Further, she argues, 'separating Palestine and Israel is problematic at best, and if anything only reinforces the intransigence of territoriality' (Ibid, p. 180). However, it is precisely Tawil-Souri's own intransigence over a thinking of territory as a static object rather than, as this thesis argues, a process inhabiting a topological field, which diminishes the potential to think non-identical and continuous relation of discrete territorial topologies.

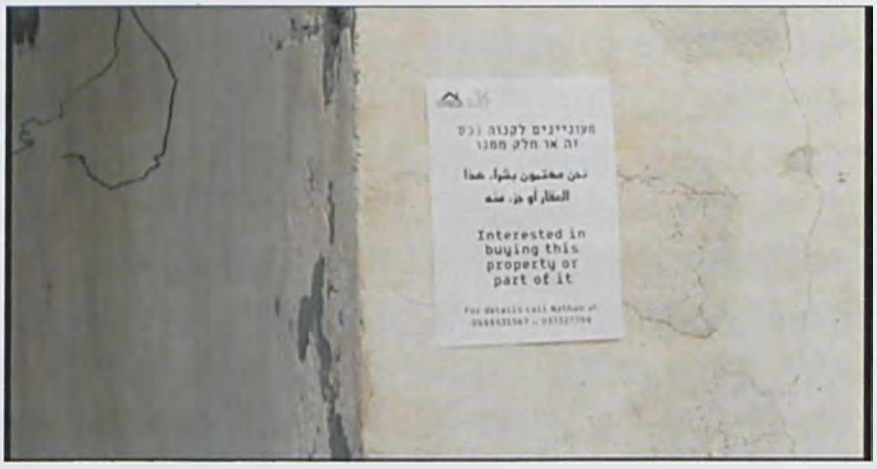
Further, treating Palestine-Israel as a whole opens the question of what can be considered a Palestinian or an Israeli film, particularly in the hyphenated liminal zone Shohat identifies. Tawil-Souri (Ibid, p. 179) correctly identifies the 'incarceration and entrapment experienced by Palestinians in Israel' occasioned by *Port of Memory*, but then conflates it with the one depicted in *Omar* as being indicative of films which treat Palestine and Israel as a whole. While it is true that the question of law is present in both films, my thesis argues that law functions topologically; its *properties* of emptiness remain the same. However, the *forms* it takes in the interior and the West Bank are radically different, and engender discrete cinematic frames.

A more productive discussion of Palestinian and Israeli cinema relationally might be where to position Amos Gitai's *Ana Arabia* (2013), ostensibly an 'Israeli' film about *al-dakhil*, and Kamal Aljafari's *Port of Memory*, a 'Palestinian' one explicitly occupied with the same type of situated subjectivity portrayed in Gitain's film. Both films take place within the same space, Jaffa. They share a cinematic language of stasis, walls and ruins as well as an

architectural porosity between interior and exterior spaces. They also share a spatial urban politics. That is, the shadow cast by the threat of gentrification and eviction, as Tel Aviv bears down on Jaffa. In both films, the main characters, Yusuf in *Ana Arabia* and Salim in *Port of Memory* are being threatened with eviction by the municipality.

©Agav Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The spatial politics of Jaffa in *Ana Arabia* (2013) (top) and *Port of Memory* (2009) (bottom)



©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

They also both move between Arabic and Hebrew and are occupied by the hauntings of Israel's repressed others. That is, both its present-absentee Palestinians and its marginalized Arab-Jews.

The Jew/non-Jew and self/other binarisms that Mahmoud Darwish, Edward Said and Elia Suleiman push back against can be put into dialogue with Agamben's thinking of the deconstructive force of the remnant in Jewish law.

In his text on Paul's letter to the Romans, *The Time That Remains* (2005), Giorgio Agamben traces Paul's letter to the Romans, along with Walter Benjamin's work on the Messianic interruption of history (and with it, the law). In Agamben's reading, the Pauline texts concern the abolition of Jewish law. In Agamben's reading of Paul, the founding principle of the law is division or separation, arguing that Paul 'seems to take the etymological meaning of the Greek term *nomos* seriously, since he uses that term to designate the Torah as well as laws in general, in that *nomos* derives from *nemō* "to divide, to attribute parts"' (Agamben 2005, p. 47). This separation manifests itself between Jews and non-Jews. However, within this division Paul introduces further divisions, into 'that of *sarx/pneuma*, the cut of "flesh/breath"' (Ibid, p. 49). A formerly clear Jew/non-Jew division is now partitioned, this being neither coincidental with, nor external to, the division of Mosaic Law: 'instead, it divides the division itself' (Ibid). This cut of Apelles introduces a remnant on either side of the Jew/non-Jew division of law, admitting 'a third term that then takes on the form of a double negation' (Ibid, p. 51) which is the non-non-Jew. It is precisely this figure that proves both irreducible, but also acts back upon the very act of division, performing 'an operation that divides the divisions of the law themselves and renders them inoperative, without ever reaching any final ground' (Ibid, p. 52). It is in this very disabling of law as inoperable that the remnant becomes an active and resistant political force that undermines attempts to homogenize identity formation. According to Agamben, the contemporary political force of the remnant:

> [...] allows for a new perspective that dislodges our antiquated of a people and a democracy, however impossible it may be to completely renounce them. The people is neither the all nor the part, neither the majority nor the minority. Instead, it is that which can never coincide with itself, as all or part, that which infinitely remains or resists in each division, and [...] never allows us to be reduced to a majority or a minority. This remnant is the figure, or the substantiality assumed by a people in a decisive moment, and as such is the only real political subject (Ibid, p. 57).

The relational complexity of a cinema of Palestine-Israel points toward a cinema of the remnant, that which undermines each national cinema's claims to speak for its people. Filmmakers and theorists featured in this thesis complicate the borders between Palestine-Israel by consciously occupying the liminal (and critical) space between the two. Ella Shohat's reiteration of the hyphen in the dual identity of the Arab-Jew exists as a third term, an irreducible remainder that undercuts attempts to frame Arab and Jew in a binary relation of enmity, along East/West fault lines. Similarly, Juliano Mer-Khamis's identification as

Palestinian-Jewish further troubled the Arab/Jew dichotomy, as he was '100% Palestinian and 100% Jewish, born in *al-dakhil*. Mer-Khamis himself spoke out in support of what he termed a 'cultural intifada'. A unifying thread that runs through the thinking of Shohat, Mer-Khamis, Amos Gitai, Udi Aloni, Edward Said and Elia Suleiman is a progressive culturalist approach to moving beyond the cul-de-sac of the two-state solution. Mer-Khamis, Udi Aloni and Suleiman see a two-state solution as unworkable, and spoke in favour of an artistic support for an alternative manifestation of bi-nationalism. In response to a question on Udi Aloni's defence of bi-nationalism, Suleiman responds:

> I know Udi Aloni and I believe that to have this kind of idealistic approach is the only way forward. I don't believe in pragmatism. So I think Udi's is an absolutely valid proposition. Is it realizable? Well... Ultimately, if one thinks of a just solution to the conflict, no alternative comes to mind. The two-state solution is a thing of the past, and the two peoples will eventually need to live together, in equality, without racism, etc. But I don't believe an occupier will want to easily give up the privileges of occupation. Also, I doubt that the Israeli government will ever want to accept millions of Palestinian refugees back into the country (Suleiman 2016).

The defeats and concessions of Oslo, along with the intransigence of Israel's government under Likud and Netanyahu and the rise of political Islam in Gaza have contributed to an emergent one-state thinking outside of a Westphalian nation-state model. Between the pessimism of the status quo, and the idealism that Suleiman acknowledges as being both utopian and necessary is the 'pessoptomism' of Emile Habiby that Moore-Gilbert endorses, calling for:

> the creation of a single, binational, secular democratic state, comprising the whole of Mandate Palestine, which guarantees equal status before a single system of law and equality of personal, social, political and economic opportunity for all its citizens (Moore-Gilbert 2018, p. 29).

This spectre of bi-nationalism, of the resistance of the hyphen between Palestine-Israel is one that haunts their respective contemporary cinemas. This is a spectre that Said recognises in *After the Last Sky* as haunting Palestine as far back as 1986, where he credits Arafat as both conjuring and mishandling a fragile ideal of non-sectarian existence, claiming:

> No leader of any group in the Middle East so unambiguously sponsored so secular and genuinely liberating an idea. That Palestine might become the peacefully shared home of Arabs and Jews, and

> that no one group would have privileges over the other. And no leader has also seemed so catastrophically to be implicated in setbacks (Said 1986, p. 122)[9]

The disjuncture between the idealism and realties of co-existence are dealt with in the absurdist encounter between orthodox settlers and Palestinian Catholic nuns in Basil Khalil's short feature *Ave Maria* (2015). The film deals with a family of settlers whose car crashes into the Virgin Mary statue outside a convent in the West Bank. The competing laws of religious dogma create a series of absurd encounters, as the accident happens both on the Sabbath and during the nuns' vow of silence. Despite the settler's predicament and need of help, there is an initial insistence on deference to the laws of the Sabbath, such as in the scene below, where Moshe is trying to call a friend to be rescued from Arab territory, and insists Sister Marie makes the call for him, breaking her vow of silence. She dials the number, but leaves the phone on the table, forcing Moshe to eventually relent and pick up the receiver.

The resistance of sectarian difference to secular co-existence in *Ave Maria* (Basil Khalil, 2015). ©Basil Khalil (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The film is a reminder of the fragility of the ideal of bi-nationalism, or even co-existence in the realities of both occupation and a piece of land that Said (1986, p. 152) describes as being

[9] Regarding the issue of secular co-existance, it is worthy of comment on Said's quote that, within the context of the Arab world, Habib Bourgiba—the first leader of independent Tunisia—played a role in the pre-1967 Arab world in both suggesting co-existence and expressing criticism of both Israel and Palestine's Arab neighbours for the plight of Palestinian refugees. Bourgiba's pragamitism (and recognition of disequilibria of military means) called for 'a pacific solution in which there would be neither victor nor victim' (Bilinsky 1973, p. 111). Bourgiba's approach put him at odds with Arab nationalism, and his position, as Bilinsky (Ibid, p.116) highlights, was both tested and, in the wake of defeat, somewhat affirmed by the events of the 1967 war and the defeat of Pan-Arabism and its politics of rejection.

'drenched in religion'. There is no transformative understanding of the other resulting from this encounter. Nevertheless, there is, in spite of the film's caustic humour, recognition of the kindness and resourcefulness of neighbours, even those framed discursively in enmity. Nevertheless, the emergent cinema of Palestine-Israel that can be traced through the writing of Ella Shohat and Edward Said, and in the filmmaking of Juliono Mer-Khamis, Amos Gitai, Udi Aloni, Kamal Aljafari and Elia Suleiman—a cinema that complicates the threshold space of *al-dakhil*—a cultural challenge to a politics of separation emerges.

Admittedly, Moore-Gilbert (2018, p. 31) acknowledges that some of the proponents of the progressive one-state solution 'belong to a relatively highly privileged class fraction of the Palestinian diaspora,' and further that the argument is 'necessarily "culturalist" and therefore has little hope of influencing established parameters of political debate about Palestine/Israel'. However, a challenge to the logic that this is a utopian dream of a privileged few comes in the recent rationale behind the protest marches in Gaza that began in March 2018. In spite of the disproportionate response, the agenda of the protestors was strikingly close to Mer-Khamis's 'cultural intifada'. As inconvenient as it may be to contemporary political discourse coming from Israel that frames Gaza and Hamas as an insurmountable obstacle to peace, Ahmed Abu Artema, a Gazan journalist who claims no Hamas affiliation and who co-organized the protests, articulated a different political demand, expressing a desire for a fully equal state of citizens, claiming in an interview with *Middle East Eye* (2018) that 'a one-state solution, where all citizens are equal under one law, is a powerful and strong idea which I think it would grow in the future and gain momentum.'[10] While the political stasis of Palestine/Israel remains, its cinema, and increasingly activism at a grassroots level, points to a critical approach to the politics of partition.

2.4 Towards a Topological Atonality of Contemporary Palestinian Cinema

Annemarie Jacir's *Like 20 Impossibles* (2003) opens in flight, with a disembodied hand suspended from the window of the back of a car, while the disembodied voice of the protagonist—the director of the film within this film—rhapsodises about freedom from the back of a car, as open landscape passes by. This opening fragmentation of body, voice and reeling landscape will become significant when the openness and free tracking camera are

[10]Source: Abu Sneineh, M. (2018) 'Interview: The Palestinian who sparked March of Return with a Facebook post' *Middle East Eye*, 08 June [online] Available at http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/Gaza-great-march-return-Israel-Ahmed-Abu-Artema

soon arrested as the film crew travelling in the car reach Kalandia (they are travelling from Haifa to Jerusalem), which is gridlocked with cars being stopped and IDs checked. At this stage, the fluidity of territory comes into play as Mohammad, the cameraman, states 'this isn't a checkpoint. In a couple of years it'll be a border.'[11] This static checkpoint is averted as the crew decides to take a side road. These routes, as Sobhi al-Zobaidi (2008) elucidates, are known as Tora Bora, in reference to the tunnels in Afghanistan, albeit used in a conceptually more nuanced manner in his essay. By way of definition, al-Zobaidi (2008) states that 'In Palestine, the term Tora Bora has become popular as a designation for "those really dangerous passages" between Palestinian towns and villages cut off by the Israelis.' This route initially leads to flowing movement, as the hills of the West Bank pass by the window, and the conversation flows between the returning Annemarie (who is based in New York) and Rami, her lead actor from Ramallah.

Movement is arrested once again, as high in the hills of the West Bank a mobile checkpoint emerges, an emergence that reshapes the territory in complex ways. In this new space, the characters of the film find themselves inside while being simultaneously outside. This untenable paradox is played out in a number of ways, from the paradoxes of the law to the formal elements of the film itself. The characters are rendered, by this passage, legally and ontologically displaced. Annemarie, who considers herself as being at 'home', carries an American passport. She initially shows the least concern about taking the back road and tries to retain control of the space as its transformation escalates. Her cameraman, Mohammad, is from Jaffa, and thus legally an Arab-Israeli; he is informed that he cannot enter the West Bank as a citizen for his own 'security' and is told there is a 2000 Sheikel fine for his 'transgression'. Rami, the actor, who is both from and in the West Bank, is detained because he is 'suspected'— although of what, it never transpires. Annemarie, who carries an American passport, is regarded as an outsider; as highlighted when one of the Israeli soldiers, on learning she is from New York, states 'actually, I was born in Miami' in a surreal moment of forced 'camaraderie'. The territory depicted in the film is further complicated by yet another legal hurdle, the permit to be filming. When Annemarie shows the soldier her 'right' to be making

[11] The West Bank Palestinian's ironic awareness of the hardening of 'temporary' security measure draws on a logic of temporary permanence underpinning the occupation. Similar to Reid's (2012) notion of resilience constructed on the perpetual threat of danger, Eyal Weizman (2007, p. 104) writes of the continued temporariness of the Occupation being predicated on a notion of security which perpetuates insecurity, thus justifying its continued presence. This logic that necessitates state violence, also exists alongside the eternal return of resolutions suggesting the conflict 'is on the brink of being resolved' (Ibid), thus further justifying 'temporary' measures.

a film in the West Bank, he informs her that this permit is for Area A, and that they are now in Area B.

Thus, the three Palestinians find themselves caught by the legal processes of territory, functioning here as the 'spatial extent' of sovereignty (Elden 2009, p. xxx), a (bio) political technology, a territory that is not a bounded space as such, but rather a fluid configuration of figures, as in the unexpected emergence of the soldiers, coming face to face with the three Palestinians from the 'diaspora', the 'interior' and the West Bank, who find themselves constituting a new territory, both inside and outside, a space where the figure of the exile, who feels at home, is a figure disoriented by the confusion of the arbitrary legal irruptions that can redraw the space. This disorientation is marked cinematically in a number of different ways. Annemarie, who, by carrying a US passport, has a certain legal freedom within this territory, nevertheless finds herself ontologically situated as a stranger. Her initial confidence in the group's ability to pass is undermined by the irruption of sovereign power. There is further disorientation as she is informed that her permit is for the wrong area. This is estrangement as imagined by Edward Said's thinking of *al-ghurba*. While Said uses both terms *manfa* for exile and *ghurba* for estrangement, the latter term has a more nuanced, existential meaning as to the foreignness and strangeness of exile.

Hans Wehr's Arabic English dictionary translates *al-ghurba* as follows: 'absence from the homeland; separation from one's native country, banishment, exile; life, or place, away from home' (Wehr, 1994, p. 783). *Ghurba* draws its root from the Qur'an from the verb *gharaba*, which, since its opposite *sharaqa* is connected to the sun and East, thus orientation, can be taken as disorientation, cast from the light. Julianne Hammer, when tracing the philological complexity of a Palestinian notes this dual use:

> Edward Said translates *ghurba* as estrangement, and uses the term *manfa* for exile. Indeed, *manfa* is exile in a more literal sense, as the verb *nafa* means [to negate], to banish or expel. In Palestinian literature and poetry it is *ghurba*, where the Palestinian is a stranger that carries all the notions of suffering, cold, winter, estrangement and dislocation (Hammer 2005, p. 60).

This strange chill of displacement, disorientation and abandonment Said (2000, p. 186) describes as a 'mind of winter', 'in which the pathos of summer and autumn as much as the potential of spring are nearby but unobtainable.' It is precisely this wintry exilic estrangement that Annemarie experiences high in the hills of the West Bank. As her film crew are dispersed and held as points marking this new geometry of power, Annemarie is caught in the middle,

outside the car, disoriented, wrapping her arms around herself for warmth as she takes in the situation, an exilic figure of estrangement, caught within the putative boundaries of Area B and the emergent space of exception, yet rendered a stranger and outlaw, abandoned to arbitrary legal machinations, neither free nor unfree. Free to move, yet powerless to act, forced to observe yet prohibited from filming.

The *encounter* between the *Arab al-dakhil*, the exilic/diasporic Palestinian and the West Bank Palestinian in conjunction with the question of legality reconfigures the cinematic space, not topographically, but *topologically*. This topological encounter marks a paradigm shift in Palestinian cinema that is irreducible to political circumstances, generational shifts (the 'new' Palestinian directors) and political economy (reception and audience). Rather, the corpus of films under study represents a cinematic thinking of an idea of a topology of Palestinian subjectivities in relation to the question of the law. The reason for approaching contemporary Palestinian cinema through the prism of topology is that it is crucial in understanding the notion of 'peoples' rather than just 'a people' and that the element of contemporaneity in 'contemporary' Palestinian cinema, relates primarily to juxtaposition and discordance. That is, a contemporary emergence of a primarily spatial consciousness. This spatiality is echoed in Abourahme's (2011) identification of the heterogeneous temporalities of Gaza, the West Bank and the camps.

While Abourahme is speaking primarily of a temporal estrangement, he identifies, in contrasting Gaza, Ramallah and the refugee camps, an explicitly *spatial* consciousness to the contemporary Palestinian condition. Despite the fact that there have been notable attempts at theorizing the hybridity of the Palestinian (Tawil 2005) and attention has been paid to discrete functions of space, such as 'tora bora' (al-Zobaidi 2008) to counterpoise existing scholarship's overt focus on 'road block movies' (Tawil 2005, Gertz and Khleifi 2008, Dickinson 2016), this thesis contends that a specific configuration of space and subjectivity has been neglected. It is primarily the transfiguration of space engendered by the encounters between these 'sundered' (Abourahme 2011, p. 455) Palestinians that necessitate a topological spatial thinking of contemporaneity. Topology, being the study of the properties of place, allows a thinking of space as networked site of relations. Crucially, it occasions a re-articulation of space and territory *beyond* Euclidian geometry. Whereas the former is understood in quantitative and measurable terms (the distance between points), topological space is better understood qualitatively, as the properties of place under conditions of distortion, stretching and folding. Thus a single surface of multiple heterogeneous and discrete points that can converge and diverge through folds in the surface. Through folding and

convergence, discrete temporal and spatial points can interact with one another, which in turn can create new networks of relations.

A topological reading of place has been employed by Giorgio Agamben and is a recurring theme in both *Stanzas* (1993) and *Infancy and History* (1993). Perhaps the most sustained engagement with place, indeed 'extraterritorial' undoing of territorial place occurs in his 1993 essay *Beyond Human Rights*.[12] Towards the end of the essay, which is both a reflection on Arendt's work on citizenry and sovereignty and an attempt to think beyond the territorial nation-state, Agamben references the expulsion of 425 Palestinians across the border to a 'security zone' (Haberman, 1992, p. 1) in Southern Lebanon. This Agambian zone of indistinction delimited a space 'more internal to it (the territorial state) than any other region of Eretz Israel' (Agamben 2000, p. 25). Here a thinking of place that is topological allows for a complication of inside and outside, where 'exterior and interior in-determine each other' (Ibid, p. 24). Perhaps more crucially, this topological thinking implies the transformative effect on space occasioned by the *encounter* between life and law. Agamben comes back to this when theorizing the space of exception in *Homer Sacer*, drawing on Hobbes and Schmitt to posit the space of indistinction as a topological figure, a zone of indistinction between 'outside and inside, nature and exception, *physis* and *nomos*' (Agamben 1998, p. 37). For Agamben, topological spaces are crucial for understanding both the positive and insidious potential of extraterritoriality.

Similarly, Gilles Deleuze has employed topology for thinking the complex spaces and connections of cinema, from the linkages in time to those in space. Deleuze employs a whole taxonomy of transformative space-times in his topology, from the crystal and 'sheets' of the past and 'peaks' of present, to the any-space-whatever. Indeed, it is when theorising 'chrono-signs' that Deleuze develops his topology.[13] He separates chrono-signs into two topological forms: 'the first are aspects (regions, layers), the second accents (peaks of view [*pointes de vue*])' (Deleuze 1989, p. 101). Deleuze most explicitly engages with topology as a mathematical practice to articulate what happens to referential points within the pliability of the sheets of the past (Ibid, p. 119). When describing the relation between sheets of the past in Resnais, Deleuze describes the mathematical principal of the Boulanger transformation:

---

[12] Published in: Giorgio Agamben (2000) 'Means without End. Notes on Politics' in *Theory Out of Bounds, Vol. 20.* Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press

[13] These chronosigns are drawn from Henri Bergson's 'Cone of Memory' (1908), which Deleuze depicts in a footnote and references (Deleuze 1989, 98) with the 'peak' of present being 'the most contracted degree of the past'.

> a square may be pulled into a rectangle whose two halves will form a new square, with the result that the total surface is redistributed with each transformation. If we take the smallest imaginable region of this surface, two infinitely close points will end up being separated, each allocated to one half, at the end of a certain number of transformations (Ibid, p. 119).

From this, Deleuze constructs a topology of transformations, through which events, characters and place are read laterally and are constantly being rearranged. In this system, cinema acts as an assemblage, with the constant rearrangement of connections and linkages of the elements of a film as a whole or a scene as a part, be they temporalities, elements of the mise-en-scène, sound or editing. It is through this topological property of the image that we see Deleuze's articulation of the cinematic image as the extension of the image of thought, that is, the taking shape of an idea. In a 1986 interview with *Cahiers du Cinema,*[14] Deleuze himself claims his reason for writing about cinema was 'because philosophical problems compelled [him] to look for answers in the cinema' (Deleuze 2000, p. 367). Towards the end of chapter five of *Cinema 2*, Deleuze most explicitly describes his topology of images as images of thought.

> The screen itself is the cerebral membrane where immediate and direct confrontations take place between the past and the future, the inside and the outside, at a distance impossible to determine, independent of any fixed point [...]. The image no longer has space and movement as its primary characteristics but topology and time (Deleuze 1989, p. 125).

Curiously, for a thinker of the spatial such as Deleuze, to subordinate 'space and movement' to 'topology and time' seems like an unusual move. However, in thinking space and connection topologically, it becomes clear what Deleuze is deposing is not a Lefrebvrian notion of space, but rather a Euclidian geometry.

In *Cinema 1*, Deleuze (1986) theorizes the any-space-whatever in its greatest detail, reading affective spaces in Bresson and Antonioni, two forms of space he terms 'de-connected' and 'empty'. The former, the first definition of the any-space-whatever is the clearest break with Euclidean, metric space, a space which has lost 'the principle of its metric relations or the connection of its own parts, so that the linkages can be made in an infinite number of ways' (Deleuze 1986, p. 109). The latter meanwhile, is 'amorphous set' (Ibid, p.

[14] Published in English as 'The Brain is the Screen: An interview with Gilles Deleuze' in Flaxman, G. (2000). *The brain is the screen*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

120), a voiding of actions and events within it. However, acutely aware of the topological nature of these forms, Deleuze stresses that these two states are 'implied in each other' (Ibid) and the any-space-whatever retains a singular nature; namely, 'it no longer has co-ordinates, it is a pure potential' (Ibid). In the following chapter, Deleuze again breaks with Euclidean geometry when speaking of 'Riemannian spaces[15] in Bresson, in neo-realism, in the new wave and in the New York school' and 'topological spaces in Resnais' (Ibid, p. 129).

Despite Deleuze's sustained engagement with topology, it has not had the same impact as space and place on film studies as a discipline. The 'spatial turn', from Lefrebvre through Soja, Massey and Harvey, has had a significant impact on the humanities in general and film studies in particular. In her 2014 essay 'Metropolis in Transformation: Cinematic Topologies of Urban Space', Laura Frahm discusses the 'topological turn' in cultural studies in Germany. Frahm (2014, p. 262) argues for a topological thinking of space as a 'quintessentially transformative space' that, in allowing for the malleability of space through 'dynamic relations', conceptualises what she terms the 'spatial thickness' of the cinematic metropolis.

Frahm's thesis hinges on the somewhat contentious positing of the spatial turn having failed to overcome a notion of space as a rigid container, a condition she argues 'persistently remains in the basic notion of space' (Ibid, p. 260). A problem which appears to affect Frahm's essay— a danger Deleuze (1989, p. 129) is cognisant of when he cites 'the dangers of citing scientific propositions outside of their own sphere'— is one of borrowing the language of topology and using it metaphorically, uncoupling it entirely from its material context. While the genealogy of topology is traced from Leibniz's relational space, Frahm's use of topology as a tool to examine the 'dynamic and transformative' multiplicity of spaces of the cinematic metropolis rests on both the taken-for-grantedness and de-politicisation of prior conceptualizations of space. This is precisely the issue Smith and Katz (1993) take with some of the use of spatial metaphor that they see emerging out of critical geography's 'spatial turn', both highlighting 'little, if any attempt to examine the different implications of material and metaphorical space' (Smith and Katz 1993, p. 68), and claiming 'spatial metaphors are problematic in so far as they presume that space is not' (Ibid, p. 75). Essentially, Smith and Katz's argument is that spatial metaphor needs to be mindful of borrowing uncritically from the language of absolute space, or rather the 'naturalized absolute conception of space that grew up with capitalism' (Ibid, p. 76). To avoid such a trap, the topological must respect the complexity of the topographic.

---

[15] Riemannian space is described at length in the discussion of the relation between smooth and striated space in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987)

Mapping a network of spatial, temporal and corporeal points topologically over a topographic and political space as over-determined as the space of Palestine-Israel allows for neither a de-politicised thinking of 'a-territorial' space, nor for a reductive 'national-territorial'. Rather, a thinking of the territorial *through* the concept of a topological field allows a relational thinking of a network of heterogeneous temporalities, spatialities and corporealities, co-existent without a hierarchical central event such as the *Nakba*. Thinking the topological *beyond* the topographic allows a thinking of space and time that is impossible to imagine in Euclidean topographic space. That is, one where different temporalities, or territorial places can co-exist through topological folds; thus inside and outside, depth and surface, past and present can converge. It is this interpenetration of psychic and material space that Blum and Secor (2014, p. 115), in their work on a topology of trauma,[16] draw from a reading of Freud's Rome in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930).

2.5 Topology of *Al-Shatat*

The films under study in this thesis present a complex and networked spatial contemporaneity. As such, they cannot be said to express a primarily historical consciousness of the founding trauma of the *Nakba* (1948) or the setback of the *Naksa* (1967). Nor can they be grouped thematically, as in the thematic structure of the roadblock movie.[17] Finally, the a-territorial spatiality of Tawil-Souri's (2005, 2014) work fundamentally misreads territory as a passive container. When Tawil-Souri (2014, p. 173) urges us not to 'mistake the territory itself, nor its 'loss', for the nation', she prioritises space over territory in a way that this thesis argues is a false dichotomy. The former is expansive and fluid, while the latter is bounded and corresponds to its topographical sum. Stuart Elden's (2013, 2014) thinking of territory arguably thought the concept topologically, moving away from a thinking of it as fixed and bounded marker of space to a fluid and shifting process. The de-centeredness that Said (1986) highlights in Palestinian culture, and Suleiman (2000) in the non-hierarchical image can be

[16] It should be noted that in the last decade, a whole field of Topological Trauma Studies has emerged, largely due to Jacques Lacan's topological turn of the 1970s. In this decade, Lacan increasingly turned to topology to think the structure of the subject. Seminar XXIV, of 1976-77 is Lacan's most sustained engagement with topology, in which he utilizes a whole taxonomy of topological structures such as the torus, the mobius and the Klein bottle. Most significantly, he structures his Symbolic order through the Borromean knot. The subtitle of Blum and Secor's (2014, p. 103) chapter, 'Topography to Topology' mirrors the move from Freud's thinking (and mapping) of the subject, to Lacan's.

[17] Albeit still theorised historically, around the event of the 2002 *Al-Aqsa Intifada*. Further, this is a thematic structure particular to filmmaking of the West Bank, neglecting works such as Aljafari's and Suleiman's that move between the West Bank and the 'interior'.

articulated cinematically through a topology of *al-shatat*, capturing the 'dense and layered reality' (Said 1986, p. 47) of Palestine-Israel.

The present project proposes to structure the corpus of Palestinian cinema, including the selected one for the purpose of this study, topologically, as a method to think the politics of contemporary Palestinian cinema in a way that re-invigorates the spatial consciousness of territory as a dynamic process. The remaining individual chapters of the thesis are arranged according to what will be termed a topology of *al-shatat*, a generic term for the discrete but convergent topologies of the interior (*al-dakhil*), the West Bank (*al-dhaffa al-gharbiyya*), exile (*al-ghurba*) and the camp (*al-mukhayyam*).

Al-shatat in Arabic conveys the sense in English of diaspora, or dispersal. Its Arabic usage does not carry the same rich literary history of *manfa* and *al-ghurba* (exile and estrangement, respectively) and thus it provides a useful signifier for the general dispersal of Palestinian subjectivities, while also conveying the dispersal of points on a topological field, thus showing how temporal and spatial folds can manipulate the structures of these Palestinian subjectivities. The divergence and convergence of these figures topologically distort the space of Palestine-Israel merging with and emerging into one another at certain points while remaining discrete at others. While these geopolitical territories have been sundered from one another, as Nasser Abourahme (2011) has highlighted, the cinematic space-times they produce occasion radically different, albeit connected ways of framing Palestine-Israel.

Before introducing the four topologies, therefore, some explanation of the structure of the corpus and movement of the chapters henceforth is required. The structure of chapters two to six move from the edge to the centre and out again, in a topological movement which shows inside and outside to be continuation of one another. That is, to begin with the West Bank is ostensibly to begin at the edge; a territory which is divided into three zones and partitioned from the Palestinians of Gaza and those in Israel. While the figure of Palestinian resilience (*sumud*) under occupation is more central an image in popular consciousness than the liminal figure of the *arab al-dakhil,* the Palestinian in Israel, it is precisely its geographic and political position at the edge of Israel, outside of the state, beyond the Wall in an occupied non-state, which lends it a geopolitical liminality maintained by the chimera of the two-state solution. The reason for beginning my topology of *al-shatat* with the West Bank, has something to do with the notion of the surface. The term 'West Bank' is a translation from the Arabic, *al-dhaffa al-gharbiyya.* While this refers, in a literal sense to the west bank of the river Jordan, *al-dhaffa* has more complex shades of meaning, conveying both a notion of the edge and the margin. This notion of superficiality extends to the facades of suburbs of outer Jerusalem

highlighted by Eyal Weizman (and detailed in the next chapter), the lowering of trailers to provide 'facts on the ground' on the surface of West Bank land witnessed in *5 Broken Cameras*. Unlike the hidden depths of the interior (*al-dakhil*) from which the concealed (and supressed) Palestinian emerges, the obscenity of the cinema of the West Bank is the tension between the everywhere and nowhere invisibility of the Law, and the hypervisibility of the Palestinian as object of that law.

The territories which constitute the four topologies resist any thinking in terms of their bounded, topographical sum. While geopolitical concerns, as mentioned above, condition distinct ways of seeing, and interacting with power, the question (and questioning) of Law and questioning of the image of resistance means between these territoties mean function together as a heterogeneous assemblage of interconnecting points, the encounters between them producing new ways of thinking the contemporary Palestinian cinematic subject, which demonstrate resistance *of* the homogeonising 'image of resistance' and resistance *to* partition. Resistance to partition comes precisely through thinking the corpus, and the four 'territories' topologically. Through the qualitative properites of encounter and connectivity, a topological surface or plane resists attempts to partition inside from outside. In this way the figure of the margin (*al-dhaffa*), the camp (*al-mukhayyam*), the interior (*al-dakhil*) and diasporic estrangement (*al-ghurba*) exist as spatial properties within the topological field of *al-shatat*, and can connect, disperse and shift position all the while retaining distinct properties, enacting an Agambian (2000, p. 26) 'topological deformation' of the geometry of the nation-state and the continued political project of partition.

2.5.1 Cinema of the West Bank

The contemporary space of the West Bank, as we saw in the topological disorientation of *Like Twenty Impossibles*, is determined by the question of legality, in that jurisdiction is three-fold. The West Bank is divided into three zones, A, B and C with A coming under Israeli jurisdiction, C under the Palestinian Authority, and B acting as a 'buffer zone' (Lambert, 2013). The fluid spatiality of zoning is taken to extremes in Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi's *Five Broken Cameras* (2011) where the village of Bil'in gets caught in the emergence of 'closed military zones' around settlement building. Here law exists in a state of exception, in which the enunciation of the *space* of exception topologically distorts outside and inside.

This overt encounter with the force of law can also produce a dynamic and often overtly resistant body.[18] This corporeal encounter *with*, *through* and *against* space is a common trope in the cinema of the West Bank, which often articulates a cinematic body in movement (albeit frequently arrested) through space and against obstacles. A notable example of this is Sharif Waked's video installation *Chic Point: Fashion for Israeli Checkpoints* (2003). This short piece subverts the Israeli soldier's biopolitical gaze, transforming the Agambian bare body into a troublesome, erotic object by juxtaposing real footage of checkpoints with a runway show displaying actor/models. They are provocatively dressed in outfits that reveal their midsections, framed through the soldiers' gaze as always already weaponized. One of these figures—Saleh Bakri—inhabits a markedly different body in Elia Suleiman's *The Time That Remains* (2009), a film, indicative of an entirely different arrangement of bodies in space in *al-dakhil*, the Palestinian interior.

A more recent example that illustrates this resistant body is Hany Abu-Assad's *Omar* (2013), which follows its character through a series of flights, captures and betrayals. Despite a carceral theme to the film, as Omar is repeatedly captured and released, his is a dynamic body– muscle and sinew– and one which drives a kinetic, albeit claustrophobic mise-en-scène. Body and surface in this film are in a perpetual state of conflict and negotiation. Hanna Baumann (2015) has highlighted the somewhat casual nature of trespassing in Khaled Jarrar's *Infiltrators* (2012). The separation wall figures in *Omar* not as an insurmountable obstacle. Rather, it is an everyday challenge—the fabric of the city is a haptic (albeit deeply hazardous) cartography for the main character.

This focus on the Palestinian body as either a site of resistance or control occasions a cinematic body, I argue, that marks the mise-en-scène of the West Bank films, where power relations are more overt and heightened. Territory here, in the Eldenian (2013) sense of territory as a political technology, plays a part in this production of bodies in space. The cinematic body of the West Bank is an object of power but—quite literally—an *ob-ject* in the Latin sense of the root, i.e. that which is thrown against.[19] This is a body often on a collision course with the physical and juridical obstacles of power. The interplay of time, space and bodies in Ramallah constructs a different topology in Suha Araf's *Villa Touma* (2014) as the event of the *naksa* of 1967 forms a discordant time within space, a Foucauldian

[18] Determined through physics by a necessary play of forces on the body
[19] The Latin term *obicere* being constructed from *ob* (in the way of) and *jacere* (to throw)

'heterochrony' of Christian aristocratic women attempting to hermetically seal themselves off from the contemporary city.

2.5.2 Cinema of *al-mukhayyam* (the camp)

The topology of the camp holds a number of relational points within it. A folding of these points can signify a temporality of revolutionary nostalgia of the PLO in Jordan in Annemarie Jacir's *When I Saw You* (2012), as the main character Tarek escapes the boredom of his refugee camp for the *Fedayeen* camp in Jordan. The Jenin Camp signifies differing spaces of resistance in Mohammad Bakri's *Jenin, Jenin* (2002) and the Otolith Group's *Nervus Rerum* (2008), with the former documenting and taking testimony of the camp after Israel's 'Operation Defensive Shield', and offering an image of resistance corresponding to a logic of *sumud*; the latter meanwhile, with its floating camera and refusal to engage its subjects or the viewer offers a resistance of image, articulating an opacity (Demos 2009) which resists consumable signifiers of Palestinian-ness. However, while 'camp' can signify a discrete spatial consciousness, the topological deformations of space engendered by encounters between subjects and law mean that camps can be found elsewhere. As Giorgio Agamben (1998) recognises, the camp is not a fixed place, but rather a set of spatial relations, which can occur at a moment of spatial exception. Therefore, the coming-into-being of the 'closed military zone' in Bil'in marks the topological coming together of the space of the camp and the space of the West Bank.

2.5.3 Cinema of *al-dakhil* (the interior)

The ontological condition of *al-dakhil*, those in the interior, is described at length in the 'Interiors' chapter of Edward Said's *After the Last Sky* (1986). He describes its shifting meaning throughout Palestinian history in relation to those *fil-kharij* (in the exterior) and gradually a topological impossibility of separating inside from outside.

The condition of 'interiority' finds its ontological roots in the historical-legal condition of the *present-absentee*. This historical-legal condition emerged in the years after 1948, with the 1950 Law of Absentee Property. This determined Palestinians who left their villages during the 1948 war but found themselves within the new state, as corporeally present within the state, but legally absent from their place of origin. 'Thus' Hillel Cohen (2002, para. 10) writes 'the internal refugees who fled to villages in upper Galilee or to Nazareth before these were conquered are defined as absentees though they were in the state and were legal citizens.' This historical legal status occasions a contemporary trace of ontological displacement visible in the cinematic language of the *al-dakhil* films. In *The Roof* (2006) and *Port of Memory* (2009) Kamal Aljafari frames the architecture of the interior as the 'hemming-in' Said refers to through the figure of the house. In the latter film, the law is an absent presence that hangs over the film in the figure of the 'lost' house deeds. The spectre of eviction also hangs over Amos Gitai's *Ana Arabia* (2013) a film which frames Jaffa with a spiralling camera that tracks Yael, a journalist who has neo-realist seer-like presence and is led into a courtyard space by an old Palestinian man, Yusuf. She is covering the story of Ana Arabia, who migrated from Europe as Hanna Klibanov and converted to Islam to marry Yusuf. Her absence is the void at the centre of this piece, and the film takes a peripatetic structure as Yael drifts through conversations that reveal fragments from the life of the deceased Ana.

This any-space-whatever shares a similar spatial politics with Kamal Aljafari's *Port of Memory* (2009), also set in Jaffa. That is, the shadow cast by the threat of gentrification and eviction, as Tel Aviv bears down on Jaffa. This displacement by gentrification occurs in both the narrative and form of Aljafari's work, while it is alluded to in Gitai's film. Both *Ana Arabia* and *Port of Memory* allude to the madness that escapes *min al-dakhil* (from the interior) of Jaffa, in the figure of the explosions of laughter, screaming and threatened self-harm in the latter, and the madness and maladies of Yusuf's son Jihad, who fled to Nablus to build a boat.

The interior as a space of haunting conditions *Forgiveness* (2006), in which the Palestinian revenant haunts the spaces of Israel's psychological interior, mirroring *Port of Memory's* ghosting of cinematic Jaffa. The story fragments around the topological trauma of David, an Israeli-American soldier, and the folds in space and time flow through Amal, a figure who connects past and present, surface and depth and leads to the films archaeological conclusion, in which underground regression offers a path out of political impasse.

Elia Suleiman's 'interior' is largely confined to Nazareth, the site of his trilogy *Chronicle of a Disappearance* (1996), *Divine Intervention* (2002) and *The Time That Remains*

(2009). This interior is a space in which bored, ageing and unhealthy bodies dwell, and neighbourhood enmity is both directed outward (Palestine's Arab 'neighbours') and turned inward within the citizens of Nazareth.

2.5.4 Cinema of *al-ghurba* (estrangement)

The notion of a Palestinian diaspora is deeply complex in relation to Palestinian cinema. In the case of Palestine, and Arabic, there are problems from the start due to a number of co-existing terms. Three terms are used, and their meanings convey the interconnectedness and interrelation of displacement. The first of these is *al-shatat*, which is closest in meaning to diaspora, in that it translates as scattered, separated or dispersed. The other terms, *al-ghurba* (estrangement) and *manfa* (exile) have more complex shades of meaning and are found more commonly in Palestinian literature.

Al-Shatat, with its connotations of dispersal and scattering, provides a useful framework for thinking the divergent and convergent topologies of contemporary Palestinian cinema, a network of discrete but connected temporalities, spatialities and subjectivities. However, a more generalized sense of diaspora is contested in general, and highly problematic in the particular case of Palestine-Israel.

Diaspora as way of thinking post-national identity has been criticised, most notably by Roger Brubaker (2005), in its elastic and universalising tendency, which Schulz (2005, p. 8) argues 'has increasingly come to be employed as a metaphor to signify a global condition of mobility' that Brubaker (2005) refers to as the 'diaspora' diaspora. That is dispersal and stretching of meaning to the point that it loses any significance. A universal encompassing approach loses precisely the discreteness of different diasporic identities. As Brubaker (2005, p. 3) states, 'if everyone is diasporic, then no one is distinctively so.'

Julie Peteet, in her 2007 article 'Problematizing a Palestinian Diaspora', follows Edward Said in choosing the term *al-ghurba* as a translation of exile/diaspora, and consciously leaving aside the term *al-shatat* or *manfa*. Further, Peteet highlights the problem of framing Palestinian subjectivity through a lens of post-colonial discourse, claiming that 'Palestinians do not always fit easily into contemporary theoretical frameworks. In an era of post-colonial studies, they remain firmly in the grip of modern colonialism' (Peteet 2007, p. 631). This claim follows the work of Jospeh Massad (2000), whose essay "The Post-Colonial' Colony: Time, Space and Bodies in Palestine/Israel' argues for the 'synchronicity of the colonial and the postcolonial' (Ibid, p. 312), recognising the complex multiplicity of claims

within the space of Palestine-Israel to both projects of a colonial/and post-colonial nature, and statuses of both colonizer and colonized, particularly complicated in the figure of the Mizrahi Jew (This can be seen in Kamal Aljafari's 'resistant co-opting' of a Mizrahi song of oppression in the Israeli film *Kazablan* (1973) in his *Port of Memory* (2009), keeping the Hebrew lyrics to present a song of displacement and oppression of the Palestinian in Israel.) Further, Peteet (2007, p. 628) calls for a careful thinking of the specificity of the language surrounding displacement, stating that 'disaggregating exile and "refugeeness" from diaspora may be more appropriate to encompass the Palestinian situation.' This disaggregation is rendered cinematically in a scene in Annemarie Jacir's *Salt of this Sea* (2008), when the main character Soraya, despite being from a legal standpoint a Palestinian-American (she holds an American passport and was born in Brooklyn) identifies as a *'bint mukhayyamat Amrika'* (girl of the American camps). This figure sees a continuum between the camps in the West Bank, Jordan and Lebanon and her own place as a hyphenated U.S. citizen. Peteet thus takes 'refugeeness' as a juridical status to problematize a notion of diaspora and better articulate the multiplicity of identities that constitute being Palestinian.

> The juridical status of the refugee is pivotal in problematizing a Palestinian diaspora. How are the concepts refugee and diaspora articulated? How would diaspora encapsulate the varied juridical categories of Palestinian belonging and identity (from stateless refugees to citizens to residents to the complex array of legal identities of those under occupation)? (Ibid, p. 635)

While this may complicate a universalizing notion of diaspora, it does, however, fall into the same trap of somewhat universalizing discrete, and arguably territorialized identities. As such, *al-shatat* is a useful category for thinking a topology of subsets of discrete Palestinian subjectivities. Within this topology, *al-dakhil*, *al-mukhayyam, the territories* and *al-ghurba* are points of convergence and divergence, often connected and separated (as seen in *Like Twenty Impossibles*) by force of law.

Further, the figure of the 'returning outsider' complicates a thinking of exile/diaspora/estrangement. For example, while Elia Suleiman's autobiographical figure 'E.S' in *The Time That Remains* (2009) is a returning figure to his parents in Nazareth, his juridical status as an Israeli citizen combined with his life in Europe and the U.S. gives him an 'internal' outsiders perspective of being a Palestinian in Israel.

The tension between returning and remaining is central to the eruptive encounter at the centre of Annemarie Jacir's *Wajib* (2017), also set in Nazareth. Mohammad Bakri and his

son Saleh play a Nazarene father and son, Abu Shadi and Shadi, whose duty is to deliver invitations for Abu Shadi's daughter's wedding. The film takes place in an old Volvo and the houses of relatives Shadi has not seen for years. He lives in Rome with his Palestinian girlfriend, having left (or been forced to leave) Nazareth as a teenager under an unspecified accusation from an Israeli spy. *Wajib* translates into English as 'duty', and this becomes a structuring tension from which forces interact in the film. Abu Shadi's duty is to family and his traditional customs in Nazareth, whereas Shadi resents this, seeing it as suffocating ceremony. There is counter-resentment from Abu Shadi, who sees his son versed in the romantic tales of revolutionary Palestine from his girlfriend's father, an academic and PLO member. Exilic and interior ways of seeing converge and collide at various points in the film, the putative generational divide between those who left and those who remained complicated by the figure of Fadya, a lawyer and cousin of Shadi's who sees it as her duty to remain and advocate for the rights of Palestinians in Israel.

In contrast to E.S. and Shadi, the juridical status of the autobiographical 'Annemarie' in *Like Twenty Impossibles* (2003) or Soraya in *Salt of this Sea* (2008) occasions a fundamentally different framing and thinking of space and law. This is why—in the case of the latter—the category of *al-ghurba*, an estrangement that is also a form of strangeness, is an appropriate one. The Palestinian who is legally a U.S. or European citizen can be rendered a 'tourist' and a 'stranger', the former in a temporal sense and the latter in a juridical one. An understanding of law forged elsewhere often leads to a transformative encounter with a biopolitical force of law in the space of Palestine/Israel, which brings with it the coldness, strangeness and disorientation of *al-ghurba*. However, the exilic estrangement of *al-ghurba* also provides a contrapuntal consciousness, witnessed in Basma Alsharif's *Ouroboros,* which situates Gaza and Palestine in a topological network of places and images from histories of colonialism.

Chapter 3:

Topologies of the West Bank

A contemporary Palestinian cinema is characterised, as this thesis argues, by a primarily spatial consciousness. The encounter between territorialized Palestinians and the law has a transformative effect on space and the bodies caught within it, as illustrated by the end of Annemarie Jacir's *Like Twenty Impossibles* (2003), detailed below. As an active process, territory produces political spaces; emerging, disappearing and reforming as distributed nodal points within a tangled network. Thus place, power and people come into relation through political technology as a 'bundle of political techniques' (Elden 2013, p. 17).

The ending of *Like 20 Impossibles* (2003) enacts a cinematic microcosm of a tripartite compartmentalisation of the three territorially discrete Palestinians: the Palestinian from Israel (*al-dakhil*), the West Bank 'suspect', and the diaspora 'stranger' (*al-ghurba*). Each figure is isolated on account of being a suspect, having the wrong permit (Zone A rather than B), or being a citizen of Israel. Territory as a process of control here recreates the fragmentary spatial logic of the West Bank, with the three Palestinians surrounded by those in control of territory, their autonomy suspended by force of law.

West Bank 'zoning' in *Like 20 Impossibles* (2003). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

In the case of the West Bank, spatial politics is overtly heightened; reinforced by indistinct divisions and subdivisions of space, and governance over said spaces. This has led to a complex relation of space to sovereignty, in what Leopold Lambert (2013, p. 11) terms the 'Palestinian Archipelago,' alluding to the island-like isolation and compartmentalisation of juridically distinct territories within the territory of the West Bank. Elaborating on this post-Oslo construct, he states:

> Since 1993, the secretly signed accords in Oslo between the P.L.O. (Palestinian Liberation Organization) and the state of Israel have been spatially implemented through the division of the West Bank in three different zones: Areas A, B and C. While Area A guarantees – supposedly – a zone of governance for the Palestinian government and the right to insure security via its own means, Area C, on the contrary gives an absolute power to the Israeli army over security, planning and movement. Area B is a buffer zone where both the Israeli Defense Forces and the Palestinian police have the right to intervene' (Ibid).

Lambert highlights the asymmetry of these arbitrary divisions. While 'Area C constitutes 63% of the West Bank, and Area A only 17%,' (Ibid), Area C surrounds A and B, strengthening the Island metaphor.

The topology of the West Bank occasions fundamentally different relations of space, time and bodies than that of *al-dakhil* (the interior) or the camp. This is a cinema governed largely by the logic of violent encounters, manifested spatially, corporeally and temporally in a semblance of frantic mobility and even a form of aimless nomadism which is, nonetheless, arrested suddenly in its tracks by the random emergence of the Israeli soldier, the 'flying' checkpoint or another 'agent' of the law. This is a landscape, as David Fieni (2014, p. 11) argues 'embedded with shards of suspended time,' where temporal suspension can occur through the rationale of the 'necessity' of security. Spatial sovereignty is often expressed through the practice of zoning—in which the bodily presence of an agent of the law can radically reconfigure territory topologically— as we saw in *Like 20 Impossibles* (2003), but also a strong feature of encounters with the law in *5 Broken Cameras* (2011). However, a violent temporal encounter of a different kind can be witnessed in *Villa Touma* (2014), as the titular villa imprisons characters in denial, shame, and a rejection of the contemporary, into which nonetheless, they are thrown.

The present chapter identifies a set of themes and resistant images specific to the cinema of the West Bank. The main questions this chapter seeks to address stem primarily from the specific tensions within the cinema of the West Bank between the resistance of the traditional 'image of resistance' from which the PA (since 2007, effectively the Fatah government of the West Bank) seeks to commodify and gain political capital, and resistance to the occupation. The latter, practised through the techniques territory and 'zoning', occasions a resistance to partition particular to the West Bank; that is, a resistance to the arbitrary and 'empty' law, whose force lies in its contentless dissemination in the populace. With these resistances in mind, the four films examined in this chapter— *5 Broken Cameras, Route 181, Omar* and *Villa Touma*— articulate the relation between bodies, law and surfaces particular to the cinema of the West Bank. The focus on the fluid movement of law and the *process* of territory marks a break with the focus on the static apparatus of occupation—the roadblock, the checkpoint—which informs Gertz and Khleifi's (2008, p. 153) focus on 'roadblock movies', to which they dedicate an entire chapter. It is not the confrontation with the apparatus of the law, but rather its emptiness, along with a questioning of its arbitrary absurdness that defines a contemporary cinema of the West Bank. The Arabic term *al-dhaffa*,

which as discussed at the end of chapter 2, signifies 'bank', but also 'edge' and 'margin' articulates a contemporary cinema of the West Bank as a cinema of surfaces, from the use of stone cladding to lend a veneer to historical claims to the land, to the superficiality of the Palestinian Authority's circulation of 'images of resitance' for political capital. The next section will briefly contextualise this history of stone, symbolism and surfaces in the West Bank.

West Bank Areas. Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Available at: https://www.ochaopt.org/maps

3.1. Hollowing the Holy Land

The question of a politics of space is clearly a pertinent one when it comes to Palestine, both from a historical and a contemporary standpoint. Stephen Graham (2004) cites both Jaffa and Jenin as examples where the British used explosives during the Mandate to create space under which colonial control could be exercised, and the threat of insurgency diminished. The latter, as detailed in the subsequent chapter on the spatial politics of *al-mukhayyam* (the camp), has remained both a site of resistance and a laboratory for the spatial (re)ordering of occupation. Léopold Lambert (2013) uses a more contemporary example of what he terms 'architectural Stockholm syndrome' to refer to the style of Palestinian house building in the West Bank, which closely resembles Israeli settlements.[1] Both of these examples demonstrate the centrality and politicized nature of spatial thinking and planning in Palestine-Israel in general, and the West Bank in particular. Eyal Weizman (2004, p. 173) speaks of 'the spatial legacy of Ariel Sharon,' that is, how a historical continuum of spatial ordering has become a fundamental element of contemporary Palestinian subjectivity.

The space of Palestine-Israel, as Edward Said (1986), Lina Khatib (2006) and Eyal Weizman (2007) have all recognised is always already over-determined as a site of historical claim, archaeological and ideological conflict, and the epicentre of three monotheistic religions. Thus competing claims over the landscape, the territory, and historical appropriation are, according to Eyal Weizman, attempts to collapse three dimensions into six. The metaphor of the 'hollow land' (Weizman 2007) finds its actualisation in the archaeological digs under the Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount in Jerusalem, which have led to accusations of literally undermining the foundations of the present in an attempt to strengthen the historical ground with a claim to the mythical '*arche*' of the state of Israel. Edward Said and W.J.T Mitchell have both commented on the impact of competing claims on a lived social space, buried under a dense suffocating layering of myth, symbolism and violence. Said, in his reflection on Palestinian identity in *After the Last Sky*, laments the intertwining of the region with the historical traditions and apocalyptic imaginary of religious monotheism:

[1] A troubling inversion of this formula is given in an anecdote by Elia Suleiman, referring to an Israeli assistant director: 'When we were denied permission to shoot in West Jerusalem, I realized he didn't know what the term 'Arab houses' meant. He just thought the Hebrew words referred to an architectural style' (Suleiman 2003, p. 27).

> What a fate for Palestine: to have attracted the religious imagination and the dramas of the apocalypse not just once, but three times: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, the latter the most austere, least known and most abominated. Lift off the veneer of religious cant — which speaks of the 'best and noblest in the Judaic, Christian, or Muslim tradition,' in perfectly interchangeable phrases — and a seething cauldron of outrageous fables is revealed, seething with several bestiaries, streams of blood and innumerable corpses (Said 1986, p. 152).

What resonates in Said's quote is the veneer, the relationship between surface, depth and representation of landscape. In a section of his reflection on 'Holy landscape' subtitled 'Specular Surfaces: Landscape and Forgetting', W.J.T Mitchell (2000, p. 195) highlights 'the remarkable capacity of the surface of landscape to open up false depths, selective memories and self-serving myths.' W.J.T Mitchell, echoing Said's evocation of a symbolically charged social space densely layered with Biblical and mythical claims to the point that it 'becomes a magical object, an idol that demands human sacrifice, a place where symbolic, imaginary, and real violence implode on an actual social space' (Mitchell, 2000, p. 207).

In the context of the West Bank, Eyal Weizman understands the surface as a marker of myth and symbolism in a very literal sense in his observations on the use of mythical facades in Jewish settlements on the outskirts of the Jerusalem. Tracing the architectural development in outer Jerusalem neighbourhoods, Weizman follows the evolution of stone as a political symbol, first as a structural element, and latterly, due to its expense, as a layer just 6cm thick (Weizman, 2007, p. 30). In doing this, Weizman highlights the dual meaning that the *arche* holds for nationalist projects; not merely as an origin to be excavated and revealed, but also a specular surface of false continuity to both reinforce the archaeological project by giving the modern a veneer of the mythic:

> This amendment [1944] reduced the role of stone from a construction material to a cladding material. Stone became a stick-on signifying element for creating visual unity between new construction and the Old City, thus visually confirming the municipal boundaries - as whatever building appeared to be built in stone was perceived part of the city of Jerusalem (Weizman, 2007, 30).

The cinema of the West Bank characteristically seeks to interrupt this 'visual unity' between old and new, mythical landscapes and lived social spaces, to reveal their 'false depths' and unfounded claims to an exclusive identity. Arguably, myth, politics and ideology converge in

the motif of the stone, which is contested both as a symbolic object and building material. At a wider level, this extends to the concept of the surface, asphalt and concrete, ruins and archaeological practice.

The contested political meaning of stone can be seen in both the use of stone cladding to signify biblical continuity in Jerusalem suburbs, but also in the symbolic meaning of stone in the First Intifada in 1987. Young Palestinians in the First Intifada were known as the 'children of the stones' for their use of stones and slingshots; this Intifada marked in contrast to the Second by the fact that it was largely unarmed. Barbara M. Parmenter, in her 1994 book *Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature*, recognises the symbolic power of subverting the biblical narrative of David, 'part of Israel's national mythology of a small community pitted against giants' (Parmenter 1994, p. 2). The symbolism of stones as a tool of resistance to a far stronger opponent not only subverts the national founding mythology of Israel (that of a David surrounded by Goliaths), but also liberates stone from the 'archaeological' gaze; both crucial to the logic of Zionism and prevalent in framing travel to Palestine throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, as recognized by Said (1986), Mitchell (2000) and Dickinson (2016).

3.2 The Exercise of Territory in *5 Broken Cameras*

Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi's *5 Broken Cameras* (2011) is primarily a film about the sort of territory concealed behind the stone-cladded architectural landscape of the West Bank. The film is formally structured around the life cycles of the titular cameras, which start out documenting the birth of his latest child, Gibreel. This event of birth is soon overtaken by the protests which dominate the film; that is, the construction of the West Bank Barrier that separates Bil'in from the majority of its arable land. In parallel with the formal structure organized around the birth and death of the cameras, birth as an event punctuating political events frames Emad's family narrative. His eldest son, Mohamad, is born in 1995, at a time of relative openness and optimism in the wake of the Oslo Accords. Yasin is born in 1998, a time, we are told, of uncertainty and dissipating optimism. Taki Ydin arrives in 2000 on, as Emad states, 'the very first day of the Second Intifada.' His birth took place in a hospital filled with death, while his childhood came to be defined by states of siege. Finally, Gibreel—whose childhood among the escalating protests and politicisation of his father structures much of the film.

The film opens with a bucolic scene, as the camera pans slowly from right to left across the fields and farmlands of the hills around Bil'in, as Emad evokes his life as a *falah*, a farmer, who tills the land, and his youthful preference for wandering in the hills with his friends rather than helping his father—itself perhaps betraying a hint of guilt at not following the patriarchal *wajib* (duty) to live out his 'fate' to live as his father lived

The expansive opening scenes of *5 Broken Cameras* (2011). ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

This formal and textual openness evokes the *sarhat* that Raja Shehadeh (2007) describes in *Palestinian Walks*, the *dérive*-like unrestricted and unplanned wanderings among the hills the West Bank, which became increasingly striated by the geometry of occupation. Similarly, the openness of this initial scene is aggressively punctuated by what Stuart Elden (2013) terms the 'political technologies' of territory. Elden's thinking of political technology functions at multiple levels, including technical aspects and techniques. Following Heidegger and Foucault, Elden draws on *techné* as encompassing both technical hardware and, more broadly, technique as an art or way of conceiving the world. At the micro level, this political technology includes 'geometry, land surveying, navigation, cartography, and statistics' (Elden 2013, p. 16). At the macro level, it broadens into conceptual processes, including 'legal systems and arguments; political debates, theories, concepts, and practices; colonization and military excursions; works of literature and dictionaries; historical studies [and] myths' (Ibid, p. 17). Thus into the bucolic landscapes in the opening scenes of *5 Broken Cameras* arrive

first surveyors with measuring equipment, followed by a Caterpillar bulldozer. The latter, as Stephen Graham (2004) has argued, is as much a conceptual tool as a technical instrument, integral to the creative destruction of what Graham terms 'urbicide', the policy of dispossession and destruction that allows for the expansion of settlements.

Territory as political technique in *5 Broken Cameras*. ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

Following Elden's interrogation of naturalised and uncritical thinking of territory, the thinking of territory that occupies and often redraws the space of *5 Broken Cameras* does not correspond to this traditional thinking of territory as a demarcated, bounded space. Rather, it is a process of space and power that is relational. This process actively reshapes and distorts space, through a range of techniques, instruments and discursive acts.

In his earlier work *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty* (2009), Elden highlights the ambiguity surrounding the usage of the term territory, which, in its most common parlance constitutes 'a bounded space under the control of a group of people, usually a state,' but can frequently describe an 'entity that has not attained statehood' (ibid, p. xxv). In these cases, Elden cites examples of colonial legacy (Britain and France's overseas territories), neo-colonialism (the Occupied Territories of Palestine) and contemporary anomalies in Australia and Canada, which lack the full standing of statehood. The correlation between population, land and control leads to Elden broadly defining territory as 'a political and legal term concerning the relation between sovereignty, land, and people' (ibid, p. xxvi).

The relation between people, politics and land is a significant one in the case of the Palestinian Territories. In Arabic usage, territory can signify both land as unclaimed space (*'ard*), and the political sense of an area of arable lands, akin to property (*mintaqa*). The former has the sense (often taken as the root of 'territory' in English) of the Latin *Terra*, meaning 'land or terrain'. However, Elden notes that, in English usage, the 'actual term from which territory is directly derived is the Latin "territorium"' (ibid, xxviii), meaning a place surrounding an area, but complicated by 'a relation suggested between "terrere" and "terra"' (ibid). The former term meaning 'to frighten' leads Elden to theorize a conception of territory in which terror is always already present.

Such a relation of land to terror can be seen in the opening sequences of *5 Broken Cameras* (2011). The film documents the village of Bil'in's struggles with the Israeli settlement of Modi'in Illit and the simultaneous construction of the West Bank Barrier and the one which demarcates the settlement, cutting off 60% of the territory (*'ard*) and farmland (*al'ard alziraeia*) around Bil'in. This in turn leads to protests and escalation between Palestinian protesters, the settlers, and the Israeli military. The film's structural play is both the tension between terror and territory, and the tension between territory (*'ard*) in the sense of cultivated land of the farmers, and territory practised as a 'political technology' of control incorporating agents of law, (bio)political technology and property. This latter sense is manifested in the figures (and crucially, *bodies*) of the border soldier, the settler, and the

surveyor; and instruments of control, including the spaces of exception declared 'Closed Military Zones', and the use of JCB and crane to reshape territory.

The zone of indistinction between terror and territory is alluded to in Achille Mbembé's (2003) work on necropolitics, understood as the intersection between 'politics as the work of death' and 'sovereignty, expressed predominantly as the right to kill' (Mbembé 2003, p. 16). When writing of colonial occupation, Mbembé references 'colonial terror,' practised through 'a matter of seizing, delimiting, and asserting control over a physical geographical area—of writing on the ground a new set of social and spatial relations.' Mbembé terms 'necropower' a form of power that 'appeals to exception, emergency, and a fictionalized notion of the enemy' (ibid, p. 25). This enmity is constructed as a function of territory through control. As Elden (2009, p. xxx) explains, 'those in control of a territory—states—can act in ways that those not in control of territory cannot.' By this logic 'to control a territory is to exercise terror; to challenge territorial extent is to exercise terror.' In other words, those with control over territory can act with relative impunity due to a state-based system of rules, while those without it, who attempt to resist or challenge such a system are 'necessarily coded as "terrorists"' (ibid). As Elden suggests, the codifying of control *of* territory as legitimate, and *challenge to* it as illegitimate, structures a logic of violence within those parameters.

To challenge territorial extent is to exercise territory: Power, terror and territory in *5 Broken Cameras* (2011). ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

Hence, in the scene illustrated above, the immediate and disproportionate violence meted out to Emad and the protesters when they initially attempt to halt the lowering of a trailer onto their land. Mbeme's 'writing on the ground' of colonial practice finds a very literal expression

in the establishing of 'facts on the ground.' This 'temporary permanence' has long been a practice of settling land under the logic of 'exceptional' necessity. Eyal Weizman (2004, p. 186) has highlighted this, recognising that 'throughout Israeli history, though, the state has always preferred to use temporary security arrangements as a way to create permanent political "facts on the ground".'

Despite the non-violent attempts at protesting the lowering of the trailer, and the presence of the camera, protestors are met with violence and aggression by a group of settlers outside Modi'in Illit and attempt to express their right to the territory. There is no discussion to be had, since, in challenging territorial extent they are always already codified as 'terrorists'. Weizman also recognizes the 'contingency apparatus' nature of the barrier that allows 'sovereign' spaces of exception to codify occupation as legitimate, and challenging expansion and making claims on this territory as illegitimate. This is exemplified in the scene that follows, as the villagers attempt to subvert this logic and lower their own trailer, establishing their own 'facts on the ground.'

A subversion of territorial logic in *5 Broken Cameras*. ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

This scene marks a striking temporal differential between those who putatively 'control' the territory and those who challenge it. The speed of response with which the military intercept and remove the villagers' trailer is in marked contrast to the futility of attempting to stop the 'temporary permanence' of the settlers' trailers. Eyal Weizman highlights the military tactical-legal technique that allows temporary structures to become permanent under the guise of security, emphasising the significance of legal techniques in the relation between terror and territory:

> The tactical-legal manipulation of the term 'temporary security necessities,' testified to whenever needed by the military, has turned into a government charade in attempts to deny the HCJ[2] the possibility of blocking government access to private Palestinian land (Weizman 2007, p. 97).

David Fieni (2014, p.11) defines this topological structure of temporal suspension emerging within biopolitical space as 'sovereign time,' the potential temporality of the state of exception in which temporal suspension structures and undermines the very landscape, threatening to erupt at any point. While Fieni's article examines the temporality of the checkpoint, as we have seen, in potential spaces of exception the 'checkpoint' is very rarely an architectural structure, and is often embodied by and depends on the speech and actions of agents of the law— be they soldiers, lawyers or those codified as its guardians. It is these very guardians who embody the presence of this form of law. The law itself however is conspicuous by its absence. This lack of content is most striking in the scenes that follow the 'Closed Military Zone' scene.

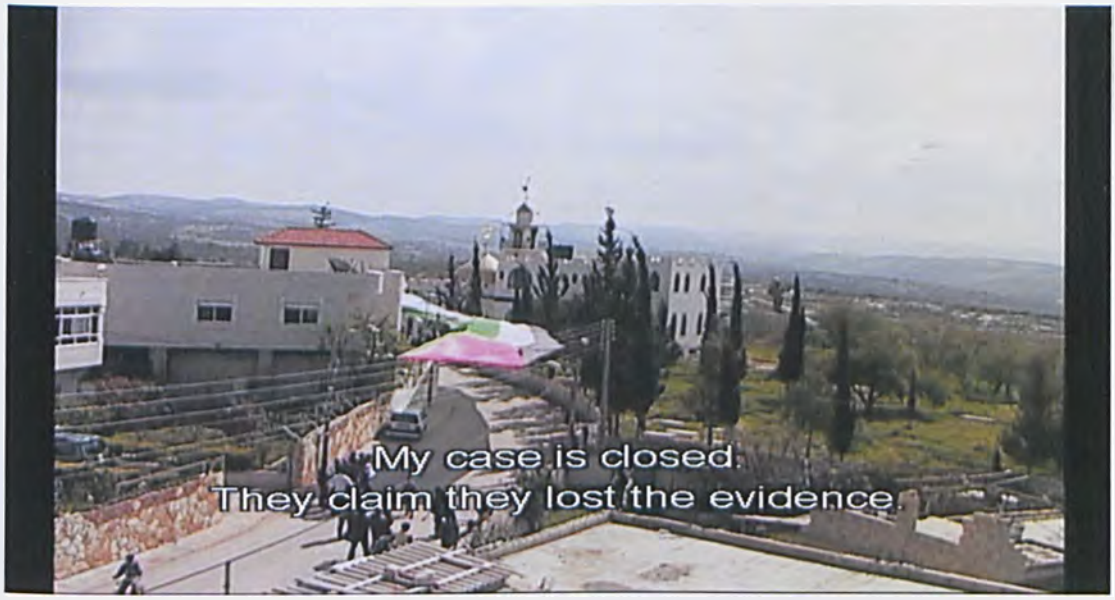
Emad is arrested and spends several weeks in prison, after which his lawyer manages to commute his sentence to house arrest for one month. His charges relate to an accusation of stone throwing. These scenes resemble an austere version of Jafar Panahi's *This Is Not A Film* (2011). For a sustained period, having been unable to have access to his camera in prison, Emad is in front of the camera—set up on a tripod fixed in the corner of a sparsely furnished room outside Bil'in, recording the claustrophobia of house arrest. Family members visit and leave, moving like shadows in and out of the fixed frame, a court-appointed psychologist arrives to assess Emad, and the tedium and depression of his domestic incarceration begins to take its toll.

[2] Israel's High Court of Justice.

The boredom and stasis of house arrest in *5 Broken Cameras* (2011). ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

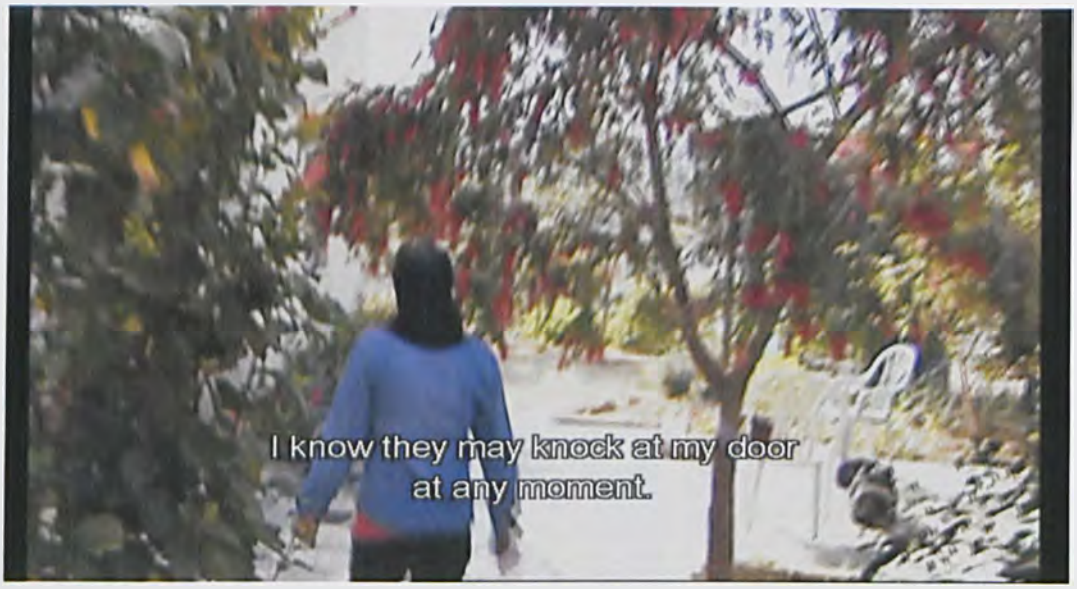
While it may appear that the above discussion, and the scenes focused on in my analysis of the film thus far, fit in well with the proverbial image of *sumud*—the steadfastness of the characters, the protestors and the cameras, even the 'biological resistance' of Emad's children that keep being born, all this corresponds to the traditional thinking of the 'image of resistance' associated with the revolutionary ideals of Palestinian cinema. However, the contemporary elements, which in the present research are directly associated with the 'resistance of the image' (of the image of resistance) pertain to the questioning of the law, its arbitrariness, as well as the double absurdity of partition and the photo-opportunism of the Palestinian Authority. The rest of this section is concerned with the analysis of these subversive images, which elude the traditional theoretical frames of national, post-national, or trans-national cinemas, while similarly challenging the accepted notions of colonialism and coloniality.

As opaquely as Emad's legal trials began, they are over. 'After a while' narrates Emad 'I'm back in Bil'in.' His case is closed, citing lost evidence. This law without content takes up and drops Emad, condensing into presence and then vaporizing into absence. This movement between states, pervasive but without content, characterises an Agambian form of law in its most heightened state in the West Bank, as seen by the soldiers' emergence as sovereign exception which reconfigures space in Annemarie Jacir's *Like 20 Impossibles* (2003).



The pervasiveness of a law without content in *5 Broken Cameras* (2011). ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

It is this contentless form of the law that Giorgio Agamben theorizes with explicit reference to Kafka in *Homo Sacer* (1998). For Agamben, a law without content makes life indistinguishable from it. As such, execution and transgression of such a law is rendered indistinct, and the law itself takes on the corporeal form of those who enforce it and those who are subject to said force. 'For life under a law that is in force without signifying,' claims Agamben, 'resembles life in the state of exception, in which the most innocent gesture or the smallest forgetfulness can have most extreme consequences.' This Kafkaesque form of law 'in which a distracted knock on the door can mark the start of uncontrollable trials,' is for Agamben, 'all the more pervasive for its total lack of content' (1998, p. 52). The insidious threat of this potential 'distracted knock' hangs over the closing scene of *5 Broken Cameras*, as Salim states his determination to continue filming despite claiming that 'I know they may knock at my door at any moment.'



5 Broken Cameras 'a distracted knock on the door can mark the start of uncontrollable trials'. ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

The inaccessibility of the content of the law echoes a scene in Kafka's *The Trial*, in which K., when attempting to locate law books, finds them not to contain records or proceedings, but pornographic pictures. The law as such, is without content, making decisions related to it contingent and arbitrary. Dimitris Vardoulakis (2013), in theorizing what he terms 'Kafka's Empty Law', highlights the humour and absurdity present in this inaccessibility of the content of the law under which K's guilt has already been decided. This invisibility creates pervasiveness to the law that amplifies these modalities of arbitrariness and contingency.

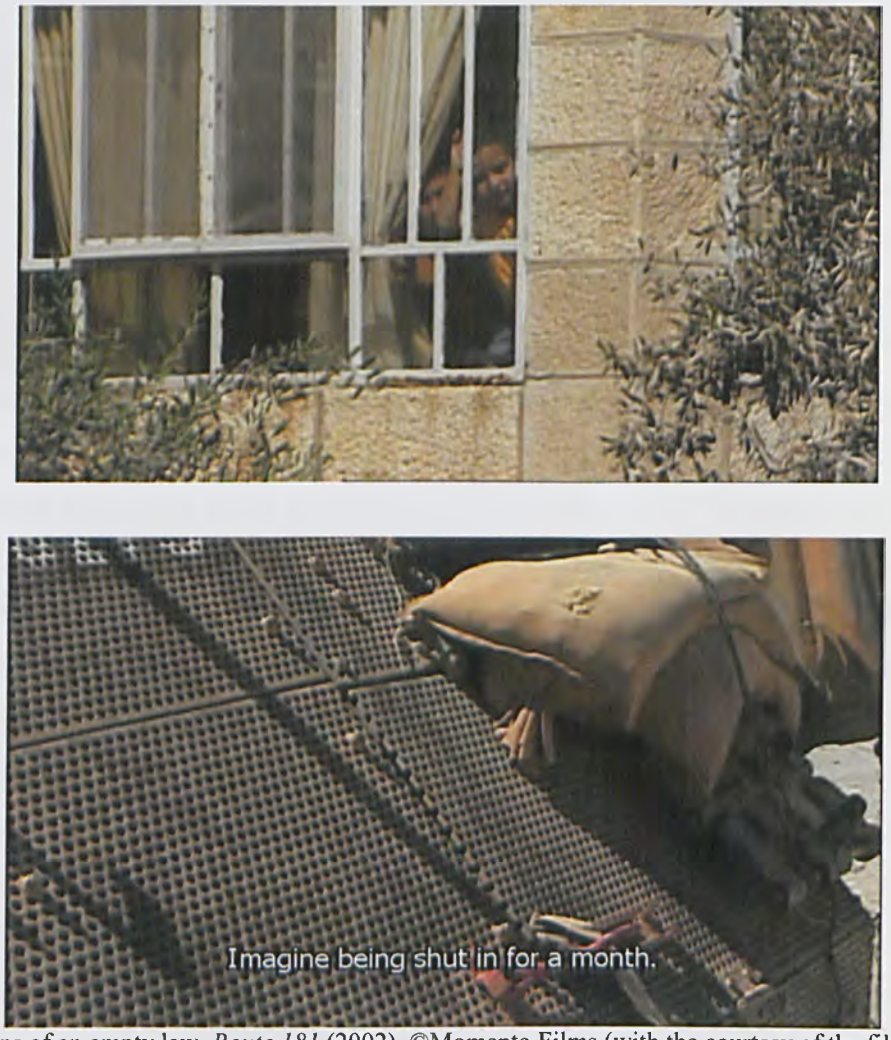
A scene from Eyal Sivan and Michel Khleifi's *Route 181* illustrates this pervasive contentlessnees of a law that is always in force without content. The film consists of three chapters, South, Central and North, as the directors follow the line of the proposed partition line of Resolution 181, which runs through parts of Gaza, the West Bank, and what is now the State of Israel. The scene in question takes place in 'the centre' of *Route 181*, where they encounter guards near Kalandia, the checkpoint between Ramallah and Jerusalem. In a scene which has striking parallels with the 'Closed Military Zone' scene in *5 Broken Cameras* in its configuration of bodies within space, a young soldier notices the camera and orders Eyal Sivan to stop filming; Sivan, in response questions the soldiers as to what grounds he has to issue such orders: 'Is this a military zone?' he asks. 'Can I see your orders?' To which comes the reply: 'My presence is enough'.

The soldier as law in *Route 181*. ©Momento Films (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

When confronted with the law, Sivan finds himself in the position of Joseph K. Unable to find the content of the law, or even ascertain whether it has ever existed, they can rather only find the words of the guardians of a contentless law, a law that is thus contingent and is entirely arbitrary. More importantly, it is not the words, but rather the mere corporeal presence of this guardian. It is this recognition of the embodied nature of the law, not in its textual form or even audible/ oral form, but as present bodies—the body of the checkpoint or roadblock soldier, the body of the surveyor, the body of the protestor and the body of the dispossessed and the incarcerated—which, I argue, marks the everywhere and nowhere encounter with the law in the cinema of the West Bank. The camera itself— both in *Route 181* and *5 Broken Cameras*—in its ability to move, to encounter the law, to be subject to its obscenity, to break and be broken, in many respects, follows this very same logic of the corporeal—as defining object of legitimacy and illegitimacy, territory and terror.

The burden of a law without content is further illustrated in the subsequent scene of *Route 181*, which takes place in Ramallah, which at the time of filming is under curfew. Two soldiers are discussing the situation from their tank, observing the bored-looking inhabitants of a nearby house. One says to the other: 'imagine being shut in for a month.' The other soldier responds, simultaneously appearing unsympathetic, but perhaps seemingly acknowledging that freedom and confinement, inside and outside lose their discreteness under a pervasively empty law, with an explicit reference to Kafka:

> Shut indoors? I'd love it. I'd love to be shut in for a month with twenty good books. I'd gladly read *The Trial* again. It corresponds to the situation. Our world is Kafkaesque. And *Before the Law*. Have you read it? [...] He must break the law to enter. But there is no law.



The guardians of an empty law, *Route 181* (2002). ©Momento Films (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

Arguably, this scene betrays the burden of a universalised contentless law, in which both judge and judged become guardians of the law, caught in a carceral space where freedom is impossible.

5 Broken Cameras initially appears to function as a documentary of the Bil'in protests specifically and the occupation more generally. However, a strong element of the film is its self-reflexive questioning of both the function of image making and a critique of the commodified 'image of resistance' utilised by the Palestinian Authority. This reflective critical approach to image-making marks the film out as essayistic, following Edgar Morin's (1996) drawing on the French *essai*, meaning both 'essay' and 'attempt' as despite Emad being a novice filmmaker, at several points of the film, he uses the cinematic form to debate his own role in both image making and representing events.

At around 40 minutes into the film, as Emad documents the army's latest movement into Bil'in to counter demonstrations, he initially reflects on the illusion of protection being behind the camera gives him before a sustained reflection on the role of the political filmmaker.[3] As his brother, Khaled, is arrested and his parents attempt to stop the jeep taking him away, Emad questions what purpose these images may serve, stating 'I have to believe that capturing these images will have some meaning.'

[3] Emad's third camera does in fact stop a bullet at one of the protests.

Constructing meaning in *5 Broken Cameras*. ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

This reflection on how images construct some indeterminate future meaning fits into a wider context of representing what both Edward Said and Serge Daney term a 'complex' or 'dense' image of Palestinian reality. For Daney (1999, p. 189) 'there is no *complex* image of Palestinian reality' because it has been overwhelmed by the 'pure signifier' of 'the word "Palestinians".' Daney believes that this complex heterogeneous image has been co-opted by an image of the cause (*al-qadiyya)*. This crystalized image as cliché, writes Daney, (Ibid) 'is no doubt useful for the survival of the word "cause", but its functioning doesn't go beyond that of an advertising label.' With a consciousness of how the images might construct meaning, and also by whom they will be consumed, *5 Broken Cameras* somewhat de-centres its own process of image making.

Shortly before the hour-mark, Emad screens the raw footage he has obtained up to that point for the villagers. Perhaps with a future-oriented awareness of how these images might be disseminated in the context of what John Collins (2011) terms 'Global Palestine,' Emad reasons that seeing their participation at a step removed will provide some distance from the lived experience. The impromptu screening around a small television in the village hall also allows Emad to reflect on the earlier questioning of the meaning of his images.

'Screening my images gives some distance' *5 Broken Cameras.* ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

As well as interrogating its own image-making, the film takes issue with Daney's concern for "the cause" functioning merely as an advertising label, an accusation Emad levels at the Palestinian Authority on several occasions. The first of these occasions is after Emad's truck crashes into the barrier, causing serious injury. He is sent for treatment, but incurs enormous hospital bills because he is not an Israeli citizen. The Palestinian Authority is also unable to help, because his accident is not 'resistance related.'

An 'image of resistance' in *5 Broken Cameras*. ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

This prompts Emad to reflect on the PA's definition of the 'image of resistance' that is manufactured and utilized for political propaganda, but beyond that has little use. This empty political symbolism, which is as obscene as the emptiness of the law, is a major theme of Annemarie Jacir's representation of Ramallah in *Salt of this Sea* (2008), as will be examined in later chapters. In *5 Broken Cameras*, Emad notes with cynicism the increasing number of politicians descending on Bil'in as it becomes a 'symbol' of popular resistance. Emad considers the commodification of symbols for political profit in Palestine, 'whether it's a symbol of Bil'in or a symbol of the Palestinian state.'

The politics of symbolic capital in *5 Broken Cameras*. ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

Emad notes that he would rather spend time with the villagers, the real rebels. This critical interrogation of both image and symbol marks the film's own critical resistance.

3.3 Bodies and biopolitics in *Omar*

Corporeal relations are often articulated through the figure of the Palestinian codified as biopolitical threat, and thus a threat to which territory (as power enacted through spatial process) must respond. This can even be reflected—as seen in *5 Broken Cameras* with the birth of the cameras reflecting the episodic births of Emad and Soraya's children—in the mere biological process of having children. The act of continuing to have children in a context where the occupation sees the body of the Palestinian as one to be biopolitically controlled, compartmentalised and limited informs what Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2015, p. 1190) terms the 'politics of birth' in the West Bank. Bodies enter into a resistant and often violent

encounter with power and its agents, be they physical or juridical. The agents of *law*, like the figures at the threshold of terror/territory witnessed in *5 Broken Cameras*, order space through bodies (of empty law). This construction of law in the West Bank is not one defined by infrastructure (the checkpoint/roadblock) but rather, it is embodied, which occasions a fluid form of confinement to operate.

This chapter will now attempt to trace the shapes of confinement by law that are manifestations of its emptiness. The spectre of the figure of Kafka and a construal of law as 'empty' are key to understanding a certain manifestation of biopolitical law exercised over bodies in the West Bank, bodies not controlled by overt signifiers of the occupation such as the checkpoint, but rather by a dispersal of law into the populace whereby everyone is suspected as a potential *aameel*.[4] This fluid form of law that renders everyone lawless will be explored through a close reading of Hany Abu Assad's *Omar* (2013). This film, while ostensibly employing a less overtly static framing to the films of *al-dakhil*, nonetheless can be read as a carceral film of formal enclosure and entrapment, and one which utilises a language of guilt, necessity and lying which makes it particularly Kafkaesque in structure.

Hany Abu Assad's *Omar* (2013) tells the story of Omar, Tarek and Amjad, three friends in the West Bank, whose relationship is complicated by Omar and Amjad's romantic pursuit of Nadia, Tarek's sister. Transposed onto this is the three's involvement as militants, which becomes complicated after an Israeli soldier is killed in an operation, which brings Omar into a complex, co-dependent relationship with Rami, an Israeli security agent. These factors open the film into a cyclical (and thus, endless) movement of mistrust, collaboration and betrayal.

The seemingly paradoxical construal of empty law that encages despite kinesis articulates a certain plasticity of confinement enacting force on West Bank bodies. *Omar* follows its character through a series of flights, captures and betrayals. Despite a carceral theme to the film, as Omar is repeatedly captured and released, his is a dynamic body– muscle and sinew– and one which drives a kinetic, albeit claustrophobic mise-en-scène. Body and surface in this film are in a perpetual state of conflict and negotiation.

Leopold Lambert (2013) has highlighted the subversive role of parkour in Gaza and Hanna Baumann (2015) the somewhat casual nature of trespassing in Khaled Jarrar's *Infiltrators* (2012). The separation wall figures in *Omar* not as an insurmountable obstacle. Rather, it is an everyday challenge—the fabric of the city being a haptic (albeit deeply hazardous) cartography for the main character. This focus on the Palestinian body as either a

[4] The Arabic word for collaborator, literally 'agent'. This is a common theme in contemporary Palestinian cinema and culture, particularly in the biopolitical space of the West Bank.

site of resistance or control marks a cinematic body particular to West Bank films, where power relations are more overt and heightened. Territory here plays a part in this production of bodies in space. The cinematic body of the West Bank is an object of power but— quite literally— an *ob-ject* in the Latin sense of the root, i.e. that which is thrown against.

The film's perpetual motion (seemingly at odds with the 'road block' trope indicative of Second Intifada West Bank filmmaking) describes a paradoxical condition of absolute freedom of movement coupled with absolute entrapment, similar to a mouse trapped in a wheel. This same paradox reflects the absolute emptiness of the law, which is coupled with its absolute dissemination, the no-where and everywhere of this law resonates with the condition of Joseph K.:

> Jospeh K. enjoys **freedom of movement** but everywhere he goes everyone seems to have already judged him as guilty for something indistinct, unexpressed, unknown. Joseph K. finds himself trapped by an omnipresent and omnipotent law- he finds himself trapped in a cage without walls (Vardoulakis 2013, p. 34).

With this passage, Dimitris Vardoulakis articulates what he terms Kafka's empty law, a 'generalised sense of encagement' (Ibid, p. 33) that pervades Kafka's work, notably *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial*. The figure of imprisonment is key to Kafka's work, but the question as to what shape that figure takes through its enactment by law is one with wider consequences.

Before elaborating on how the empty law functions, it is worth briefly tracing its genealogy. Vardoulakis takes his lead from Spinoza, specifically the *Theological-Political Treatise* for the dual functional modes of necessity and contingency. It is the function of law that is important, rather than its content. Obedience of the law is what matters, i.e. what is necessary and this is accompanied by contingency, that is, its function depends on the circumstances of the community. Thus, writes Vardoulakis (p. 36), the law is 'empty because it is both necessary and contingent.' This emptiness, or lack of content puts Vardoulakis's reading of Kafka's law in dialogue with Giorgio Agamben, albeit from different sources. Agamben draws the logic of the law without content for his theory of the state of exception from Kant's notion of a simple form of law, articulated in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. For Kant, a law abstracted of content remains as an empty 'universal legislation' (1993, p. 27). Agamben takes this zero point of signification as the stage at which life and law blur, citing the life lived in the village in Kafka's *The Castle* as an example of which 'law is all the

more pervasive for its total lack of content' (Agamben, 1998, p. 52). Agamben's tracing of this form of the law, which is in force without significance, back to Kant from Gerschom Scholem informs the logic of his theory of the state of exception. What both Vardoulakis and Agamben recognize in this Kafkaesque law is that its very lack of content, its invisibility, is precisely what gives it its pervasiveness and menace. In Vardoulakis's reading of an empty law dislocated from the category of truth in *The Trial*, he recognizes the movement between states that articulate differing modes of incarceration.

> In the absence of content, everyone in the novel becomes a guardian of the law. Thus when Titorelli says the judges are invisible, this is not because the judges are hidden and their judgements assume a universally true content, but because they are everywhere and their judgements are arbitrary. Everyone is a judge [and] everyone condemns Joseph K. from the very first moment of his arrest without charge (Vardoulakis 2013, p. 40).

Empty law is thus dispersed universally in a biopolitical mode into the populace.

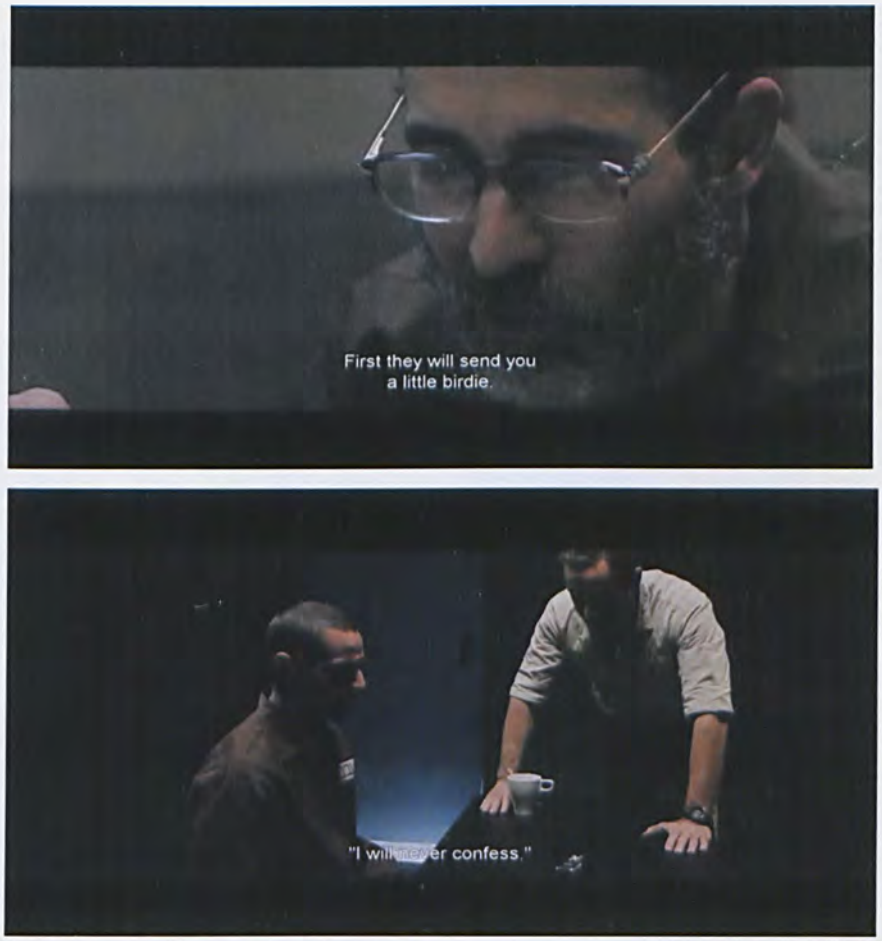
Just such a biopolitical levelling can be seen at work in Hany Abu Assad's *Omar* (2013), which renders every character a potential double spy, both a guardian and agent of the empty law. The film opens with a close up of Omar, which zooms out to reveal the separation wall with a rope hanging behind him, at shoulder height. With athletic dynamism, Omar scales the wall and drops to the other side as bullets ring out around him. He accelerates through a narrowing series of alleys and waits for confirmation that he is safe, before entering Tarek's house. This seemingly subverts the logic of walls and checkpoints as points of constriction and impediment. The kineticism and dynamism of Omar's movement in these early scenes marks the separation wall as an obstacle of play in Omar's 'parkours'. However, it can be argued that this fluidity and kineticism are the first of the film's many layers of deception. Omar is allowed what might be termed an illusory freedom of movement. As Vardoulakis recognises of Joseph K., the incarceration that takes place in Omar is enacted through a form of law that acts as a series of open cages, occasioning an entrapment of the lead character that 'disperses over his entire milieu' (Vardoulakis, 2013, p. 34). Even in the open, kinetic scenes of flight through the streets of Jerusalem, a visual leitmotif of ever narrowing passages, walls and doors enclose Omar, leaving him with no spatial exit. This is one form of a multiplicity of cages. These range from the open streets of Jerusalem, to the formal incarceration of the cell Omar shares with insects while he is awaiting interrogation.

No exit: the open cage of entrapment by law in *Omar* (2013). ©Hany Abu Assad (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The largest of these cages is the invisible, open cage of guilt, collaboration and mistrust that entraps all of the characters and disperses across the entire film. This structure of betrayal, guilt and mistrust will now be examined in detail.

The category of truth is absent throughout the structure of the film, and categories of friend and enemy are blurred into indistinction, as everyone becomes (double) *agent* of the law. There are multiple levels of deception throughout *Omar*, from the personal to the political, which also blur into indistinction.

Omar is in a clandestine relationship with his best friend's sister, Nadia, and sees her without Tarek's knowledge. After he is caught crossing the separation wall he is beaten and humiliated by guards, prompting him to get involved with Tarek and Amjad in the resistance brigades. Amjad shoots a soldier at a checkpoint. In the fallout, Omar is imprisoned and interrogated by the security services, misleading the audience into believing that they believe Tarek is the culprit. During this incarceration, the first deception occurs.



The first deception in *Omar (2013)*. ©Hany Abu Assad (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

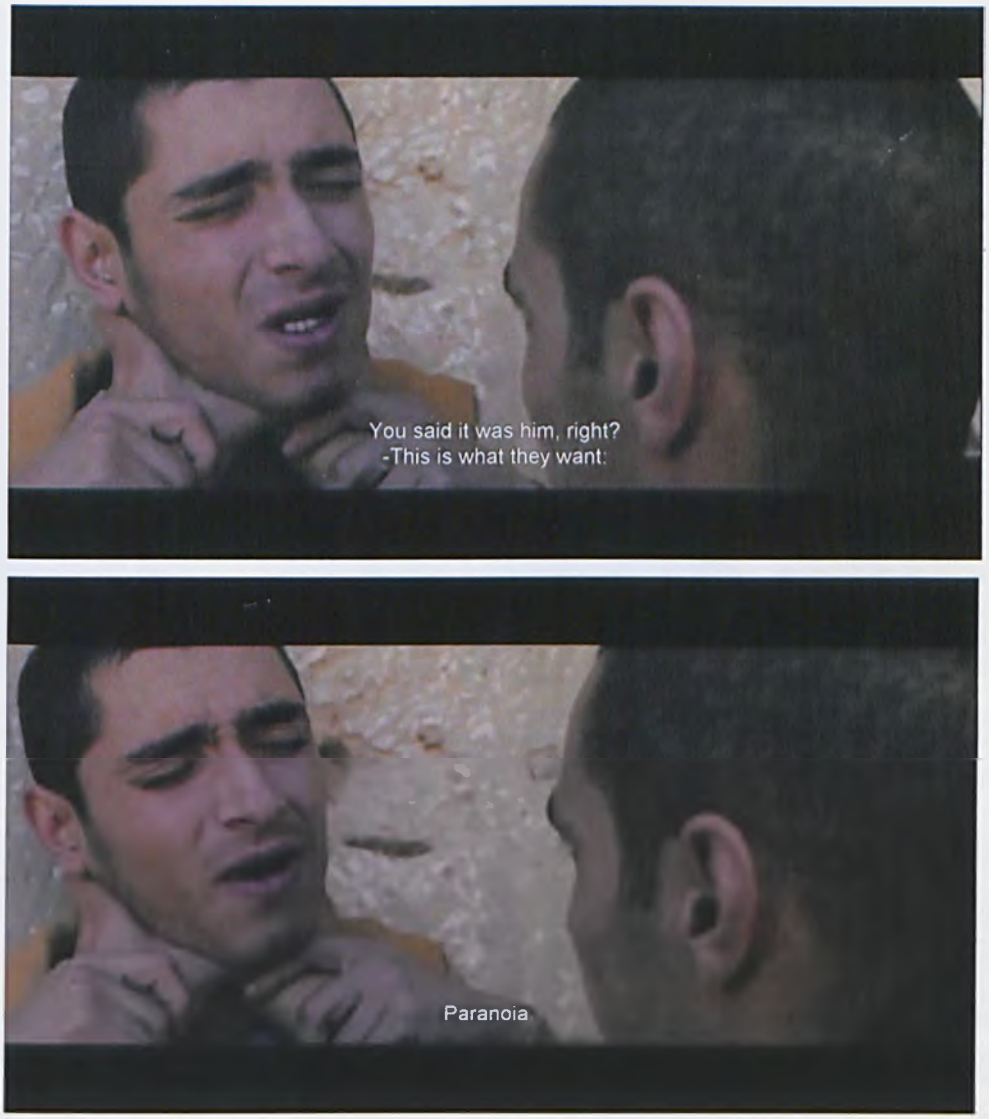
Omar is approached by a fellow prisoner, a Palestinian resistance fighter who informs him of how an agent will try to get to him in prison, pretending to be his friend and warns him 'never to become a collaborator.' Omar tells him he will never confess. In the subsequent scene, the 'prisoner' is revealed to be Agent Rami, working for the Israelis. He has recorded their communication, included Omar's refusal to confess, which in military jurisdiction, amounts to a confession. Later in the film, when Omar hears Rami speaking Hebrew to his mother, he admits that Rami's Arabic was so fluent and without accent as to convince anyone that he was an Arab.

While, at first, Rami appears to be the film's antagonist, the universalisation of guilt and mistrust flattens these discrete categories. Everyone in the film inhabits the borders of friend/ enemy, confidant and betrayer. These porous borders are articulated in the scene described above (image below), in which Rami and Omar, despite the obvious disequilibrium of power, show an affinity towards one another, trapped in a cycle of guilt, betrayal and

manipulation as they both are. It is a disarming scene, as this affinity is mixed with a deep suspicion and awareness that they are bound to one another by necessity and contingency. This affinity is communicated textually in the use of medium and close-up framing. Omar and Rami are intertwined, dependent on one another, both caught up in the logic of the empty law.

No exit: Necessity and contingency without truth in *Omar (2013)*. ©Hany Abu Assad (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

As the film unfolds, the emergence of a collaborator, or mole, is revealed. With Omar's repeated capture and releases, there is a presupposition of his guilt. Amjad reveals that he is giving information to the security services, as a result of coercion, having made Nadia pregnant. At this point, it appears to Omar that he has been betrayed by Nadia, whose relationship with Amjad has been used as leverage against the brigades. This leads to a standoff between Omar, Amjad and Tarek, as suspicion and betrayal comes to a head and personal and political betrayals become one and the same.



The second betrayal in *Omar (2013)*. ©Hany Abu Assad (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The film's denouement acts as a structural reveal, and lays bare the entire system of lies and deception that the empty law functions on. Omar has an awkward conversation with Nadia, who after Tarek's death has married Amjad and has two children (a decision Omar saw as necessary due to the pregnancy). When discussing the children's ages, Omar realises the extent of the deception by Amjad, that Nadia wasn't pregnant at the time of Amjad's claim, and thus every 'decision' taken has been taken within a network of lying and counter-lying which has underpinned every relationship.

Lying as a universal system in *Omar (2013)*. ©Hany Abu Assad (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The modes of contingency and necessity which determine the empty law as an empty cage which universally and arbitrarily ascribes guilt, is marked as separate from the mode of truth in the discussion of the gatekeeper and the man from the country towards the end of *The Trial*. The discussion of truth and law between Joseph K. and the priest leads to necessity as the condition that separates them:

> It is the Law that has placed him at his post; to doubt his integrity is to doubt the Law itself.' 'I don't agree with that point of view,' said K. shaking his head, 'for if one accepts it, one must accept as true everything the doorkeeper says. But you yourself have sufficiently proved how impossible it is to do that.' 'No,' said the priest, 'it is not necessary to accept everything as true, one must only accept it as necessary.' 'A melancholy conclusion,' said K. 'it turns lying into a universal principle (Kafka 1953, p. 243).

This is a structural system that Vardoulakis, citing Spinoza, eliminates truth and thus freedom through the mode of possibility:

> The separation or disengagement of truth from the empty law creates a dualism, which entails that, in Spinoza's terms, the possibility of freedom is eliminated. The man from the country is presented as being absolutely obedient. Without recourse to truth, he has no recourse to any methods of resistance to the contingent and yet necessary pronouncements of the gatekeeper (Vardoulakis 2013, p. 39).

The absence of truth thus creates a structure, an open cage of lies, guilt, and betrayal which ensnares everyone in the film within it. To exercise agency in a structure where choice is unavailable due to the pervasion of necessity, Omar elects to kill Rami, seeking an exit from the cycle of lies and violence, which is in reality no exit at all. Interestingly, this final scene disrupts the tension between its *resistance of image*—resisting initially both an image of *sumud* and finally a consumable, palatable image of the non-violent, resilient Palestinian to a Western audience—and *image of resistance.*

Perception of the film's coda is particularly important insofar as it disrupts the frames of the festivalization of Palestinian cinema. This scene where Omar shoots Agent Rami, putting an abrupt full stop to the film while engulfing the screen in black and a long silent pause before the closing credits, is politically charged and coded in such a way that it speaks directly to a local (and to a certain extent, Arab) audience. This scene, which is marked with the awe of absolute and radical violence, is perversely wished for and almost desperately anticipated by an audience that shares the protagonist's sense of entrapment. The film deliberately heightens the audience's feeling of being disarmed, infiltrated, violated and impotent while sitting through the ordeal of a tangled web of lies and deception out of which there seemed to be no way out. But just as the audience begins to despair of Omar's inaction and multiple prisons, the unthinkable happens. Omar kills Agent Rami with his own gun, the one he provided him with ostensibly to kill his friend. In cinemas across the Arab-speaking world, the scene was received with jubilation,[5] which in many ways provided the audience with a perverse satisfaction and the restitution—albeit belated—of empowerment. This transgressive act of political incorrectness seems to act back on the preceding structure. If in *5 Broken Cameras* the traditional image of resistance is disrupted half way through the film, by contrast *Omar* spends virtually its entirety *resisting* this image of *sumud*, except for its final scene, which re-inscribes the film in the tradition of revolutionary Palestinian cinema. However, this is countered on the one hand, by *Omar*'s depiction of bodies distributed across a territory defined by an obscene, arbitrary and empty law—much like that of *5 Broken Cameras* and *Route 181*; on the other, its resistance to partition—on terms of radical enmity—through the universalising structure of guilt and mistrust, underscores its untimeliness, or

[5] Hany Abu-Assad has alluded to differing audience perceptions to the film. In a 2014 interview with *Film Journal International* (2014), Abu-Assad claimed that 'People who live under the occupation feel there is hope in my movie, and those who have no experience with oppression feel that Omar is boxed in.' The ambiguity in Abu-Assad's quote is whether 'hope' lies in that suppressed desire for both retribution and a release from the insidious, empty logic of the law.

contemporaneity, and its pertinence to the research question with which the present thesis is concerned.

3.4. Heterotopia of the Zero Hour in *Villa Touma*

Suha Arraf's 2014 film *Villa Touma*, which focuses on the isolated Touma sisters in their Ramallah villa, is something of an anomaly. A chamber piece and comedy of manners, the film deals with the disruptive impact an orphaned niece has on the sisters when she comes to stay at the villa. The film largely takes place in static, oppressive and temporally vague interiors as the niece Badia[6] tests the oppressive, bourgeois norms of these aristocratic Christian women of Ramallah. The circumstances of Badia's orphaning are revealed in the films logic of the airless oppressive atmosphere of tradition and honour. Male figures remain largely offscreen, but one of the largest absences is that of Badia's father. A brother of the Touma sisters, all we learn of him is the 'shame' he brought on the family by marrying a Muslim woman. The present absence of a *nomos* goverened by codes of 'honour' mirrors both the logic of inter-faith transgression which conditions the community of outcasts in *Ana Arabia* (2013) (examined in Chapter 5) and the resentment and shame that characterises the encounter between the returning *al-ghurba* Palestinian and remaining *al-dakhil* father in *Wajib* (2017) (examined in Chapter 6).

The titular sisters occupy the large house, which remains almost hermetically sealed off from the outside world. Indeed, for the first half of the film, the setting is singularly indoor, taking place in this seemingly timeless place. The only concessions to the outside come in scenes where the aunts teach Badia to stich on the veranda of the villa. The formal, austere and dark interiors could date anywhere from the early twentieth century, while the gestures betray an aristocratic tradition and the clothes—with floral and sometimes colourful patterning—seemingly place the film in the second half of the century. The lack of diegetic clues usually present in period pieces adds to this sense of temporal disorientation.

The moods that dominate the film are etiquette and honour, two attunements that inform the static framing and austere mise-en-scène of the film. The reason for this, along with the temporal dislocation of the film is revealed only around a third of the way into the film. This occurs when the Touma sisters and Badia leave the Villa for the first time, and enter the chaos of contemporary occupied Ramallah. The discordant and violent clash of

[6] the name's literal meaning in Arabic being 'countryside'

temporalities as contemporary, occupied Ramallah crashes into Christian aristocratic Ramallah produces a moment of profound shock. What has been hinted at until now becomes evident. Villa Touma exists only insofar as it remains *set back* from the time that surrounds it. The absence of men, and the vague allusion to war turns out to be the moment of incommunicable shock that is the *naksa* of 1967.

In his essay 'Arabic Prose and Prose Fiction After 1948', Edward Said contrasts the usage and impact of the two proper nouns associated with '48 and '67, the *nakba* and the *naksa*. While the former suggests a catastrophe that occasions a deviation or movement 'a rupture of the most profound sort,' the latter 'suggests nothing more radical than a relapse, a temporary setback, as in the process of recovery from an illness' (Said 2000, p. 47). Interestingly, Said invokes the language of both the pathological and the temporal behind the term *naksa*, albeit treating it as *temporary* malady, rather than a *temporal* one. The profound shock of the *naksa* to the Touma sisters psychologically sets them back to a temporal standing now, the titular villa a museum of the lost Christian aristocracy of Ramallah. The house itself stands as something not necessarily outside of time, but rather something in relation to time but something fundamentally *other* than it.

In his 2011 book *Out of Time: Desire in Atemporal Cinema*, Todd McGowan traces a move away from an ethics of temporality (drawing on Heidegger, Bergson and, most explicitly, Levinas) to situate an a-temporal ethics, which he locates in what he terms 'a cinema of the drive' (McGowan 2011, p. 10). Essentially, McGowan's argument against an ethics of temporality is that in seeking to move beyond a constitutive loss, we treat others unethically, as 'means for overcoming loss' (Ibid, p. 15). McGowan claims that an a-temporal cinema of the drive, in embracing this loss, can invert this relation.

> The subject of the drive reverses the relationship between means and ends. The end for this subject—the object of desire—becomes a means for sustaining the drive rather than a source of satisfaction itself (Ibid, p. 16).

While there is some merit in McGowan's approach, putting value in means rather than ends, his thesis is entirely contingent on a Freudian understanding of both the drive and desire as predicated on lack. Deleuze and Guattari argued against what they saw as reductive, idealist thinking in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1977)[7], rearticulating desire as a

[7] This date is when the text was first translated into and published in English. The edition cited in the text is: Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2004) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Continuum.

productive and positive force, a factory model rather than the Freudian theatre of representation (2004, p. 25). Emmanuel Levinas, who McGowan acknowledges as the great thinker of an ethics of temporality, saw the ethics of time as stemming from the relationship with the other. Being with others is thus constitutive of being in time. Levinas equates sociality to an ethical relationship with both time and the other, writing:

> Is not sociality something more than the source of our representation of time: is it not time itself? If time is constituted by my relationship with the other, it is exterior to my instant, but it is also something else than an object given to contemplation. The dialectic of time is the very dialectic of the relationship with the other, that is, a dialogue which in turn has to be studied in terms other than those of the dialectic of the solitary subject. The dialectic of the social relationship will furnish us with a set of concepts of a new kind. And the nothingness necessary to time, which the subject cannot produce, comes from the social relationship (Levinas, 1978, p. 96).

If time then, as Levinas argues, is sociality then this leaves subjects without sociality positioned as subjects not *outside* time, but *without* time; that is a-temporal, or perhaps more accurately *eternal* subjects.

While McGowan (2011) highlights Plato's opposition of temporality and eternity in the *Timaeus*, he ignores the conceptual nuances in the distinctions between the eternal and eternity, terms McGowan uses interchangeably in a chapter on the eternal in Wong Kar Wai's *2046* (2004). He does, however, frame the eternal as both a rupture within change, and a place of stasis within space. Following Benjamin's notion of the interruption of history, the *stillstellung*[8] that allows for the possibility of action, McGowan frames the eternal as 'not just the nonhistorical kernel within history, but an unchanging place within space' (McGowan 2011, p. 160). This spatialization of the eternal as an unchanging site within time and space gives the near hermetically sealed villa of the Touma sisters a museum like quality, filled with the artefacts of Christian aristocracy, artefacts which have no real, present-day function, other than to mourn the sisters' abandonment and loss of status. Michel Foucault, in 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias' (1967: 1986) links the fundamental otherness of these spaces to their heterochronic function, that is their relation with temporal crisis, claiming that 'the heterotopia begins to function when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time' (Foucault 1986, p. 26). Foucault cites libraries and museums, with their

[8] In Dennis Redmond's (2001) translation of Benjamin's *On the Concept of History*, *stillstellung* is translated as 'zero-hour', giving it the connotation of a dramatic pause, or what Andrew Benjamin (2013) terms a 'caesura of allowing'. In Harry Zorn's translation, (2006, p. 396), *stillstellung* is rendered as 'arrest of happening.' Source: Benjamin, W. (2006) *Selected Writings Vol. 4 1938-1940*. Cambridge/London: Belknap.

accumulation of time in an unchanging form, as sites which are 'oriented toward the eternal' (Ibid), as opposed to the flowing temporality of the festival.

The shock of contemporary Ramallah violently clashes with the eternal place of the Villa, occasioning an inverse of the Benjaminian interruption. Here, the chaotic temporality of Ramallah, a site of 'international circuits of aid and exchange' (Abourahme 2011, p. 455) punctures the stasis of the Villa and its inhabitants, whose out-of-place presence in the city is a jarring anachronism. However, this apparent anachronism displays, in fact displays the Villa's function as what Foucault (1986, p. 27) would term a 'heterotopia of illusion.' The function of such sites, he argues, is to create 'a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory.' (Ibid) The stasis of the Villa, its seeming frozen eternal now in time, in fact reflects the illusory nature of the flowing, chaotic temporality of contemporary Ramallah. The Villa, with its unchanging nature, its rigid, ordered bourgeois class with empty artefacts of a life lost reflect the bourgeois political class of contemporary Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian Authority, trapped in an eternal maintenance of the political status while clinging to markers of status and symbols of power.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the key themes particular to the contemporary cinema of the West Bank. Namely the questioning of a form of law construed as empty, and practised as the zone of indistinction between terror and territory and legitimacy and illegitimacy embodied by (or perhaps, *in*) its guardians (that is to say, everyone taken up by it). This form of law, I argue, conditions bodies and space in the cinema of the West Bank. Secondly, the signifiers of an image of resistance (the soldier, the checkpoint in Route 181, the collectivity of *sumud* in *5 Broken Cameras*) exist in a relation of tension with those films' resistant questioning—of, on the one hand, the absurdity of an insidious 'empty' (and thus inaccessible) law underpinning the occupation; and on the other, the meaning of image-making and its co-option by the PA for 'empty' political capital.

The function of law as exception in *5 Broken Cameras*, as will be examined in detail in the next chapter, topologically converges the space of the West Bank and *al-mukhayyam*, the camp. Whereas in Hany Abu-Assad's *Omar* (2013) law is biopolitically dispersed into the

populace, making everyone a guardian of the law, and thus making encounters with it more nebulous if (no less insidious), in a crucial scene in *5 Broken Cameras* the soldiers' declaration actualizes the always already potential spaces of exception, thus folding the topological structure of the camp into the topography of the West Bank.

In its resistance to the future triggered by the event of the *naksa*, *Villa Touma* has a structural similarity to *When I Saw You*, a film that resists the future which came to pass for the *Fedayeen* in the camps of Jordan, as will be examined in the next chapter. However, while that film's nostalgia draws on the nascent Palestinian revolution emerging after the *naksa*, Villa Touma dwells in a pathological nostalgia that renders the *naksa* as a form of architectural nostalgia—loss rendered as a pathological domesticity, in which the Villa becomes a museum of accumulating dead time, resisting the occupation of the West Bank by repressing it, and yet also heterotopically reflecting the real political stasis of the contemporary occupation outside its walls.

Chapter 4:

Topologies of *al-mukhayyam* (the camp)

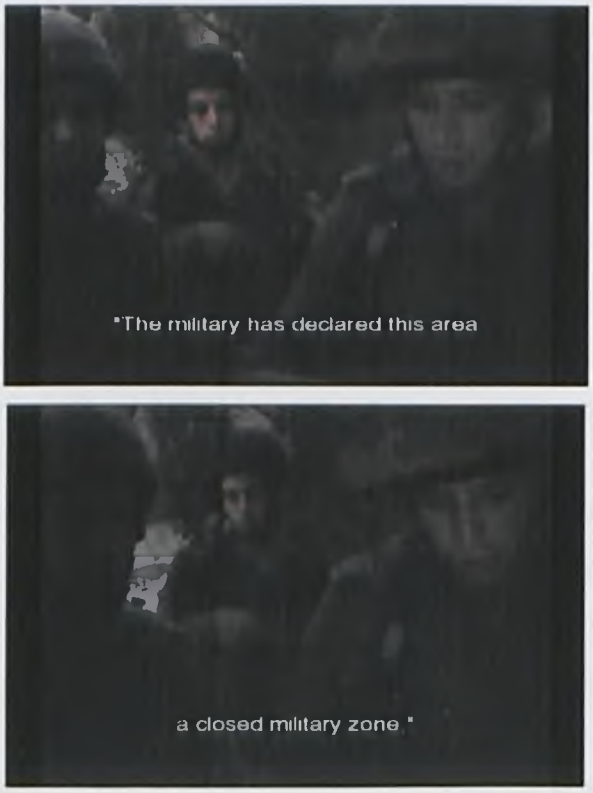
My critical analysis of the contemporaneity of Palestinian cinema, and the body of films selected for the purpose of this research, rely on a double genealogy; (1) a literary genealogy that extends from Emile Habiby, Ghassan Kanafani and Edward Said to Jean Genet, (2) and a cinematic genealogy in which the Palestine Film Unit, Jean-Luc Godard and Pier Paolo Pasolini are prominent references. These texts, I claim, frame a 'critically resistant' Palestinian image, but bear strong resonance with the topology of the camp. The reflexive juxtaposition of temporal, spatial and corporeal images of contemporary Palestinian cinematic subjectivites with historical images of Palestine, alongside points of convergence and divergence, which construct a territorial topology of the inside/outside and camp/diaspora are crucial to understanding the liminal atonality at work in the films under study in this chapter.

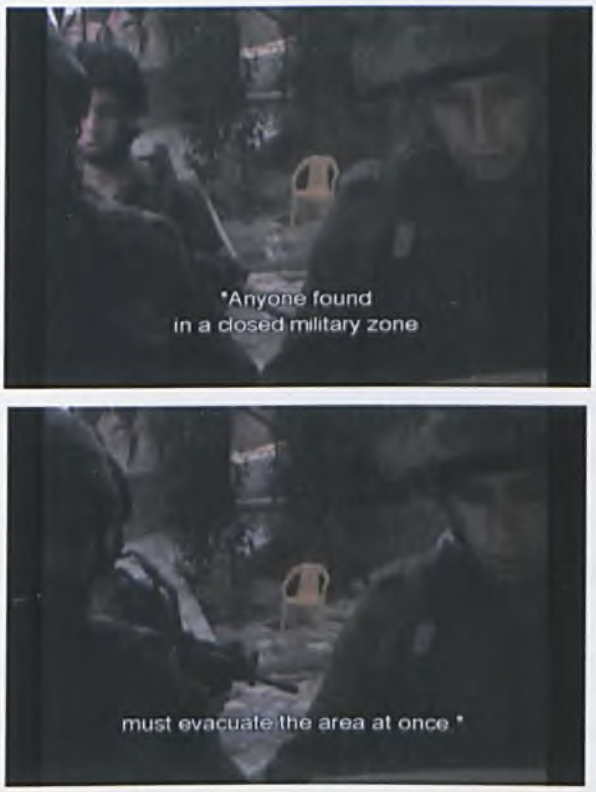
In Annemarie Jacir's *Salt of this Sea* (2008), the main character Soraya, a Palestinian-American (she holds an American passport and was born in Brooklyn) identifies as a *'bint mukhayyamat 'Amrika'* (girl of the American camps), thus refusing to separate her status as a US citizen from her citizenry of the camps. In the article 'One Fine Curfew Day,' Nuha Khoury dramatizes what is at stake in the elusive location of the camp.

> Go inside, he ordered in hysterical broken English. Inside! – I am already inside! It took me a few seconds to understand that this young soldier was redefining inside to mean anything that is not visible, to him at least. My being 'outside' within the 'inside' was bothering him (Khoury 2004, para. 6)

The becoming invisible, and its disturbing occasional visibility summarises the intricate topology of the camp, reflecting what Gil Hochberg (2015, p. 16) terms a politics of visibility, in which visibility, invisibility and control of a visual field can order the topology of the camp. The chapter explores how resistance has been (and is still) framed in scholarship on Palestinian cinema, particularly in relation to the cinema of the camps before examining a network of complex, and at times contradictory resistances at work in the cinema of *al-*

mukhayyam. This examination of resistances will explore the intersections of Jenin and the *Fedayeen* camp through the shifting representations of *al-mukhayyam* in five films: Mohammad Bakri's *Jenin, Jenin* (2002), The Otolith Group's *Nervus Rerum* (2008), Jean-Luc Godard's *Ici et Ailleurs* (1974), Udi Aloni's *Art/Violence* (2013) and Annemarie Jacir's *When I Saw You (Lamma Shoftak)* (2012). The discussion is framed with the cinematic essays of Godard and the literary work of Genet to rethink the space of exception and the notion of resistance. The chapter underscores the ambivalence, on the one hand, of nostalgia for the image of resistance, and on the other hand, a sustained effort to articulate a non-representational cinema of resistant image— that is, a resistance of the image.





The coming into being of the State of Exception, *Five Broken Cameras* (2011). ©Alegria Productions (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

4.1. Walking Through Walls in *Jenin, Jenin*

A key scene towards the middle of Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi's *5 Broken Cameras* (2011) enacts the emergence of an insidious form *al-mukhayyam*, the space of the camp, on the threshold of domestic space at the point at which the political is suspended—when the military arrive at Emad's front door in the middle of the night to inform him that his house has been declared a 'closed military zone' and thus should be evacuated. This scene captures, in a way that arguably only cinema can, the transformative spatio-temporal event of the coming-into-being of a space of exception, where 'an apparently innocuous space [...] actually delimits a space in which the normal order is de facto suspended' (Agamben, 1998, p. 174). A gesture as mundane as the opening of one's front door at night marks the encounter with the sovereign exception—embodied here by the foremost soldier declaring the 'closed military zone'—bringing the topological properties of the camp directly into Emad's life. The borders of public and private, inside and outside are evacuated of meaning, as the empty potentiality of the law becomes the insidious actuality of the exception.

While the film as a whole, as we saw in the previous chapter, is 'set' within Bil'in—a village in the West Bank a short distance from Ramallah—the scene above articulates the complex and fluid topology of the camp, and its emergence into other topographies. It is the tension between non-localizable topology and topography which inform my reading of the 'camp' in this chapter. In Arabic usage and in the Palestinian imagination *al-mukhayyamat* (the camps) refer to refugee camps, which are situated, geographically speaking and as defined by the UNRWA, in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria the West Bank and the Gaza strip.[1] However, in both culture and theory the notion of the camp transgresses territorial/topographic definitions, such as UNRWA's (n.d., para. 3), definition as 'as a plot of land placed at the disposal of UNRWA by the host government to accommodate Palestine refugees and set up facilities to cater to their needs', further stating that 'Areas not designated as such and are not recognized as camps.' (Ibid). However, Eyal Weizman (2011, p. 140) recognizes the fluidity of such recognition, highlighting the porosity of boundaries between camp and neighbourhood in the case of Gaza, 'where 70% of the population are refugees.' Indeed, a transgression of this political-territorial frame of recognition culturally blurs Palestinian identity—expressed in Annemarie Jacir's *Salt of this Sea* by Soraya's blurring of *al-mukhayyam* and *al-ghurba* by identifying as *'bint mukhayyamat 'Amrika'*, a child of refugees and a girl of the 'American camps.' In political theory, the work of Giorgio Agamben (1998) warns us that it is precisely its hiddenness and resistance to recognition that makes learning to identify the differing topological spaces of the camp so crucial in understanding its effect on the (bio)political.

For Giorgio Agamben, the camp is the biopolitical space par excellence, a general condition of modernity that can easily be extended to any place whatever, threatening at every turn to render the contemporary notion of the political inoperative, not to say obsolete.

> If the essence of the camp consists in the materialization of the state of exception and in the subsequent creation of a space in which bare life and the juridical rule enter into a threshold of indistinction, then we must admit that we find ourselves virtually in the presence of a camp every time such a structure is created (Agamben 1998, 174).

It is just such an emergence that transforms the spatial relations of Emad's home in *5 Broken Cameras*, as the zone of indistinction between law and life that is the state of exception,

[1] UNRWA (No date) *Palestine Refugees*. Available at: https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees

topologically distorts the domestic space through temporal suspension. According to Agamben (2005, p. 35), the state of exception 'represents the inclusion and capture of a space that is neither outside nor inside (the space that corresponds to the annulled and suspended norm).' It is a space with the topological structure of '*Being-outside, and yet belonging.*' Agamben uses the archaic Roman term *iustitium* to articulate a historical origin of the modern state of exception, which, as he points out, translates literally as 'standstill' or 'suspension of the law' (Ibid, p. 41). It is, as Agamben claims, a suspension not only of the apparatus of law, but of the law itself, and thus constitutes, in his words, 'the production of a juridical void' (Ibid, p. 42). Since this space is essentially a void, without positive content, it also negates a juridical sense of acts committed within such a space. Thus, Agamben (Ibid, p. 50) tells us, 'we might say that he [or she] who acts during the *iustitium* neither executes nor transgresses the law, but *inexecutes* [*inesegue*] it.'

It is just such a void, a space in which life and law, public and private blur into indistinction that is all the more threatening for its logic of abandonment, in which a lack of signification can actually have dramatic consequences, a space in which anything is possible. The *being in force without significance* of the space that law abandons[2] under the state of exception creates an insidious space, its logic of abandonment more menacing than mere positive application. The camp, for Agamben, is not a fixed place, or even a space in a Euclidian sense, but rather a set of relations, which can take form at a moment of spatial exception. Agamben warns us that it is this 'structure of the camp that we must learn to recognise in all its metamorphoses into the *zones d'attentes* of our airports and certain outskirts of our cities' (Ibid, p. 175). Recognition is, therefore, key for Agamben as spaces of exception appear, morph and de-familiarize seemingly 'innocuous' spaces. The question of how cinematic spaces of exception manifest and arrange themselves is, therefore, a pertinent one. Any cinematic representation of exception might have to follow Agamben's spatial logic of indistinction, of blurred boundaries of inside and outside. As such, this chapter will examine both the resonance of *al-mukhayyam* in the Palestinian cultural consciousness, but also examine the camp as a fluid topological relation, rather than a fixed topographic site.

[2] Agamben draws on Jean-Luc Nancy for the philologically ambiguous *ban* (referring to both *command of* the sovereign and *exclusion from* the community to form a logic, or rather a threshold of abandonment that one who is banned is left upon, in which Agamben (1998, p. 28) tells us 'life and law, inside and outside become indistinguishable.' Since it is not possible to say whether one who has been banned is inside or outside the juridical order, for Agamben therefore '*The originary relation of law to life is not application but Abandonment*' (Ibid, p. 29)

Mohamed Bakri's *Jenin, Jenin* (2002) essentially documents an insidious convergence of spatial theory and military practice. The film's structure takes the form of oral testimonies in the Jenin Camp after Israel's 2002 Operation Defensive Shield.[3] The film itself uses a far more embodied approach to space as a handheld camera relays the testimonies of the camp's inhabitants. While faces and testimonies are foregrounded, it is the space of Jenin that reveals the story, a story of capture, control and spatial (re)ordering through destruction.

'Walking through walls' in *Jenin, Jenin*. ©Mohammad Bakri (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The above transition scene depicts three men walking through the camp. To the left we see a house with an ornate wooden door, closed and intact. To the left of the door, we see two characters standing in a large hole where the living room wall would have been. To the right of the frame is mound of rubble and pipes, a building that has been entirely razed. What is interesting in this scene is that it marks the spatial practice of two theories adopted by the military, in which Jenin marked the turning point between the two. These two theories are walking through walls (Weizman, 2007) and urbicide (Graham, 2004). Eyal Weizman

[3] This operation came as the IDFs response to a number of suicide bombings during the second intifada and took place primarily in Nablus, Jenin and Bethlehem. It was the largest military ground operation since the 1967 war. The fighting in Jenin was particularly ferocious, with armed Palestinian's using holed and damaged architecture as sniper points (described by Zakaria Zubeidi in *Arna's Children* (2004, Juliano Mer-Khamis). The armed resistance of the camp led to a dramatic Israeli escalation, with 'the wholesale destruction of a 250 × 160 meter area at the core of the camp's Hart-Al-Hawashin district—an area that long been discursively constructed as the "cobra's head" of suicide attack planning by the IDF public relations branch. (Graham 2004, p. 209). Graham notes a predilection for de-humanising language in the IDF and the Israeli right, with Efraim Eitam (2002), as cited by Graham (2004, p. 208) calling Jenin a "terrorist nest".

highlights the cooptation of numerous theoretical concepts from the academy to combat,[4] notably from spatial thinkers such as Deleuze & Guattari and Bernard Tschumi. The attack on Nablus was notable for its employment of spatial movement taken from the language of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*. Movement was non-linear and traditional modes of passage were eschewed in favour of creating new space, effectively reordering the established geometry. As Weizman states:

> Moving through domestic interiors, this manoeuvre turned inside to outside and private domains to thoroughfares. Fighting took place within half-demolished living rooms, bedrooms and corridors. It was not the given order of space that governed patterns of movement, but movement itself that produced space around it (Weizman, 2007, p. 186).

Shimon Naveh, co-director of the IDF Institute The Operational Theory Research Institute (OTRI) has acknowledged the influence of Deleuzian thinking on military practice, most notably the concept of smooth and striated space. Broadly defined, smooth space is not a geometric, Euclidian space, but rather 'a field without conduits or channels' (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p. 409). To illustrate the difference between these conceptions of space, the contrast between Chess and Go is made. Rather than 'going from one point to another' the movement involves 'holding space, maintaining the possibility of springing up at any point' (Ibid, p. 389). Movement in smooth space is thus non-linear, perpetual and rhizomatic.[5] It is the space of the nomad, one who evades capture as opposed to the space of the state, the striating force of capture, control and order. It should be noted, that much like the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, the two spaces are in a constant process of translation. From smooth to striated and returning to smooth. Thus 'one organises even the desert' yet 'the desert gains and grows' (Ibid, p. 524). It is important to recognise that while the spaces remain discrete, the state can co-opt smooth space if need be, rather than merely act as a striating force. Shimon Naveh inverts the spatial logic of 'state' and 'nomad' when he states:

---

[4] Weizman (2007, p. 187) highlights the case of the 'Operational Theory Research Institute (OTRI)' which employed both former soldiers and academics to teach IDF soldiers to think spatially and employ this, through the ideas of Clausewitz (Ibid, p. 191) and Deleuze & Guattari (Ibid, p. 201) to deconstruct established military grammar and linear movement.

[5] The rhizome is a concept Deleuze and Guattari uses to contrast with the root-tree system which is causal and follows linear trajectories. By contrast, 'a rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines (...) Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organised, signified, attributed etc. as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 10).

> In the IDF we now often use the term 'to smooth out space' when we want to refer to an operation in a space in such a manner that borders do not affect us. Palestinian areas could indeed be thought of as 'striated' in the sense that they are enclosed by fences, walls, ditches, road blocks and so on (Weizman 2007, p. 201).

Seemingly without seeing the irony of his comments, Naveh explains the possibility for the co-option of tools of the war-machine by the state. Further, this attempt to apply a non-geometric thinking of space onto an established geometry, highlights another form the Agambian camp can take. Not only emerging in the suspension of the juridical order, but also a suspension of the laws underpinning Euclidian space. The key tipping point in the (re) ordering of space in Jenin came with the failure 'to bring about the rapid collapse of the camp's defence' (Ibid, p. 202). At this point, the smooth returns to the striating movement, specifically of the D-9 Bulldozer. These attempts at literally 'walking through walls' proved unsuccessful in Jenin. Graham (2004, p. 197) recognises the strategic importance of the bulldozer as a means to both 'maintain and deepen Israel's geopolitical advantage,' and undermine modernization through infrastructural destruction. This strategy Graham terms urbicide—the targeting of urban space to cause maximum disruption to (and destruction of) everyday urban life. What the above scene demonstrates is the marking of Jenin as a site of colliding militarised poststructuralist spatial theories and the architectural violence of their practice.

4.2. Images of *al-mukhayyam* as resistant assemblage

> The real, or what is perceived as such, is what resists symbolisation absolutely (Lacan 1988, p. 66).

The concept of resistance has a strong resonance in the history of Palestinian cinema and more broadly in Palestinian culture, particularly in the related Arabic terms *qadiyya* (which translates as cause, but also case, in the legal meaning) and *sumud* (which translates as steadfastness, retaining the will, or capacity to continue struggling). While these terms point to a notion of political resistance, conceptually, the meaning of the term resistance itself, as Howard Caygill (2013) has recognised, has been curiously resistant to analysis and requires careful thought.

The term resistance is deeply evocative to the political imagination, and presents images of resistance, be they historical (such as the French resistance, or Algeria's own resistance to France), or contemporary and spatial (the squares of Taksim and Tahrir or the Occupy movements). In the European imagination particularly, the French resistance is arguably the image of resistance par excellence. Conceptually however, resistance, as Caygill (2013) argues, needs to retain the capacity to resist totalization; that is, to resist a single absolute concept. There are always resistances, rather than *resistance* per se. The most sustained philosophical engagement with the subject comes in Derrida's *Resistances of Psychoanalysis* and Foucault's late work (most notably *The History of Sexuality Volume I* (1978) and his article *The Subject and Power* (1982)).[6] Frames for thinking resistance conceptually include 'force, consciousness, violence and subjectivity.' (Caygill 2013, 10) As such, the purpose of theorizing resistance is to articulate a cohesive conceptual understanding while avoiding a conceptual totalisation, namely to retain the capacity to resist. Derrida warns of the seductive allure of the dominant concept of resistance (and the importance of resisting this) at the beginning of *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, when he writes:

> This word, which resonated in my desire and my imagination as the most beautiful word in the politics and history of this country, this word loaded with all the pathos of my nostalgia [...] why and how did it come to attract, like a magnet, so many other meanings, virtues, semantic or disseminal chances? I am going to tell you which ones even if I cannot discern the secret of my inconsolable nostalgia—which thus remains to be analysed or which resists analysis, a little like the navel of a dream (Derrida 1998, p. 2).

For Jacqueline Rose, a Freudian resistance as 'psychic reality' (2007, p. 5) emerges as an aporia in Palestine-Israel, as the new nation-state is founded on traumatic resistance. In foreclosing the memory of survival in the acknowledgements of the 1953 Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Law, 'trauma enters the national psyche in the form of resistance to its own pain' (Rose 2007, p. 6). An always already resistance *within*—precluding exteriority in a manner akin to Foucault (1978)—can be found in Derrida (1998) who frames resistance

[6] In the former work, Foucault famously engaged with a thinking of resistance that lies within power, claiming: Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.' (Foucault 1978, p. 95). Foucault defines power relationships as relational, and as such, resistance is networked and plural within these relationships; or, as Foucault states, 'points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network' (Ibid) In Foucault's 1984 essay, he suggests that an analysis of power relations begins with resistance. That is, the play of forces between power relations, their points of antagonism can be highlighted by using resistance as a conceptual tool which 'consists of analyzing power relations through the antagonism of strategies.' (Foucault 1984, p. 780)

through the language of immunology, as 'installed right away at the origin, like an auto-immune process, at the heart of psychoanalysis and already within the Freudian concept of "resistance-to-analysis"' (Derrida 1988, p. viii). Resistance is thus always already within a concept. However, Derrida also views resistance as a reciprocal play of forces, a field of tension which frames the internal and external as a topological continuum:

> Every resistance supposes a tension, above all an internal tension. Since a purely internal tension is impossible, it is a matter of an absolute inherence of the other or the outside at the heart of the internal and auto-affective tension (Ibid, p. 26).

Following Derrida, for Howard Caygill (2013), resistance itself is understood primarily as a complex relation of forces, a dynamic field of relations. Caygill articulates this in response to Sartre's 1961 essay on a painting of the riots of October 27th 1960, and a confrontation between protestors and police. Sartre's essay sets up the binary question of whether to run or resist, thus creating 'the ritual space for staging either an authentic resistance or an inauthentic flight' (Caygill 2013, p. 3). However, this authentic or pure resistance is fictitious, argues Caygill. Rather, there are always movements of resistance and counter resistance as initiative, or what Caygill (2013) describes as the ebbs and flows of 'the capacity to resist.' As such resistance/s is/ are a dynamic spatio-temporal process, rather than a binary relation. Expanding on this, Caygill claims:

> From the dynamic point of view, *resistance* understood in terms of the preservation or enhancement of the capacity to resist cannot be reduced to a binary opposition of 'run or resist', but must be situated instead within a complex and dynamic spatio-temporal field that manifests itself in postures of domination and defiance (Ibid, p. 4).

It is this field of resistances that allows any notion of resistance to retain a fluidity, a Deleuzian smoothing out of space in order to evade capture or co-option 'by the very state-form it began by defying' (Ibid, p. 6).

4.2.1 Genet and the resistance within revoultion

The resistant figure of Jean Genet provides an interesting link to the critical resistance of two figures central to my research who have decentred images of resistance in Palestinian visual culture. That is, Edward Said and Elia Suleiman. *Prisoner of Love* (1986) is Genet's account of the Palestinian Revolution and his time spent with the *Fedayeen* in Jordan between 1970

and 1972 and his time in Beirut during the 1982 invasion. Genet's 'speaking' to his own recollection of the images of revolution bears a striking resemblance to Said's struggle to represent Mohr's images in the photo-essay *After the Last Sky*. The conjuring of Genet's memories display at times a remarkably cinematic quality of both juxtaposition and flow of a chain of images (a similar process to Godard's interrogation of image and movement in *Ici et ailleurs*, as will be analysed later in this chapter), in the face of which a descriptive language fails—as illustrated by the evocation of both cinema and slide show in the following confession:

> I've only to hear the phrase "Palestinian Revolution" even now and I'm plunged into a great darkness in which luminous, highly coloured images succeed and seem to pursue one another. (...) I feel now like a little black box projecting slides without captions.' (Genet 2003, p. 348)

As a resistant who retains critical distance, comparisons can be made with Elia Suleiman; for their similarities both as resistant subjectivities and artists who remain at the margins resisting power. Both embrace an idea of violence (be it political or aesthetic) while distancing themselves from brutality, a distinction Genet insisted was discrete. Speaking of the 'violent' resistance of the Palestinians, which is not to be confused with the 'brutality' of oppression, Genet claims that 'they inflict violence not only on the Israelis, but also on the Arab world, the Islamic world in general and even the Western world that refuses them' (Genet 2004, p. 246).

Genet recognises in the Palestinian resistance a violent resistance to refusal of acknowledgment, but also a resistance to power and authority and subordination, which occurs in many forms. Precisely these forms assumed by brutality, and the movement from violence to brutality, resistant violence to revolutionary brutality is what Genet witnessed in the PLO, and documented in both *Prisoner of Love* and *The Declared Enemy*[7], as resistance turned to revolution. There lies in resistance a capacity for critique, a delicacy and non-hierarchical structure. Howard Caygill best summarizes the resistant subjectivity of Genet in the following passage:

> Genet stands alongside those who resist, but will in turn resist them when they succumb to brutality, when they lose their delicacy with respect to their enemy and themselves. It is a movement that he sees played out in the mutation of revolt or resistance into organised revolution. Genet, in short, is

[7] A collection of texts and interviews published posthumously in French in 1991, and translated into English in 2004

> an anti-revolutionary, a resistant who will continue to resist the revolution that he has himself provoked (Caygill, 2013, p. 131-32).

What might be termed then, Genet's 'poetics of resistance' rests on always maintaining a position on the outside, at a critical distance from power, to retain the capacity to resist, or in his own words, *revolt*, stating in an interview with Hubert Fichte that 'the current regimes allow me to revolt, but a revolution would probably not allow me to revolt, that is, individually. This generalized thinking of resistance to revolution he applies specifically to the case of Palestine, when he frames the Revolution, and by association his thinking of the Palestinians as an idea of revolt, a moment of revolution to be sustained in perpetual exile, a condition with which Genet identifies. In an interview with Rüdiger Wischenbart and Layla Shahid Barrada, a year after Sabra and Shatila (1982), Genet again reiterates his adherence to deterritorialized revolt, rather than the institution of revolution:

> For the moment I adhere completely to Palestine in revolt. I don't know if I will adhere—I will probably, even certainly be dead by then—but if I were alive I don't know if I could adhere to a Palestine that has been made into an institution and has become territorially satisfied. (Genet 2004, p. 251)

While clearly problematic in so much as it abstracts an idea of Palestine to one of perpetual revolt, and doesn't suggest a conception of political subjectivity beyond this, the question of resistance to the institution of the state, and a caution as to what form that state may take, has a lineage in the writing of both Edward Said and Mahmoud Darwish, as described in the opening chapter. The positioning of resistance as a mode of continuation, of continued resistance to the formation of hierarchical power, finds a cinematic correlate in a filmmaker of *al-dakhil*, Elia Suleiman. Suleiman is a filmmaker of resistance in its many forms. A resistant image, that which resists representation, resistance— through humour— to the occupation. Also, a fundamental resistance to attempts to position him as a figurehead or voice of 'the resistance', 'the cause'. In this regard, Suleiman sees the same structural brutality Genet did, in adherence to hierarchical power structures and linear identities. In a 2010 interview, in which Suleiman is discussing potential statehood the two-state solution, Suleiman (2010) articulates a remarkably similar resistant subjectivity to Genet, positing a resistance that won't rest until it realizes a state and then will resist the homogenizing, striating tendencies of that state. This stance bears an uncanny resemblance to Genet's position on the threshold of resistance and revolution. Suleiman's resistance positions itself at a critical

distance. To resist is to stand with but retain the capacity for critique; that is, to always remain on the outside.

Although Genet's position is formulated largely from within the reality of the Palestinian camps (although it should be noted that Genet (2003, p. 5) is careful to refer to himself as *among* rather than *with* the *Fedayeen*, it remains, I suggest, perhaps more appropriate to a position between exile and the 'interior'—the one from which Suleiman speaks (or rather observes, as his characters are mostly reduced to silent witnesses). The luxury of choosing the path of anti-revolutionary resistance remains perhaps foreign to the junkyard-like landscape of the camps. There is a different form of resistance closer to the idea of resilience and survival than to a free-willed choice to be revolutionary or anti-revolutionary. Brutality is already inscribed in the lived reality of the camp; it is too close to home. If the cinema of the 'interior' as in Suleiman's case depicts the lived experience of the present-absentee who is nonetheless a citizen of a state (and carries an Israeli passport), the inhabitants of the camps are more absent in their presence than they are present to their absence. Alternative frames to conceptualize the form of resistance characteristic of the camps from the anti-revolutionary one evoked in Genet's experience are depicted in Godard's *Ici et ailleurs*, The Otolith Group's *Nervus Rerum* and Udi Aloni's *Art/Violence*. While these film's do not share Genet's luxury of anti-revolutionary resistance, they do, however share his aesthetic struggle; that is, a structural tension between representing and resisting images of resistance, a tension that is particularly prevalent to the cinema of *al-mukhayyam*.

4.2.2 Godard, the Fedayeen and counter-cinema

The *capacity to resist representation*, a strong element of the films featured in this thesis, can be defined as a resistance to a long history of over-determined images which have been used to signify 'Palestine'. Responses to this history can be seen in the cinematic language of contemporary Palestinian cinema, notably in the works of Suleiman and Aljafari, but also in Amos Gitai's *Ana Arabia* and significantly in the *al-mukhayyam* films, perhaps the films where a traditional and commodifiable 'image of resistance' is most seductive. The de-centred, non-linear image is one which Suleiman has explicitly referred to, but one which is implicit across a range of works. Taking Denes' (2014) contemporary reframing of the origins of the Palestine Film Unit on the one hand, with Jean-Luc Godard's engagement with Palestine in the 1970s, on the other, a double movement within the emergence of contemporary Palestinian cinema's modes of cinematic resistance/s can be identified.

Godard's move from political propaganda to a questioning of the authority of the image, mirrored by the Palestine Film Unit's counter-move from resistance to revolution[8] highlights the fragility of the resistant subjectivities' ability to maintain a capacity to resist. This multi-directional emergence of a cinema of resistance marks the possibility of a different engagement with the political, a critical interrogation of representation and authority. This criticality can be found in the contemporary Palestinian image, a resistant image, rather than an image of resistance.

One clear cinematic example which documents the struggles of representation with regard to the image of resistance is Jean-Luc Godard's *Ici et ailleurs* (1975). The film was originally titled *Jusqu'à la Victoire* (Until Victory) and was planned for release in 1970, a documentary focussing on the struggle of the PLO. Due to unforeseen circumstances (after the recording of some footage, many of the participants of the original film were killed in attacks by the Jordanian army, followed by the PLO's explusion from Jordan), the original project was abandoned, until collaboration with Anne-Marie Miéville produced a meditation on the failure of the filmmaking project and a wider critique of the construct of the revolutionary film as a commodity. That is to say, what started out as a document of the Palestinian revolution as an image of resistance, evolved into a reflexive critique on the production of those images for consumption—a resistance of image. Formally, this resistance is enacted through deconstruction. Sound and image are ruptured, separated and highlighted to display their construct and artifice. A central section of the film deals with the exposure of the concept of montage, a presentation and deconstruction of the process of montage, in which five figures present photographs, with five titles on revolutionary stages: *The People's Will, Armed Struggle, Political Work, Extended War* and *Until Victory*. As one image replaces another on the film stock, Godard refers to these images, being shown performatively, as cinematic montage, as space in its temporal movement. Commenting on this process, Godard's voiceover is akin to a capitalist production line in which two workers, space and time are producing a consumable product. 'Space has inscribed itself on film, which is not a whole but a sum of translations, a sum of feelings which are forwarded [...] that is, time.'

[8] A move, as we have seen, *resisted* by both Jean Genet (2004) and Elia Suleiman (2010)

A production line of images in *Ici et ailleurs* (1975). ©Gaumont Films (with the courtesy of Gaumont Films)

This is the film's most explicit critique of the political film as consumption-image. While Godard makes this statement, he is simultaneously dismantling and deconstructing the process of montage; he questions and breaks the chains of space and time, image and sound. The film continuously uses non-diegetic sound and the juxtaposition of images to question both the value and authority of the political image, and the consumption of the image. On a personal level, it is also a self-critique of his political film practice from his Dziga Vertov period. This is highlighted by the constructed flow of images which would have constituted the earlier iteration, a production made 'elsewhere' for consumption 'here'—a consumer represented in the preceding scene as the 'poor revolutionary fool, millionaire in images of revolution.' The 'staging' of this production line of revolutionary images creates what Olivia Harrison (2018, p. 187) accurately terms 'a *mise en abyme* of the fictional making of the film *Jusqu'à la victoire*.' The film is somewhat elegiac in tone. It mourns the failure of the film itself, but also the failure of the cinematic left, (the Dziga Vertov group had disbanded by 1972). What began as an ideologically committed, cohesive Marxist-Maoist militant documentary evolved into a film shot through with ambiguity, ellipsis and rupture. This highlighting of the artifice of image-making through Brechtian techniques of de-familiarization, constantly making the viewer aware of the artifice involved in the cinematic process, and the construction, or deconstruction, of documentary images. This approach in Godard's filmmaking with the Dziga Vertov group was termed *counter-cinema* by Peter Wollen in his 1972 article on *Vent*

D'Est. Wollen (2004 [1972], p. 528) recognised the attempt to move away from an idea of representation, to a cinema through which images are 'given a semantic function within a genuine iconic code, something like a baroque code of emblems.' It was this concept of semantics, de-signification through a construction of images that Wollen recognised in later Godard

4.2.3 The impenetrable opacity of resilience in *Nervus Rerum*

A Godardian thinking of resistance is at work in the Otolith Group's *Nervus Rerum* (2008). The film is located in the Jenin refugee camp and might be termed an essay film, in the Godardian sense, in that it blurs image and spoken word (in this case the words of Jean Genet and Fernando Pessoa) so as to question the representative function of the image. Structurally, the film somewhat paradoxically opens out onto concealment as the camera proceeds through the camp. That is, the more one sees, the less one knows. The use of Steadicam creates a slow moving, drifting aesthetic, which withholds any unfolding of comprehension or empathy. The camera is neither truly inside nor outside, neither subjective nor objective. The opening scenes, which actually take place in Gaza, are emblematic of this. The camera focuses initially on a number of rusted, dilapidated washing machines, before drifting away to two men leaning on the back of a truck (shot behind–there is very little interaction with faces throughout the film). The film then returns to the initial scene. These opening scenes create a sense of spatial frustration of dead-ends. The camera lingers at ruins *without* moving on.[9]

[9] This is a reference to Laura Marks's concept of asphalt nomadism. Nomadic qualities include the ability 'to continue to move, in attention to the immediate and the surface, to avoid depth, hierarchy, roots, causality, to invent according to local needs, to respect ruins and leave them behind' (Marks 2015, p. 168)

The Otolith Group. Nervus Rerum (film still), 2010. Courtesy and copyright of the artists.

Dead commodities and turning one's back on power in *Nervus Rerum* (2008). The Otolith Group. Nervus Rerum (film still), 2010. Courtesy and copyright of the artists.

This is a spatial logic TJ Demos (2009) refers to as 'opacity'. The opening scenes of the ruins of consumer goods set the tone for the aesthetic structure of this opacity. Following its Godardian logic, the film arguably speaks from the space between the *Ici* and the *Ailleurs* of Godard's film. That is to say, while it doesn't work with juxtaposition, the elsewhere of the

Fedayeen camp and the 'here' of the domestic family home, it does present the opaque 'elsewhere' of the Jenin camp in such a way as confound the norms of representation of 'Palestinians' 'here', that is to a Western audience. The refusal of empathy, the non-translation of slogans and graffiti and the growing sense of disorientation— alongside the logic of de-identification, which sees characters with their backs turned to camera—are all markers of this spatial opacity.[10]

In a discussion over the mode of address the film utilizes, Kodwo Eshun, a member of the Otolith Group, explains the concept of 'turning one's back on power' that is producing a logic of representation at odds with the dominant power of corporate media, 'so as to open up a potential mode of address that was neither one of resistance nor victimization' (Emmelhainz 2009, p. 30). What is interesting in this quote, is that it initially appears to frame the camp as an apolitical space. That is, a notion of the political that rests on a concept of struggle within an oppositional field of forces, such as friend/enemy or power/counter-power. Conversely, the camp here exists as a space where such a relation is impossible, through both the suspension of the law and the political. This marks the film as strikingly different to Mohammad Bakri's *Jenin, Jenin* (2002), which, as T.J Demos (2009, p. 18) contends, articulates 'the cinematic documentary as a mode of historical truth-telling put to task as political resistance.' That film itself uses a far more embodied approach to space as a handheld camera relays the testimonies of the camp's inhabitants. The meaning and identification foregrounded there is elided and evaded in *Nervus Rerum*.[11] Indeed, the claustrophobia of the space, with its narrow alleys, reminiscent of the tunnel-like opening scenes of *Omar* (2013), offers neither exit nor resolution, but only oppressive enclosure. This evocation of the camp, rather than the bearing-witness as victimhood/defiance that constitutes the more familiar *sumud*-like image of resistance portrayed in *Jenin, Jenin*, seems to present it as a space of *resilience*, rather than *resistance*. In this space, as Julian Reid (2012) defines it, resistance is impossible, as the subject must simply adapt to the perpetual threat of danger and insecurity,

---

[10] It is worth noting that the opacity on display in this work raises the question of reception. The hypervisibility being resisted here corresponds to a refusal to furnish a Western audience with images of Palestinians reduced to a suffering/defiance binary. This is a resistance Said (2006 [2003]) and Collins (2011) both cite as constituent of a politics of visibility. The non-translation of graffiti is clearly designed to alienate the non-Arabic reading Western viewer, and could thus have different connotations within the Arab world. An example this can be seen in the subversive graffiti on the series Homeland, in which artists commissioned to provide 'authentic' graffiti on the set of a Syrian refugee camp instead supplied messages criticising the show's Orientalist portrayal of the Middle East. Source: Amin, H. (2015). *"Arabian Street Artists" Bomb Homeland: Why We Hacked an Award-Winning Series* [Online] hebaamin.com.

[11] The opening scene of *Jenin, Jenin*, in which a mute man gestures at the scars around the camp which point to an 'unspeakable' violence, is a narrative juxtaposition markedly at odds with the literal volte-face performed by the figures in *Nervus Rerum*.

and the capacity to imagine life otherwise is similarly foreclosed. However, while the camp appears to be a de-politicised space where resistance is impossible, it is the impenetrable opacity of the images themselves that offer resistance.

4.2.4 The network of resistances in *Art/Violence*

Art/Violence (2013) is a documentary that takes place between the camp and the city, in this case the zone of indistinction between camp and city in Jenin, and the displacement of the Freedom Theatre's production of *Antigone* from Jenin to Jaffa. The structure of the film follows the Freedom Theatre in the aftermath of the assassination of Juliano Mer-Khamis, its founder and director. Mer-Khamis was the son of a Jewish mother, Arna Mer, and a Palestinian father, Saliba Khamis who met through the Communist Party. This lineage led Mer-Khamis to identify as '100 per cent Palestinian and 100 per cent Jewish' (Shatz 2013, p. 3), a hybrid identity that problematizes the juridical understanding of a Palestinian within Israel, which, as Tawil-Souri (2011, p. 222) highlights, allows them 'to be "citizens" of the state but not the nation,' with the latter being defined in line with religious belief. Mer-Khamis' initial involvement with Jenin began with his mother, Arna, who set up an education centre, Care and Learning (Shatz 2013, p. 5) after the closure of Palestinian schools in the wake of the first Intifada. After a nomadic acting career in Israel and overseas, Juliano returned to Jenin to open the Freedom Theatre in 2006, six years after an earlier iteration, Arna's children's theatre (the subject of Mer-Khamis' 2004 documentary *Arna's Children*) had closed.

In the Palestinian collective consciousness, Jenin has a particularly resistant identity. A history of defiance can be traced from the Ottoman era 'when residents refused to pay their taxes to the Sultan' (Ibid), through the British mandate, when the British retaliated to an assassination following the uprisings of 1936 by flattening portions of the town with explosives (Corera 2002, para. 2). A little over sixty years later, the camp would be the site of some of the fiercest conflict of the second Intifada, culminating in Operation Defensive Shield the destructive practices of which are witnessed in Mohamed Bakri's *Jenin, Jenin* (2002), and documented extensively in the work of Graham (2004) and Weizman (2007). It is within this post Second Intifada context that Mer-Khamis, along with Jonathan Stancyak and Zacharia Zubeidi, founded the Freedom Theatre as both a mode of artistic and cultural resistance, but also as creative outlet for young people in the camp, whom, in the wake of the intifada and military operation on the camp 'showed signs of post-traumatic stress disorder'

(Shatz 2013, p. 6). Zubeidi, being one of the few actors featured in *Arna's Children* who would survive after becoming a fighter during the Second Intifada, was regarded as a hero within the camp. He thus offered the theatre both a cachet and protection within the camp that Stancyak and Mer-Khamis, both being Jewish and viewed as outsiders, couldn't provide.

Art/Violence begins with a recorded interview with Mer-Khamis from 2006, in which he evokes an image of corporeal violence articulated by the occupation, claiming that 'Israel is destroying the neurological system of the society.' The response to this is primarily gestural, as Mer-Khamis invokes a networked, multimedia artistic response to occupation. After the violence, destruction and loss resulting from the second Intifada (particularly in Jenin), Mer-Khamis claimed that 'the next intifada will be cultural.' This cultural resistance manifests itself not only to the occupation, but also to a series of repressive elements which burden the camp. Crucially, the film also articulates a moment of resistance, situating it within a wider network of global resistance. This associates Mer-Khamis's thinking of Palestinian resistance with a laterally networked, globalised struggle, what John Collins (2011, p. x) terms 'a Palestine that is globalized and a global that is becoming Palestinized,' a view echoed by Elia Suleiman, who has claimed that 'Palestine represents all of the conflicts of the world' (2010), and a few years later that 'many conflicts now represent Palestine' (2016). Similarly, Basma Alsharif's 2016 film *Ouroboros* echoes this relational thinking of Palestine, situating the destruction of Gaza within a context of networked destruction and renewal. Rather than an image of Gaza as disconnected, it is networked and co-implicated in the wider context of acts of destruction and renewal thereafter. As Alsharif states:

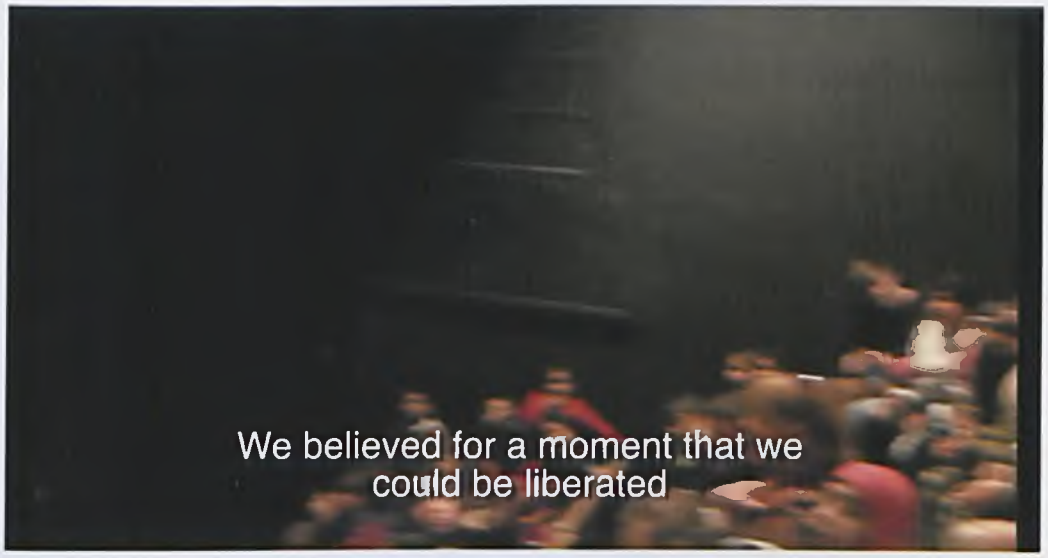
> With *Ouroboros*, I was interested in weaving together disparate landscapes and peoples and histories, and to ask us to see them as part of an endless cycle of destruction and renewal, doomed to repeat itself as the process of forgetting seemed to be the only way forward (Alsharif 2017a).

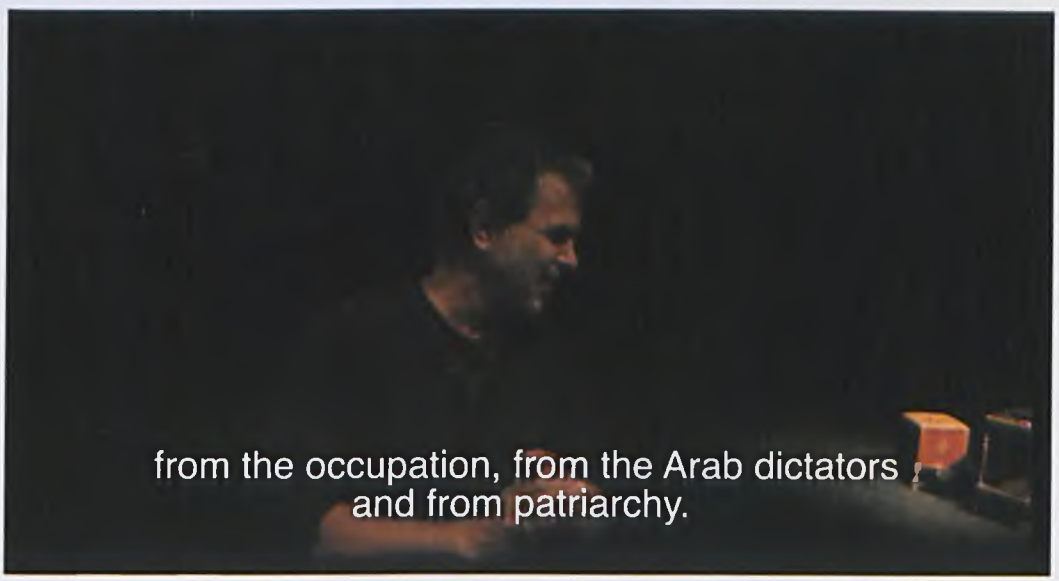
The driver of this cycle, claims Alsharif (2017a), was Gaza, the 'starting point' or rather ground zero where 'civilisation was ending and beginning again.'

The early stages of *Art/Violence* situate Jenin globally, with lateral connections within the Arab world but also an acute temporal consciousness, that of a resistant moment in 2011. Following the dissemination of Stéphane Hessel's *Indignez Vous!* (2011), whose influence was felt in an emergent global resistance network, as in the anti-austerity movements of Spain's *indignados*, Greece's *aganaktismenoi* and the Occupy movements, but also in the anti-autocracy movements of the Arab Spring. Indeed, the lateral connections are shared

across language, with the call for indignation in the West being mirrored by the call in Arabic for *karama* (dignity).

Art/Violence opens with the Freedom Theatre's production of *Alice* in Jenin in early 2011. In an interview, Mer-Khamis likens Alice's process of liberation in the play to contemporary protest movements in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, claiming 'This wind of the Arab Spring is now [...] blowing on the stage of the Freedom Theatre.' These early scenes have a revenant-like quality to them, as we are witnessing an image of death. Firstly, the coming death of Mer-Khamis, but also the death of that 'wind' of liberation, articulated as a passing of a resistant moment into a loss of momentum. The wind that elevated the hopes of the Freedom Theatre, positioned as a resistant figure to military occupation, but also patriarchal and gender oppression, a feeling that Mariam Abu-Khaled articulates before a performance of *Alice*, in which she plays the lead:





A moment of resistance in *Art/Violence*. ©Udi Aloni (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Abu-Khalid's role as the 'Red Queen', an autocratic figure she likens to Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) proves controversial within the camp, in a scene that introduces the major fault line of the film, i.e. the discordant resistances of the camp and the theatre. A young woman dressed in bright red with her face a geometric pattern of red and white is a source of potential scandal. Reflecting on her lead role and her choice to be an actor, Abu-Khalid notes her mother's objection, 'not because she didn't want me to act, but because of the neighbours,' and quoting these critical responses: 'With your daughter acting, she'll end up on TV… a scandal.' It is these scandals perpetuated by a religious, conservative and patriarchal society that Abu-Khalid denounces as indicative of an immature society—one that doesn't allow her to do her job. The convergent resistances of the camp and the theatre to the occupation diverge over the more repressive religious elements of the camp and the expressive performativity of the theatre.

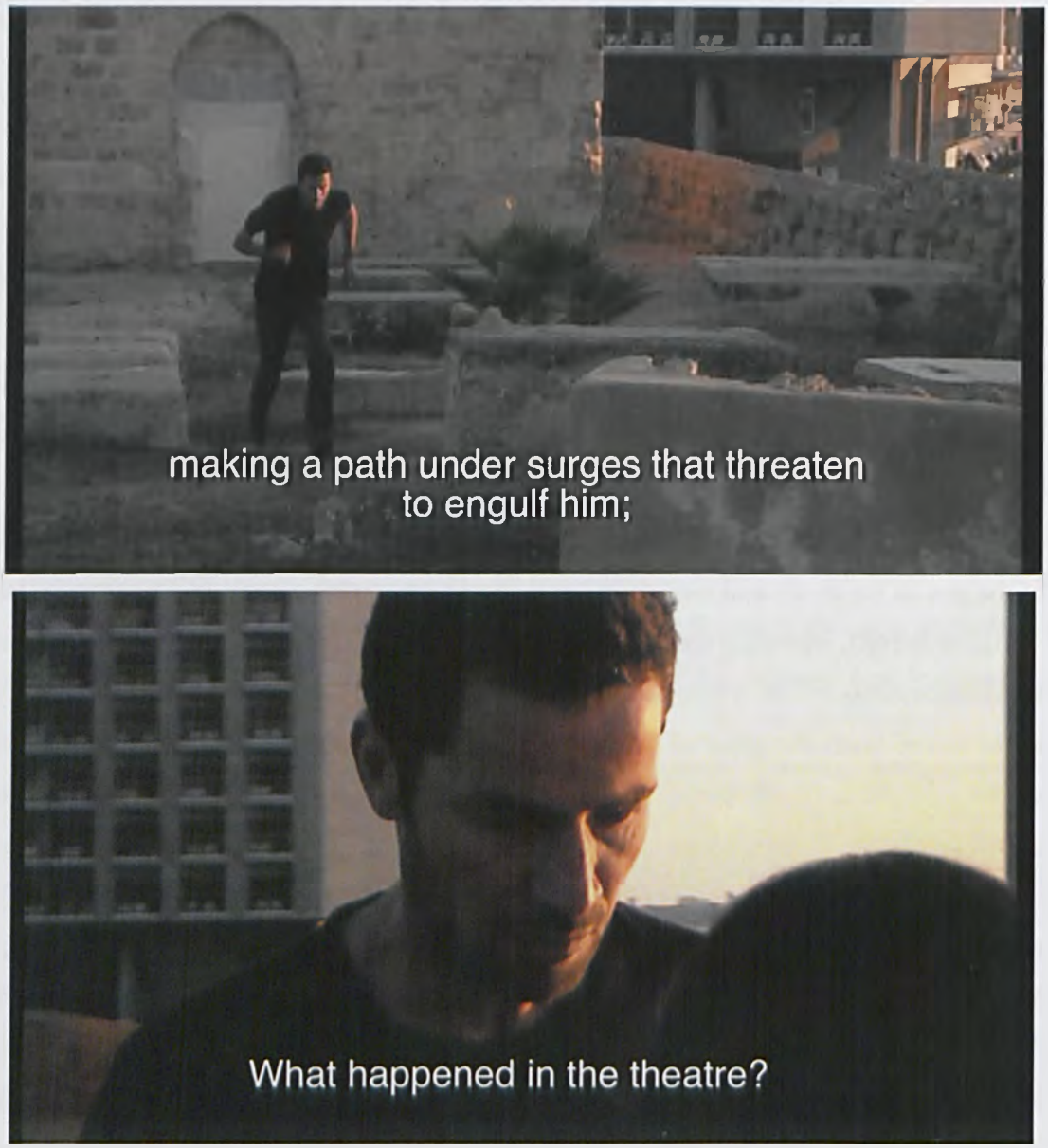
Resistance of tradition and patriarchy in *Art/Violence*. ©Udi Aloni (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

As discussed above, the figure of Zacharia Zubeidi existed at the threshold of these resistances, traversing the militant armed resistance of the Second Intifada, but also an adherent of Mer-Khamis's articulation of a cultural intifada. This tension is played out in the film's second half, which deals with Udi Aloni's 2012 film production of *Antigone*. This production is based on an unrealized ambition Mer-Khamis had to stage Antigone in Jenin. Aloni's film displaces the setting to Jaffa 'in a refugee camp ten years in the future.'

Sophocles' play deals with the question of the law, namely the relation of subject to law as *nomos* and law as *physis*.

Antigone is the daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta. Her two brothers, Etiocles and Polyneices, kill each other in a war for the city-state of Thebes. Polyneices was banished from the city by his brother and returned with an army. Upon the brothers' death, Creon, Jocasta's brother, becomes ruler of Thebes and decrees that while Eteocles will be honoured, Polyneices will be neither mourned nor buried. Disobedience of this law is punishable by death. The tension of the play thus results in Antigone's prioritising of the 'natural' law of burial and her duty to her brother over Creon's demand for absolute obedience of the law of Thebes.

Aloni's film version, which occupies the latter part of *Art/Violence* takes the question of the law as its centre and then forms two concentric circles around it. The first of these is Antigone herself, while the second is the film about the staging of *Antigone* in the theatre. It is the movements of law where these circles converge and diverge. A camp in Jaffa ten years in the future takes the place of Thebes, and it is not the *nomos* of the state, but rather the *nomos* of *al-mukhayyam*, the camp, that this Antigone challenges. This Antigone is Salma, the sister of Khaled, who is the head of the resistance to Israel, a hero of the resistance who is a wanted man and thus has to move to evade capture. The few scenes we see in *Art/Violence*, of a project that was never to come to completion, depict Salma's conflict with Khaled, who here represents Creon's *nomos*. It is this conflict over the laws of the camp that highlight the discordant resistances at work in this staging of *Antigone*. The key scene that articulates this conflict occurs towards the end of the film, when Khaled demands a meeting with his sisters, Noora, Salma and Yasmin. Khaled has been in hiding for six months, and his sisters have had no idea of his whereabouts or wellbeing. While waiting in the cemetery, Noora, the youngest sister, asks Salma to perform a scene from *Antigone*. Noora objects to performing in a cemetery, but Salma, echoing Antigone, is defiant. She enthusiastically performs the 'Ode to Man' chorus. During her recital, Khaled arrives in a hurry, his face contorted with anger.



The *nomos* of the camp in *Art/Violence* (2013). ©Udi Aloni (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

There is talk in the camp that she has kissed a man, and Khaled fears the shame and loss of honour this will bring. Salma responds that it was simply a scene—she is just playing her role. It transpires that Khaled's intervention is also to stop the killing of Salma (which he himself issued in rage). Echoing the Freedom Theatre's own complex relationship with the Jenin camp, Khaled's law of the camp clashes with Salma's *wajib* (duty) to the theatre. Departing from Sophocles, this Antigone is a resistant who subordinates the law of the camp, manifested in the figure of her brother, to her own duty to freedom of expression. Khaled represents the resistance of the camp, with its duty to *al-qadiyya* (the cause). Within, the camp, he is a hero of the resistance to Israel. However, to Salma, while he initially encouraged her participation

in the theatre, once his 'honour' is damaged, he becomes an oppressive patriarch. A reactive, repressive agent of the laws of the camp, a law bound up with codes of 'honour' and 'shame'. For Salma, unlike Antigone, it is not divine law that prevails over the city's law, but rather freedom of choice as freedom from oppression that supersedes the law of the camp. In exploring the tension between the 'cultural intifada' envisaged by Mer-Khamis, and the gradual shift of *al-qadiyya* from a secular concept to a religious one, the film's somewhat elegiac tone mirrors the struggle of a progressive, secular resistance in what Laura U. Marks (2015, p. 125) terms the 'political vacuum' left in the wake of the PLO's exile from Lebanon in 1982, and the subsequent loss of what Edward Said (1986, p. 122) terms 'the idea of non-sectarian community.'

4.3. The Future that Came to Pass in *When I Saw You*

It is a painful nostalgia for this lost, secular resistant moment which Annemarie Jacir's *When I Saw You* (2012) expresses, through both formal and textual means. The film takes place in 1967, in the wake of *al naksa* (the setback)[12] and as such shares with *Villa Touma* the same historical trauma that foregrounds characterization in both films. After the six-day war, Israel occupied Gaza and the West Bank, resulting in refugees heading across the Eastern border into Jordan. The film takes place both in and between two camps, the fictional Harir Refugee Camp, and the *fedayeen* camp in the forest. The film tells the story of Tarek and his mother, Ghaydaa, who have become separated from Tarek's father while leaving. Despite being shot on digital, the film has a distinctly vintage aesthetic, with the somewhat harsh, bleached palette of white, grey and stone that comprise the camp scenes convey both the graininess of 16mm film and the arid dryness and boredom of the camp.

The bleached, harsh palette of the refugee camp in *When I Saw You*. ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Indeed, the airlessness of the camp is conveyed both formally and textually. The faded, dry colour palette dominates the mise-en-scène which conveys the interminable waiting of the

[12] Edward Said (2000, p. 47) highlights the relative temporariness and lack of severity of this term when contrasted with 1948's *al-nakba*, and its suggestion of a catastrophic deviation from continuity, arguing that *naksa* 'suggests nothing more radical than a relapse, a temporary setback, as in the process of recovery from an illness.' There is an irony here considering the 'temporary permanence' of settlement building and the contemporary political impasse, an irony Said was perhaps not unaware of as he moved away from the two-state solution towards the end of his life.

camp; but also Tarek's frustration is expressed narratively at points as an inability to breathe. The loss of territory and the loss of his father provoke Tarek to lash out at his mother, complaining that 'you're suffocating me!' While this suffocation can be read as the protectiveness of a single parent, it can also be seen as a wider malaise in the refugee camp, a condition of occupation and displacement.

When speaking of the effects of colonisation in *A Dying Colonialism*, Frantz Fanon is careful to point out that the territorial impact extends to both the corporeal, and even the respiratory.

> There is not occupation of territory, on the one hand, and independence of persons on the other. It is the country as a whole, its history, and its daily pulsation that is contested, disfigured, in the hope of a final destruction. Under these conditions, the individual's breathing is an observed, an occupied breathing (Fanon 1965, p. 65).

Despite the harsh lighting of the camp, this is a film of nostalgia, both in its cinematic references and its framing of a historical, internationalist and secular moment of resistance. The film's use of Mahmoud Asfa, a non-professional actor, as Tarek (alongside a mix of professional and non-professional cast members) echoes certain films of the Iranian New Wave, particularly Abbas Kiarostami's *Where Is My Friend's House?* (1987) and Jafar Panahi's *The White Balloon* (1995). Another stylistic lineage the film has with those films is in its use of the freeze-frame, which Chaudhuri and Finn (2003) cite as a key constituent element of what they term 'open images' or 'closing scenes which try not to close down a narrative but rather open it out to the viewer's consideration, to live on after the film itself has finished' (Chaudhuri and Finn 2003, p. 52). However, perhaps the film's clearest stylistic antecedent is François Truffaut's *Les Quartre Cents Coups/The 400 Blows* (1959). Much like Antoine Doinel, Tarek spends much of the film in flight between oppressive institutions. Antoine flees both school and home, whereas Tarek runs between school, the refugee camp and the *fedayeen* camp. They are both articulate and rebellious characters marginalised by their teachers (Tarek is shown to be highly numerate and bright, but illiterate, and thus scorned by his teacher). Both films end in arrested movement, as flight becomes stasis. While the framing is notably discrete, the movements of both films act almost as inverse relation. In Truffaut's famous ending, Antoine escapes the juvenile centre he's been placed in (by the sea, at his mother's request) and runs to the beach and into the sea.

His face and movement are frozen in medium close-up as he turns to the camera. The scene spatially and temporally traps Antoine in a moment, the openness of the sea as restrictive as the classroom and the home. However, the scene also encapsulates Antoine's ambivalent relationship with his mother. The absence of a paternal figure dominates the film, as Antoine's biological father is absent. An English lesson in an earlier scene centres on the pronunciation of the question 'Where is the father'? His relationship with his mother is one of neglect and aloofness. However, the rush to the sea at the end, with the ambivalent steps and half turn that freezes Antoine in liminality, has maternal significance. The sea (la mére) and mother (la mer) are homophones in French, which leaves Antoine frozen both physically in isolation but psychologically in an ambivalent embrace.

In the freeze-frame that ends *When I Saw You*, Tarek runs from his mother and the *fedayeen* camp with a handful of fighters and his mother, Ghaydaa, in pursuit. However, as Tarek heads for the wire fence separating Jordan from the West Bank, his mother catches up with him. Having been, in Tarek's eyes, the figure pulling him from his father and home, here she takes his hand and they quicken their pace toward the border. The film ends on a long shot of them in flight, the hills of the West Bank rising in the distance. Interestingly, the absence of the father is similarly prominent in Suha Araf's *Villa Touma*, as discussed in Chapter 3. In that film Badia is taken in by aunts who aim to find her a suitor, bemoaning that 'the war' has taken most of the men. While the film itself is contemporary (albeit untimely), it is the *Naksa* of 1967 that, much like in *When I Saw You*, is the force that renders the father absent.

Between emergence and the yet-to-come. The freeze-frame ending of *When I Saw You.* ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

When I Saw You's freeze-frame evokes a moment of nostalgia for the political moment of the waning of Pan-Arabism after the defeat of 1967, and the waxing of the nascent PLO as a secular armed resistance. While, the fate of Ghaydaa and Tarek is left open, the device also arrests the yet-to-come. That is, its temporality dwells in the lacuna between Godard's *Jusqu'à la Victoire* (1970) and *Ici et Ailleurs* (1976), the film that would be assembled from the ashes of the former, a film of literal revenants as the *fedayeen* would perish in the Black September massacres. *When I Saw You* ends on a crystallized image of stasis, an index of the lost yet-to-come. In ending in a photographic image, the film captures the Barthian *punctum* and its consciousness of death, the temporality of '*this will be* and *this has been*' (Barthes 1993, p. 96). However, it also performs a Bazinian (1967) 'embalming' of the moment between life and death, emergence and disappearance.

In addition to its formal nostalgia, the film enacts a textual nostalgia; that is nostalgia for both the ethics and aesthetics of radical leftist resistance. This can be seen in the shift in colour palette that marks the transition from the harsh bleached tones of the refugee camp, to the warm, softer greens of the *fedayeen* camp. This camp is located in Dibeen Forest, which brings a verdant hue to the mise-en-scène. Nonetheless, the *fedayeen* camp is lit in softer, warmer tones than the film's opening segment. The contrast between these two palettes can be seen in the images below:

The bleached palette of the refugee camp contrasted with the soft warm greens of the *fedayeen* camp in *When I Saw You.* ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

This textual and formal nostalgia can also be seen in *When I Saw You's* homage to both the secular radical left, and the guerrilla and internationalist filmmaking of the PLO's Palestine Film Unit. Cinematic nostalgia for the radical left in the Arabic-speaking world is the focus of Chapter 5 of Laura U. Marks *Hanan al-Cinema* (2015). In reflecting on the chapter's title—*Communism, Dream Deferred*—Marks acknowledges that terming Communism a 'dream' may seem provocative, but less so in the Arab world.

> In many parts of the Arabic-speaking world, Communism—or, to begin to be more precise, the secular, radical left—was a dream cut short by deals with global superpowers, the rise of religious fundamentalism, and historical bad luck (Marks 2015, p. 97).

In contrast to the image *al-mukhayyam* as a site of resistance but also patriarchal conservatism seen in *Art/Violence*, *When I Saw You* presents the camp as a secular space. While the women of the camp in *Art/Violence* have some autonomy in the theatre (as long as patriarchal 'codes' aren't transgressed), they have no place in Khaled's resistance. In contrast, Layth, the figurehead of the *fedayeen* in *When I Saw You* (Saleh Bakri plays the roles as figurehead of the resistance in both films) fights alongside men and women. In the *fedayeen* camp, as demonstrated in several scenes, a woman's place is in the resistance.

Women in the armed resistance in *When I Saw You*. ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

In its textual nostalgia, the film seemingly romanticizes the moment between the defeat of pan-Arabism and the rise of the PLO alongside international anti-colonial movements. This brief temporal moment was also an extraordinarily complex spatial network, a 'global network' (Marks 2015) of *fedayeen* extending through Latin America, China, Algeria, Vietnam and farther afield. This is referenced at points on the film where the fighters open supplies of rifles and boots, checking their provenance.

The international network of the *fedayeen* in *When I Saw You*. ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

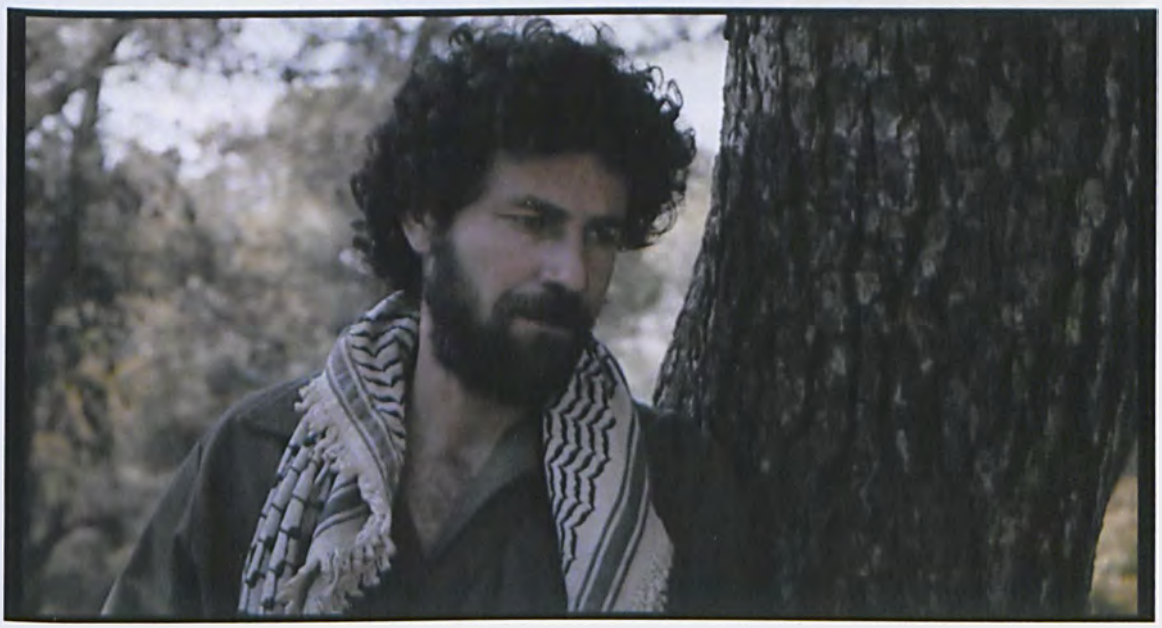
The reflexive scenes in the *fedayeen* camp are acutely aware of both the image making potential of armed resistance—the *keffiya* having long since become a commodity of resistance aesthetics, or what Laura Marks (2015, p. 99) refers to as 'radical chic'—and of the role of image making in growing the nascent Palestinian resistance of 1967. A shot reverse shot sequence in the film during military exercises demonstrates the tension between armed struggle and the iconography of armed struggle, as a couple of young *Fedayeen* stare purposefully down the lens of a photojournalist's camera, while their older commanding officer disapproves.

Creating an Image of Resistance in *When I Saw You*. ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

While the film's romanticizing of the 'image of resistance' may appear formally conventional, its reflexive embrace of, and references to Third Cinema in general, and the Palestine Film Unit (PFU) in particular make *When I Saw You* a more layered work than is initially apparent. In addition to being a filmmaker, Annemarie Jacir also curated the *Dreams of a Nation* film festival, with iterations held in both New York and Jerusalem. At the latter, she screened *They Do Not Exist* (1974) and hosted its director, Mustafa Abu Ali at the screening. Abu Ali is perhaps the most prominent of the filmmakers from the PFU, and also worked more widely within the context of global radical militant cinema. Both Nick Denes (2009) and Marks (2015) reference the relationship between Abu-Ali and Jean-Luc Godard. Abu-Ali worked as a cameraman on *Ici et Ailleurs* (1976) and Godard lent Abu-Ali a camera for the production of *They Do Not Exist*. The work of the PFU is subtly referenced throughout the film, from the importance of image creation in messaging, through photography and poster art. Nick Denes (2014, p. 227) highlights the use of mixed media in compiling the bricolage-like experimental form of the early works of the PFU, particularly 1971's *With Soul, With Blood*, which constructs a 'visual mosaic of archive photographs, newspaper headlines, caricatures, poster art and original footage.'

The creation of poster art in *When I Saw You*. ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

However, perhaps the most striking homage to the PFU comes in the mise-en-scène of the *fedayeen* camp itself. The structure and framing of the camp, along with the scenes of distributing of mail and singing of revolutionary songs are remarkably similar to the *fedayeen* camp that features in the middle sections of Abu-Ali's *They Do Not Exist*, as can be seen in the images below.



The similarities in mise-en-scène between *They Do Not Exist* (1974) and *When I Saw You* (2012). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Jacir has acknowledged the influence of her research into the PFU on the 'look' of *When I Saw You*. In its dual homage to both a political and aesthetic moment and movement in Palestinian history, the film appears to perform a romanticized nostalgia. However, in arresting the moment between a series of emergences and disappearances—of the secular radical left after the defeat of 67; of the PLO in Jordan, and of the Palestine Film Archive before its disappearance in the wake of the 1982 siege of Beirut—the film's nostalgia can be read differently. That is, as an unconscious resistance to the future that came to pass, a painful attempt to open up imagined radical secular futures.

To return briefly to Jean Genet and his time with the *Fedayeen*, of all the images that flashed up in his attempts to recall and represent the Palestinian Revolution, the one that haunted him most was a prescient contemporary sense of the transition from a form of secular martyrdom to a fundamentalist one, which he evokes in a reflection on the French term for dusk, *entre chien et loup*[13], signifying the liminal condition of the *fedayee*. With uncanny prescience, Genet confesses:

[13] Literally 'between dog and wolf, when fading light makes the two figures indistinguishable. In Genet's use, the term signifies a betweenness of states, and corresponds to the fragility and ephemeral state he sees in the Palestinian *fedayeen*.

> What I feared most were logical conclusions: For example, an invisible transformation of the fedayeen into Shiites or members of the Muslim Brotherhood. None of the people around me thought such a thing possible, perhaps rightly if it were a matter of a simple, external, visible change. (Genet 2003, 254)

When I Saw You ends in a psychological refusal to face the fate of a resistance movement, an attempt to halt the future which came to pass—which in the emergent 'counter-revolutionary Arab order' Bashir Abu-Maneh (2016, p. 145) highlights in the wake of expulsion from Jordan, became 'soaked in oil money and bureaucratized.'—and reimagine a contemporary, secular mode of resistance.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the discrete network of resistances which compose the topology of *al-mukhayyam*, both its complex cultural meaning, and its emergence into (bio)political theory, and practice. The films discussed in this chapter all share a common tension between nostalgia *for* and resistance *of* over-determined image of Resistance[14], which reaches its logical zenith in the camps. What is at stake in this struggle with the ghosts of the past is the capacity for a contemporary network of resistances to emerge. The fact that this tension is heightened in the cinema of *al-mukhayyam* is perhaps unsurprising, in as much as a Palestinian revolutionary cinema emerged in the 1970s both *in* and *of* the camps, facilitated by the PLO's mobile screening unit, which led to films of the *Fedayeen* being screened for discussion amongst the inhabitants and fighters in the camp. (Gertz & Khleifi 2008, p. 26) A mere homage to this 'golden age' is seductive, much like Derrida's (1998, p. 2) admission of the 'pathos of my nostalgia' for the seductive Resistance that looms large in his consciousness.

The tension between the resistance of the image of the contemporary cinema of *al-mukhayyam* and the image of resistance which always threatens to overdetermine it has

[14] I use the capital letter intentionally here, following particularly Jacqueline Rose (2007, p. 2), but also Howard Caygill (2013, p. 6) who cite the French Resistance as totalising force, one which for Rose (Ibid) is husbanded by history, sacred, eternally sequestered, whose meanings are exhausted by the moments of bravery and cunning of the Second World War.' For Caygill (Ibid) 'The unification of the practices of resistance into a concept and institution of *the* Resistance' somewhat negates the resistance within resistance. The image of Resistance, a continuum of the signifiers of the *Fedayeen* of the Revolution to the *sumud* of the Second Intifada, still circulated by the Palestinian Authority for political gain, enacts a similarly totalising force on both Palestinian consciousness, and representation.

something to do, I argue, with both embracing and overcoming the work of mourning. That is the spectrality of the index of image which both outlives and overdetermines its subject. The conscious image making of the Palestinian Revolution, captured in the photography scenes of *When I Saw You* is conditioned by both an awareness of the presence of death and the signifying power of the image (as icon) to come. Genet himself reflects on the tension between the life and death of the image and its subject in the following passage on photographing a *Fedayee*:

> The widespread function, being perhaps connected with death, desires fulfilment while the person concerned is still alive; he gets hung up on the image of himself. But this can't be: the desire prevents its own fulfilment. A young man, having his photograph taken adjusts his appearance a little, making it more studied or relaxed—in any case, different. He adopts a pose, for this chance image may be the last. (Genet 2003, p. 301)

The 'living-deadness' of the Palestinian Revolution haunts Genet's text, written both with a sense of his own finitude (it was the last text Genet wrote) and the fact that many of the images of the *Fedayeen* he was recalling were now images of the dead. The same spectrality haunts Godard's *Ici et ailleurs*. That is to say, the *et* acts both as a spatial conjunction between the 'here' of a European living room with the 'elsewhere' of the Fedayeen camp, and also separates and joins the struggle to reconcile the 'death' of the PLO image of resistance (an image which by 1976 was an index of death) with the nascent resistance of image emerging here in his post-Dziga Vertov work. The inclusion of readings from Genet's *Prisoner of Love* in *Nervus Rerum* is crucial in that the film, with its logic of opacity, tries to find a new vocabulary of resistance in the spaces between the images of resistance that remain dominant in how Palestinian cinema is framed in general, the cinema of *al-mukhayyam* in particular. It is these spaces between the *text* (in Genet's case)—which hold some kind of reality behind the image of the revolution— which Genet invokes in the in the opening lines of *Prisoner of Love*, when he wonders 'Was the Palestinian revolution really written on the void, an artifice superimposed on nothingness, and is the white page, and every little blank space between the words, more real than the black characters themselves?' (Ibid, p. 5)

Returning to the question of visibility which opened the chapter, the importance of finding a new vocabulary with which to resist this image of resistance is twofold. First, it both refuses to fit into a reductive and clichéd circuit of images of Palestinians 'in forms that are constructed and tightly controlled by others' as John Collins (2011, p. 6) warns as the

downside of what he terms the 'hyper-visibility' of Palestinians. The translation of this hypervisibility into a regime of images which can effectively erase the complex subjectivity behind them, is something both Edward Said and Jean Genet warned about in the images emerging from the Palestinian revolution, with the former lamenting a reductive imagery of 'postures, guns and slogans' easily weaponised by the Israeli state to codify and the complexity and multiplicity of struggles for Palestinian rights as 'terrorism'. (Said 1986, p. 107) Genet (2003, p. 141) similarly laments the empty signifiers that represent the Palestinian revolution in the West, claiming that 'For Westerners, he [Arafat] remains a keffiyeh with a stubble.' It is the tension between a pathological nostaligia *for*, the interrogation *of*, and resistance *to* these overdetermined images of resistance that conditions the cinema of *al-mukhayyam*. This manifests itself in the resistance to the future of *When I Saw You* and the opacity of both *Ici et Ailleurs* and *Nervus Rerum*. *Art/Violence* documents the tension between cultural resistance to the occupation, and resistance to a totalizing logic of *al-qadiyya* (the cause) which diminishes other resistances. These are the resistances the film examines, resistance to patriarchy, to the laws of honour and shame which condition power structures within the camp, and the parallel shift of *al-qadiyya* from a secular concept to religious one. In addition to the struggle for the capacity to resist the cultural dominance of the 'image of resistance' in *al-mukhayyam*, there is a parallel resistance to the spatial practices of the camp, occasioned, as seen in both *5 Broken Cameras* and *Jenin Jenin*, by a convergence of spatial theory and (bio)poltical practice. These films capture the political fluidity of the term 'camp', and contain within them a structural tension between bearing witness to, and resisting, the spatial practices of the biopolitical camp which emerge (and must be recognised as such) at moments of juridical suspension thus occasioning a topological distortion of the coordinates of Euclidian space, and folding the camp into the other topologies of *al-shatat*.

Chapter 5:

Topologies of Stasis and Un-Homely Sickness in the Cinema of *Al-Dakhil*

In *After the Last Sky*, Edward Said speaks of Palestinian experience *min al-dakhil*, which translates as 'from the interior'. This interior manifests itself in different ways. Firstly, in a tangible geographical sense, it refers to Palestinians in Israel—whose status as viewed from those in exile such as Said changed from 'different in a pejorative sense' to 'still, different, but privileged' (Said 1986, p. 51)—as the tide of Arab nationalism ebbed and the status of those *fil-kharij* ('in the exterior') diminished. A second meaning is spatial in a more psychological sense, that is, a psychological and linguistic interiority that is collective, an experience of being on the outside while dwelling in the interior, a space 'always to some extent occupied and interrupted by others—Israelis and Arabs' (Ibid. p. 53). Said dedicates an entire chapter of *After the Last Sky* to exploring this condition of being rendered an outsider within the inside. A conceptual move between architectural, corporeal and linguistic interiors constantly de-familiarizes any discrete notion of outside and inside:

> The phrase *min al-dakhil*, 'from the interior' has a special resonance to the Palestinian ear. It refers, first of all, to the regions interior to Israel, to territories and people still Palestinian despite the interdictions of the Israeli presence (Said 1986, p.51)

For Said, thresholds and openings become passages through which to pass, but also spaces that can be breached and entered. 'An open door' he states, 'is necessary for passing between outside and inside, but it is also an avenue used by others to enter' (Ibid. p. 53). For Elizabeth Grosz (2001) the *outside* is peculiar in that it can only be understood by way of negativity. That is, it is *not* the inside, yet one can never be completely outside, for one is always inside of *something*. Thus the border between outside and inside, interior and exterior is a porous one. Said's interior is not a protected space that shelters one from a hostile exterior, the interior is always already hostile, one is paradoxically both hemmed in by it and excluded from it. This exclusion was particularly pronounced for Said, since he was unable to enter Israel at the time of writing *After the Last Sky*, and thus witnessed the interior vicariously through

Mohr's photographs. Said's thinking of the 'privileged affliction' that is the experience of *al-dakhil*—the interior—will inform my reading of what I term the *al-dakhil* films (the cinema of the interior), which will be the focus of this chapter.

The essence of the *al-dakhil* Palestinian finds its ontological roots in the historical-legal condition of the *present-absentee*. This historical-legal condition emerged in the years after 1948, with the 1950 Law of Absentee Property. This determined Palestinians who left their villages during the 1948 war but found themselves within the new state, as corporeally present within the state, but legally absent from their place of origin, as Hillel Cohen (2002, para. 10) has identified, particularly—but by no means exclusively—in the case of Galilee. This historical legal status occasions a contemporary trace of ontological displacement visible in the cinematic language of the *al-dakhil* directors. The cinematic body of the interior is something both caught within the state apparatus and held outside it. This chapter will examine the topology of *al-dakhil* and its intersection of time, space and bodies; both through lateral movements between inside and outside and vertical movements between surface and depth, as the problematic and disruptive figure of the *Arab al-dakhil* haunts the threshold between Palestine and Israel. The films selected to illustrate and elucidate these themes are Elia Suleiman's *Divine Intervention* and *The Time That Remains,* Kamal Aljafari's *The Roof* and *Port of Memory*, Amos Gitai's *Ana Arabia* and *Udi Aloni's Forgiveness* (2006). Each of these films, I argue examines the problem of partition, both political and cultural project, through an examination of the *Arab al-dakhil* between both Palestine-Israel and Arab-Jew.

5.1 A Tableau vivant of Home- Sickness in *Divine Intervention* and *The Time That Remains*

In Elia Suleiman's Nazareth, in both *Divine Intervention* (2003) and *The Time that Remains* (2009), enmity dwells among neighbours. In the latter, this is expressed outwardly through political critique, while the former expresses a resentment turned inward. This section will examine these modes of neighbourly enmity expressed in the Nazareth of Suleiman's cinema as one pertaining to territorial specificity, but containing an element of broader political critique implicit in the mise-en-scène of both films.

Suleiman's *Divine Intervention* (2003) opens in Nazareth, with an extraordinary series of vignettes lasting around 30 minutes. The film begins with a scene of surreal physical and aesthetic violence, which prefaces several episodes of violent speech and gesture indicating the irruptive excess dwelling beneath the surface of Nazareth. Unlike other mixed cities in

Israel, such as Lod, Ramle and Haifa, Nazereth is unique in having an Arab population—to the point of near exclusivity. This enclave-like status is reinforced both architecturally and economically—with the city overlooked by its Jewish neighbour, Nazareth Illit, and both watched and neglected by the state.[1] The needs for observation, claims Suleiman, stems from the perpetual haunting that the figure of the present-absentee (the subtitle of *The Time That Remains*) represents in the Israeli psyche. Suleiman writes that Israelis, at the state level, 'are haunted by the fear that their "Arabs" are going to become "Palestinians"' again.' (Suleiman 2003b, p. 71)This logic of haunting, I argue, defines much of the cinema of *al-dakhil*, and can manifest itself both textually and formally. The dialectic of surveillance and neglect structures the Nazareth sequences of *Divine Intervention* with its tension between civility, docility and hostility. In an interview given to the *Journal for Palestine Studies* at the time of *Divine Intervention*'s release, Suleiman expands upon the play of forces that produce the *stasis* of contemporary Nazareth.

> Nazareth is a very claustrophobic space, no land, no possibility of expanding in the city, no cultural venues, unemployment is rife, frustration, stasis, a sense of despair and hopelessness—you may think the Nazareth scenes are an exaggeration, but in fact everything you witness in the film is a fraction of what really happens there— I mean, people shoot at each other over nothing in Nazareth (Suleiman 2003b, p. 71).

The notion of stasis is a crucial one for understanding the workings of this space. While stasis conveys a sense of political stagnation and forces cancelling one another out, the etymology from ancient Greek conveys the sense of taking a stand in a dispute against others. Specifically, in both Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*, the term *stasis* named the conditions for domestic conflict in the *polis*, to be contrasted with the ideal of *Homonoia,* civic harmony or consensus. The stasis of contemporary Nazareth conveys this duality of meaning, both of time on hold and civic stagnation, but also a taking of stands, the compartmentalisation of the neighbourhood into factions.

In *Stasis: Civil War as a Political Paradigm* (2015), Giorgio Agamben draws on the work of both Nicole Loraux and Thomas Hobbes to interpret the Greek notion of *stasis* at its logical extreme i.e., is as civil war rather than just mere factional strife.[2] For Agamben, *stasis*

[1] Chad Emmet (1995, p. 64) notes that Nazareth received a lesser classification than Nazareth Illit in an Israeli Law passed to stimulate capital investment, which led to a disparity in both industrial development and unemployment rates.

[2] In English translations of Aristotle's *Politics*, 'faction' is commonly the English translation for *stasis*.

is something that dwells in and erupts from the interior. It is a 'war within the family and comes from the *oikos* and not from the outside' (Agamben 2015, p. 8). As such, *stasis* is a remnant of the *oikos* that dwells in the *polis*. In this way, borders of private and public are blurred and a political relation of enmity is found in—and emanates from—domestic space. For Agamben, *stasis* 'functions as a threshold of politicisation and depoliticisation' (Ibid, p. 12).

The enmity of the Nazareth neighbourhood begins with E.S.'s father, driving his car along his street, outwardly gesturing salutations to his neighbours, while muttering increasingly obscene profanities at each he passes. This is the first of many scenes of hostility veiled in civility, as neighbours engage in a form of escalation. Watching/being watched is a key dynamic of these opening sequences. The frequent use of the long take, along with the high-angle long shot gives these scenes the quality of surveillance imagery. Doorways, houses and yards are framed at an impersonal distance, blurring the line between neighbourhood voyeurism and surveillance footage.

Neighbourhood surveillance in *Divine Intervention* (2003). ©Elia Suleiman (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

These opening shots evoke, in framing if not image quality, the surveillance-eye of the opening sequences of Michael Haneke's *Hidden* (2005), in which the initial four minutes show residents leaving their properties. While the framing shares an observational distance, *Divine Intervention* has a more cinematic quality, compared with the bleached palette and lower resolution of Haneke's video. This lends the Nazareth scenes an ambiguity as to who

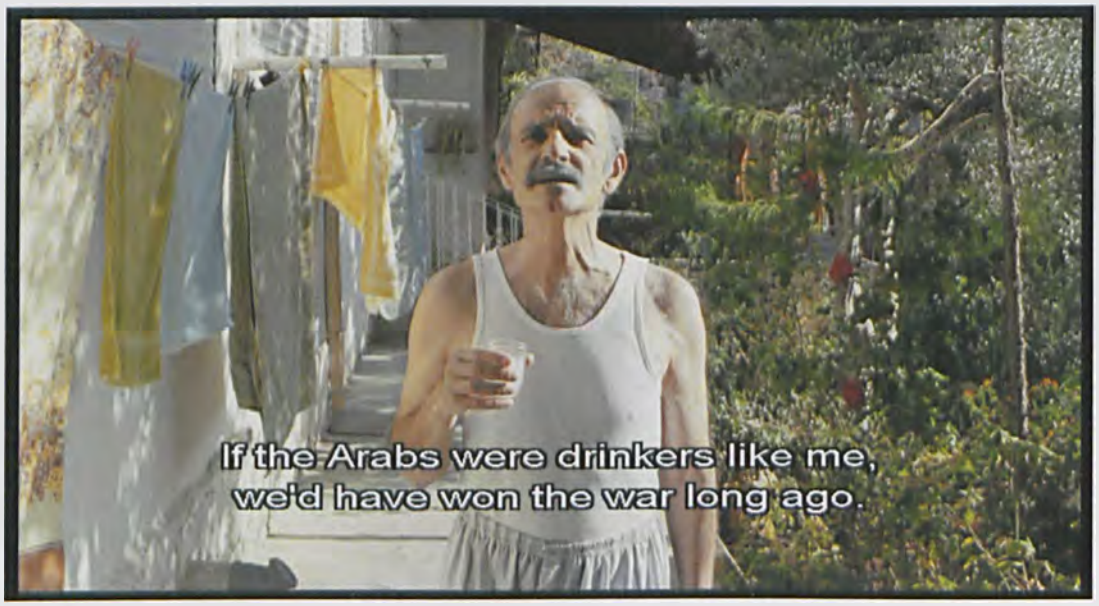
is being watched and crucially, *who* is watching. This ambiguity, I argue, stems from a panoptic internalisation of discipline that produces docile, depoliticised subjects of power. This docility will be examined in Suleiman's work in the following section.

Nazareth is a Palestinian city, with its own municipality, yet exists within a state apparatus where non-Jewish citizens are *within* the state, but not *of* the nation. David Lyon (2008), as cited by Tawil-Souri (2011, p. 222) contends that 'the Population Registry Act, by distinguishing between nationality and citizenship, permitted [Israeli] Arabs to be "citizens" of the state but not the nation.' It is this citizenry that is contained within Nazareth, where hostility is turned inward, marking a space of enmity in which the political is de-activated and private space blurs into indistinction with public space.

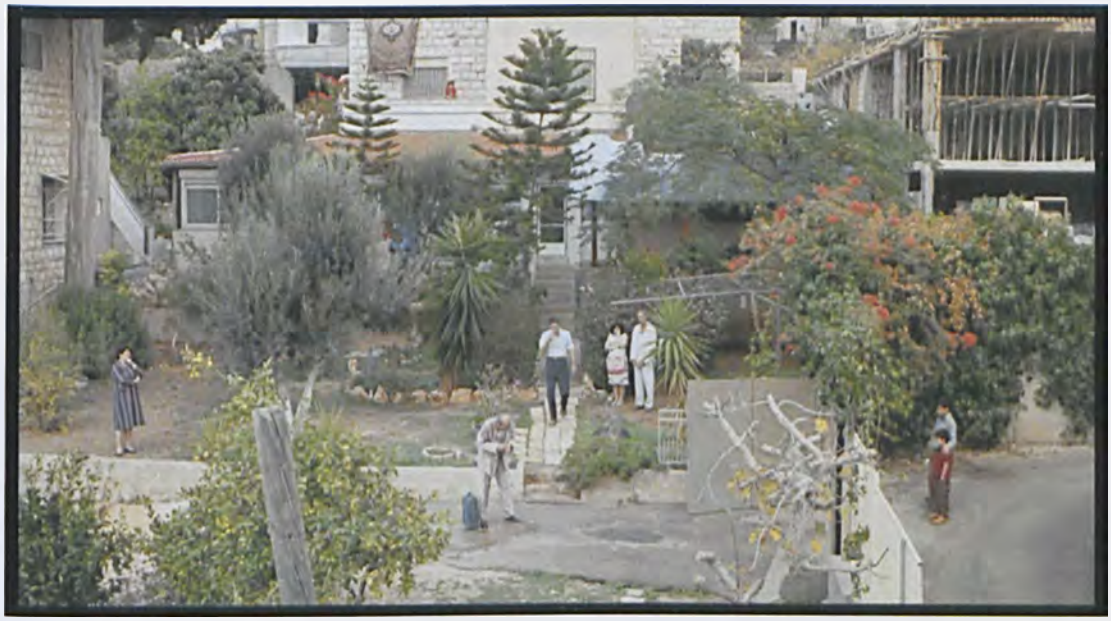
In Jacques Derrida's reading of Carl Schmitt's (1996) friend/enemy distinction which locates the political, Derrida (1993, p. 356) notes that the concept of the political enemy is necessarily public, claiming that, by contrast, 'the concept of a private enemy would have no meaning.' However, the *stasis* of Nazareth complicates this notion of public/private, as the factions, rivalries and violent hostilities happen at the threshold of both political abandonment by the state, and the internalization of its disciplinary power. In a 2003 interview with *Cineaste*, Suleiman frames what he sees as a historical forgetfulness towards Kurdistan in terms of the absence of a concrete political enemy, noting that 'the Kurds don't have Israel and they're completely forgotten' (Suleiman 2003a, p. 27). The same forgetfulness applies to

the *Arab al-dakhil* of Nazareth, abandoned by yet at the mercy of an invisible state power, one that enters the domestic space, as stasis produces the becoming-enemy of the neighbour.

The figure of the neighbour is presented somewhat differently in *The Time That Remains*. The nature of this difference is primarily due to historical circumstance. The film's critique of the neighbour focuses, historically, on the neighbour *without*, in contrast to contemporary Nazareth's neighbour *within*. The former's historical political critique uses irony and wordplay to frame domestic, seemingly quotidian scenes as forums to critique the contemporary geopolitical climate. The first of these scenes comes in the middle of the film, in the '1970' section in which Fuad's alcoholic neighbour pivots between desperation and defiance. In his more lucid moments, he interrupts Fuad's fishing trips to offer his 'solutions' to the question of Palestine, often hinging on an absurd logic—a logic that he nonetheless proudly defends. These scenes are juxtaposed with Fuad wearlily exiting his house and confiscating the neighbour's matches as he attempts, repeatedly, to immolate himself in despair. These scenes, full of pathos and the absurd, convey the 'weepy sorrows of Arab nationalism' (Said 1986, p. 51) following the defeat of '67 and the death of Nasser, the figurehead of pan-Arabist ideology.



The Arab neighbour as political critique in *The Time That Remains* (2009). ©Elia Suleiman (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)



The second scene, expressing a slight modification of this critique—as sorrow moves to cynism—occurs around an hour into the film. E.S. and his two friends are sitting around a table outside Nazareth gift shop when a newspaper boy walks by, announcing the prices of his papers in shekels.[3] The newspaper vendor's cry of 'Kul al-Arab balash!' combines the newspaper title *Kul al-Arab* (a weekly Israeli Arabic-language newspaper, based in Nazareth) and the colloquialism 'balash', which can mean both 'free' and 'nothing'— literally *balaa* (without) and *shi* (thing). One of E.S.'s friends requests the paper *al-Watan* (the Nation/Homeland), only to be told 'No more Nation (*al-Watan*). Only *All the Arabs (Kul al-Arab)* left.' The man nonchalantly takes the paper and discards it on the table. The sentence contains within it a double meaning. On the one hand, the boy is merely stating that this is a newspaper that costs nothing. However, the phrase as a whole contains an implicit political critique. 'All Arabs for nothing', with the play on *Kul-al-Arab* can be seen as a critique of Palestine's Arab neighbours—albeit in a slightly more hardened manner than previous scenes—for their empty talk of an endlessly deferred promise of a 'liberated' Palestine which has increasingly become an empty signifier. That is, *al-qadiyya*, the Palestinian cause expressed to justify actions done in the name of Palestine, if not necessarily for, or for the benefit of Palestinians. Edward Said, on charting emergent Palestinian consciousness in his 1979 book *The Question of Palestine* notes this emergent proper noun 'Palestine' as mere political capital for Arab states to trade in, noting that 'Arab state support does not seem to be diminished by periodic expulsions of Palestinians from one or another Arab state' (Said 1992

[3] The shot and framing are an intertextual reference to the same gift shop featured in Suleiman's *Chronicle of a Disappearance* (1996), which was the locus of much of that film's 'activity'.

[1979], p. 154), and also that 'the Palestinian cause is highest on every Arab government's agenda, but the number of Palestinian dead at Arab government hands is appallingly high' (Ibid, p. 170). Read alongside the figure of Fuad's alcoholic, impotent neighbour, with his frequent denunciations of the failure to liberate Palestine, but his own inability to act, the theme of the neighbour who speaks hot air and discursively borrows 'Palestine' as a proper noun to speak *of* and *for*, but never *to* can be seen as underlying political critique in the film.

Critique of the Arab neighbour who speaks for Palestine in *The Time That Remains* (2009). ©Elia Suleiman (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The Time That Remains (2009) is the third film in what might be termed the 'present absentee' trilogy. All three films focus on bodies of the interior, bodies of stasis, ageing and decadence, particularly in the Nazareth scenes. *The Time That Remains* (2009) can be read as a film charting the body's trajectory from resistance, through docility to decay. The film marks something of a break with Suleiman's earlier work in that it is ostensibly more rooted in time and place.[4] The film is largely chronological, and has four distinct temporal markers: 1948, 1970, 1980 and the present day. Historical events (the Nakba, the death of Nasser, the Land Day Protests) mark the transitions. Whereas in his two previous films the site has been a dislocated present, and Suleiman (or his cinematic alter-ego 'E.S.') has been at the centre of the films, in *The Time That Remains*, E.S. is a more peripheral figure. A large part of the film

[4] Suleiman (2000, p. 99) stated in an interview that he was not happy with scenes in his *Divine Intervention* 'that are anchored in temporal reality, linked to a specific period and place that will not last.'

is dedicated to his family in general, his father Fuad, in particular, or perhaps more accurately, to the body of his father. For this is primarily a film about bodies: the decaying body of the father, the dynamic body becoming a body of stasis, and the medicalised, docile body of entrapment. As the film unfolds, its kineticism dissipates and its framing becomes more static. We see the emergence of pathological bodies, often both trapped in these bodies and confined to domestic or clinical interiors. The enclosure of the bodies of Suleiman's parents is mirrored by the enclosure of the spaces that confine them. Contemporary Nazareth, as represented in both *Divine Intervention* and *The Time That Remains* is no place for young men. It is a landscape of ageing, unhealthy and increasingly medicalized bodies. These Foucauldian bodies in crisis both occasion, and are enframed by, spaces of discipline that impose order upon them.

In Foucault's short but dense work on heterotopias, 'Of Other Spaces' ([1967] 1986), there is an extraordinary and brief movement in which the corporeal is conjured and then displaced by the spatial in his classification of heterotopias. Foucault calls 'crisis heterotopias' places reserved for those in a state of crisis. These are other or even 'nowhere' places reserved for those in a state of biological flux. The 'crisis' to which Foucault refers is of a fundamentally corporeal nature. Citing puberty, menstruation, reproduction and ageing, he claims that these crisis heterotopias 'are disappearing today and are being replaced [...] by what we might call heterotopias of deviation.' Interestingly, old age blurs this border, with the retirement home traversing both crisis and deviation 'since in our society where leisure is the rule, idleness is a sort of deviation.' Decay and inactivity thus bridge the shift from crisis to deviation. Foucault defines heterotopias of deviation as 'those in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed' (Foucault 1986, p. 25). Citing examples of rest homes, psychiatric hospitals and prisons, Foucault's discussion of these 'counter-sites' anticipates his later work on discipline, docility and panopticonism. Of the latter, Foucault informs us that it 'serves to reform prisoners, but also to treat patients, to instruct schoolchildren, to confine the insane, to supervise workers, to put beggars and idlers to work' (Foucault 1977, p. 205). As can be seen from the corporeal crisis and spatial deviation described in *Of Other Spaces*, bodies lie at the foundations of heterotopias or other spaces. While this is implicit in *Of Other Spaces*, the body is more explicitly placed at the origins of heterotopia in a work dating from the same period of Foucault's thought.

Foucault's *Le corps utopique* was first presented as a radio broadcast in 1966, alongside his first broadcast of *Les hététotopies*, which prefaced his better known lecture on heterotopias a year later. *Le corps utopique* initially opposes the body to utopias, alluding to

Proust's narrator who awakens to find himself trapped in his body. While utopias are placeless places, the body by contrast is the opposite, the absolute, or 'pitiless place' (Foucault 2006, p. 229). Throughout the essay, Foucault conjures up a series of juxtapositions, which displace one another when thinking the place of the body. It is both the absolute place, articulated against utopias, which exceed the corporeal, such as the magical, the soul and the tomb; yet Foucault also finds in the body 'its own 'phantasmagoric resources' (Ibid. p. 230). Thus the body is the originator of utopia, a 'utopian actor,' yet always already elsewhere, or perhaps more accurately *nowhere*. 'It has no place,' writes Foucault, 'but it is from it that all possible places, real or utopian, emerge and radiate.' Imagined thus, the body is a conduit, a site in a network through which place is occasioned. It is in the image of the corpse and in sex (death linking the two in French) that the body is here, returning to the corporeal closure of the 'pitiless place' that opens the chapter.

What is striking about *le corps utopique* is the way in which the otherness of the body, the contradictions and contested states it holds mark it neither as utopia nor as its opposite, but rather as being heterotopic. Visible and invisible, here and elsewhere, and in a passage that mirrors the fifth principle of heterotopia, both 'open and closed' and 'penetrable and opaque' (Ibid. p. 231). This marks the body as a site of isolation and penetration, a system of opening and closing. What emerges from the body through a reading of *Le Corps Utopique* (1966), *Of Other Spaces* (1967) and *Discipline and Punish* (1977) is the body as heterotopic site, a system of opening and closing through which power functions spatially. This is not a body *in* space; rather, it is a body that reflects and occasions space—a body *as* space.

A key scene articulating this move from crisis through deviation to discipline appears towards the middle *The Time That Remains*. The scene takes place outside a pharmacy, as E.S. collects the prescription issued for his father. As we see E.S. enter the pharmacy in a long shot, the scene cuts to the car, where his father puts a cassette into the player. The song is *Ana Albi Dalili* by Laila Mourad, an Egyptian singer. [5] This is the same song Fuad hears on a stolen record player when he is hiding from Israeli soldiers in 1948 Nazareth. As the song plays in the car, Fuad nostalgically nods along, as E.S. stops and turns to watch his father drifting into sleep, his athletic, resistant body of youth replaced by a docile, decadent hospitalised body.

[5] Mourad is an iconic figure in Egyptian popular music, but a complex political one. An Egyptian Jew, who was chosen as the singer of the Egyptian Revolution. Despite converting to Islam in 1947, after 1948 her Jewish origins lent her some ambivalence as the voice of pan-Arabism.

From activity to docility in *The Time That Remains* (2009). ©Elia Suleiman (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Similarly, we see Suleiman's mother largely confined to the Nazareth apartment, an almost motionless figure whose movements are made after dark, as she covertly eats ice-cream at night, which leads to her being chastised by her diabetes nurse as her health deteriorates. Unhealthy, docile bodies abound in *The Time That Remains*, lending to the film a stifling sense of observing ghost-like characters living on borrowed time.

The docile body is a concept Foucault develops in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). It is just such a docile body we see produced in the cinematic spaces of Elia Suleiman's films, but also in the work of Kamal Aljafari. 'A body is docile' writes Foucault (1975, p.136) 'that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved.' However, the docility produced and on display in the films under focus differs from the Foucauldian docile body in one key aspect, namely its capacity. Foucault states that:

> [discipline] dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection (Ibid, p.138).

Discipline then, operating as micro-level biopolitics, produces subjection through the object of the docile body. However the biopolitical docile body we see in Palestinian cinema is not one of capacity, but rather one of inertia. What we witness is the pathological body. This is the body as subjection, subjection as enclosure. The body here becomes a carceral space.

The unhealthy, docile bodies we see evolve throughout *The Time That Remains* are more explicit in *Divine Intervention*. There are a number of hospital scenes, reflecting the father's sickness we see developing in *The Time That Remains*. In the first of these scenes, shortly after we see the father collapse in the kitchen after taking his morning coffee, we see a ward of ageing Palestinian men, the latest casualty being wheeled in. This first hospital scene begins with a long shot of the exterior of the hospital, with the non-diegetic beeping of monitors as cars pass along the road below. As the scene cuts to the hospital ward, we see E.S. in the far corner looking out across Nazareth. In the ward we see two men in the beds, the furthest being E.S.'s father in the background. In the foreground, the new patient arrives to complete the mise-en-scène with a striking symmetry. The two foremost characters lie supine on their trolleys, their protruding stomachs rising and falling in synchronized patterns. Despite the clinical compartmentalisation of the hospital trolleys, the foregrounding of these bodies creates a landscape of corporeal crisis, a rearticulation of home/sickness, a sickness not as longing for a home elsewhere, but a malady dwelling in these bodies trapped in the interior. These two men form a mirror image of ill health, their profiles projecting a pathetic image of the sick body as incarceration.

Pathological, docile bodies in *Divine Intervention* (2003). ©Elia Suleiman (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The biopolitical, docile body-space of the interior enacts a hemming-in of the *al-dakhil* Palestinian which is both a producer, and a product of internalised carceral structures.

Characters become trapped in unhealthy, immobile bodies, which in turn produce an ever constricting tableau-vivant like mise-en-scène. When speaking of the spatial ordering which discipline occasions, Foucault writes: 'the first of the great operations of discipline is, therefore, the constitution of '*tableaux vivants,*' which transform the confused, useless or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities' (Foucault 1977, p. 148). While speaking of physical space, Foucault's language evokes the arrangement of bodies and objects in the cinematic frame. In doing so, the cinematic *tableau vivant* is reconfigured as a disciplinary space, a space that subjugates bodies to separation, ordering and cataloguing. There is essentially an enframing at work in the static frames and compartmentalisation of bodies in the hospital scenes of *Divine Intervention*.

The act of enframing immobile bodies that we witness in Suleiman's interior, produces bodies that allow a disciplinary network, or perhaps more accurately, a *circuit* to function. Indeed, in his lecture at the *Collége de France* of March 17th 1976, in which he sketches out his theory of biopower, Foucault references the figure of the circuit through which biopower flows. In a passage in which he speaks of its reach over the medicalisation of the body, and the threat of infirmities and accidents, he warns that 'they have similar effects in that they incapacitate individuals, put them out of the circuit or neutralize them' (Foucault 2003, p. 244). This circuit, which Foucault also refers as a 'field of capacity' is explicitly spatial in its imagery—that of bodies as points in circuit, through which, when complete (or closed) biopower can function.

5.2 Buried by Foundations: Sickness of Home in *The Roof* and *Port of Memory*

Kamal Aljafari's *The Roof* is, like Suleiman's work, a film about the home/sickness of the interior. The film is semi-autobiographical, as it concerns the director (who is based in Germany) visiting his mother's home in Ramle and his father's home in Jaffa. The film opens with a flattened, compressed shot of a rain-blurred window. We hear the director off-screen, describing his experience in a prison for six and a half months during the first *intifada*. Few details are given, we get a sketch of his experience, as the face of his sister interlocutor enters the frame, listening and questioning. The interior in this case is an abstracted non-place, perhaps a bar, café or hotel lobby, the mise-en-scène is opaque.

The description of the prison is matched by a formal claustrophobia. The shallow focus and tight framing brings his interlocutor's profile looming into the foreground while the background is abstracted—only raindrops streaming down a window—adding to the any-place-whateverness of the location. The off-screen, disembodied voice de-centres this subject from spatial interiority, while retaining a psychological interiority, albeit outside the frame. This is the de-centred 'inside' of Said (1986), speaking from a situation outside of one's control and certainty. The scene also uses a dislocating sense of irony that occurs intermittently. While narrating his experience of prison, the friends he made and lost touch with, Aljafari explains that he fell out of touch with his friend Nabieh 'because I didn't know what to say to him– I was free and he was in prison.' These words ring hollow, as both characters are held captive by the static flattened frame.

'Speaking 'from the interior' in *The Roof*. ©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The composition of this opening scene anticipates the cinematic language of the film. Static, tableaux-like frames pass along (or linger at) walls, windows and unfinished roofs. Interiority becomes a mode of seeing in these scenes. Whether the scene focuses on roofs, the open sea of the port of Jaffa or literal interiors, a spatial language of enclosures and enclaves is employed, rendering the interior here not as a site of privilege, but rather one of being-hemmed-in.

Kamal Aljafari's *The Roof* is a film about the pressing weight of home. The concept of home carries significant weight in Palestinian cinema, across *al-dakhil, al-mukhayyam* and *al-ghurba*. To those 'present absentees' in Israel, it is in itself a present absence, topographically locatable but inaccessible. To those in exile and the camps, the key is a potent symbol of the endlessly deferred hope of *al awda*, the right of return; its foundations, both literal and metaphorical, lay an architectural and archaeological claim to *still existing* and *having existed*. Shortly after the establishing prison scene described above, Kamal Aljafari's film fades to black and a quote by Anton Shammas (2002, para. 1) appears on screen:

> And you know perfectly well that we don't ever leave home we simply drag it behind us wherever we go, walls, roof and all. Home - it is probably the one single thing we don't leave home without; and that would explain the rumbling in our wake.

It is clear from this quote and what follows that this is a film about home. Here however, home isn't something sanctified, an anchoring stability that grounds one. Rather, the *weight* it carries drags one under, the weight of historical claims and burdens, making it heavier and heavier. The burden and weight of home is an oppressive one in this film, as a close reading will demonstrate. *The Roof* is a film about homesickness, but not in the familiar sense of the word. Rather, a sickness of the home itself; as something that can betray trust and meaning. In fact, as this chapter will argue, the spatial ordering of the concept of home in *The Roof* reveal a formal logic of de-familiarisation.

The preceding scene is one that employs a spatial logic of inversion. The titular roof is introduced, arguably the main 'character' in a film where architecture provides the 'players' and the 'actors'[6] become the mise-en-scène. A camera pans steadily and slowly to the left, scanning the earth as stones and rubble give way to foundations and remains of houses. Aljafari narrates over this scene, a tale of dispossession of 1948 that took place in Jaffa (his father's origin) and Ramle (his mother's). It is a familiar tale. Forced to leave their homes, they became present absentees. The shot highlights the archaeological evidence. The foundations, origins were right here in the ground. This archaeological (and architectural) connection to the earth grounds contested claims of belonging. Just such a claim can be seen in Anne-Marie Jacir's *Salt of this Sea*. In the scene in question, Soraya, the film's protagonist, visits the remains of Dawayima with Emad, a Palestinian living in the territories and Soraya's

[6] I use inverted commas here because the acting is very much non-performance. The cast of Aljafari's family have a Bressonian stillness to them

love interest. The village is in Israel, through which the two are passing disguised as settlers. They are awoken by a school tour, led by teacher who explains to his students the importance of breathing new life into these ancient archaeological remains. The *arche*, that grounding root which leads to a *telos* of nation-building based on narratives of origin and claims of belonging.

The crushing weight of foundations in *The Roof* (2006). ©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The scene in *The Roof*, however, breaks this logic of *arche* and foundations, the connection to the land providing the collective grounding. While the visual language is familiar, Aljafari's narrative voiceover highlights a disjuncture between words and visual text. The past is not buried, in the land or the earth itself, but is something rather that *buries*. 'My parents live on the first floor,' states Aljafari, 'and the past lives above them.' *Arche* here, rather than being archaeological, becomes architectural as the unfinished roof looms over its inhabitants who are, quite literally, buried alive beneath it. Irony, as it did in the opening 'prison' scene here creates a powerful and disquieting effect. Foundations don't root us, says the film, (while the image shows the ruins of Arab Ramle) but rather bear down on us with the weight of gravity and history.

The burden of home, and the generational gap between the obligation to carry that burden and the unease of the current generation can be seen in two key scenes that punctuate

the film. The first occurs during the middle of the film. Aljafari and his uncle hear reports of an accident with a JCB in a Jaffa neighbourhood and go to investigate. The digger has hit the foundations, collapsing the external wall. This event, along with the long shot framing it, creates a perverse dolls' house effect. The effect is amplified by the tiny human figure of the house's owner, who appears in the bedroom, now resembling a stage, from which she enacts a defiant refusal to ever leave and demands to have it rebuilt exactly as it was. 'There isn't a house like this in all of Jaffa' she states. 'We won't leave this house. Not in a hundred years! We were born in this house and we will die here!' We hear in this scene the voice of the house and occupier as *sumud*, staying put at all costs. 'We will die here,' she says. By evoking the deaths of her father and brother she is in a way stating, as it towers over its inhabitants: this house will be the death of us all.

'We will die here.' The house as *sumud* in *The Roof* (2006). ©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

By way of contrast, the film's closing scene appears to echo the anxiety triggered by the foundations and the burden of the home seen in the opening shots of Ramle and the weight of the past on top of the Aljafaris. The scene begins with a shot of Kamal and his mother sitting opposite one another in silence. The scene then cuts to the mother, who asks: 'do you want to finish the house?' to which Kamal replies 'I don't know—it's strange finishing something

that doesn't belong to us.'[7] This brings the rueful response from his mother that 'everyone has left. Not just them—left their homes.' Belonging and home have a heavy weight for Aljafari, being more a ball and chain you drag with you. Returning from Europe, where he is based, the weight is almost unbearable. This creates an ambivalence to struggle which Raja Shehadeh alludes to in his 1982 book *The Third Way* when, after ten days spent in Geneva, he states: 'it is strange coming back like this, of your own free will, to the chains of *sumud*' (Shehadeh, 1982, p.56). The mantle of the historic 'home' is passed to Kamal, who appears to reject its burden; the foundations that don't root the family but bury them beneath the surface of the spectral roof.

We are introduced to the eponymous roof by way of a slow, one minute tracking shot, as the camera tracks left with tight framing as the unfinished roof is slowly revealed, along with a number of discarded objects (a bundle of wires, an empty birdcage). Accompanying this languid tracking shot is the song *Ya Habibi Taala* by Asmahan, a song of love, absence and ghosts. The song seems appropriate, as the spectral absent presence of the roof that isn't one haunts the Aljarfaris; an uncanny or rather *unheimlich* haunting that permeates the film throughout.

The spectral roof in *The Roof* (2006). ©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

[7] Aljafari notes in the establishing scene of Ramle that remaining families in Jaffa and Ramle in 1948 were given the houses of other Palestinians.

The Arabic term Aljafari uses for *The Roof* is *al Sateh*, which gives an ambiguity lost in translation. This can also convey flatness and surface, marking a slippage and instability at work in a number of other scenes. The linguistic slide from roof to surface gives a sense of concealment; that is, something lying beneath.

In his essay 'The Uncanny' Freud locates *Heimlich* and its antonym *unheimlich* (uncanny or literally 'unhomely) as interchangeable. This comes from a dual sense of *Heimlich* (which translates as 'homely') meaning both that which is familiar and comfortable and that which is concealed and hidden. *Unheimlich* then, Freud notes, 'applies to everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open' (Freud, 2003, p. 132). Thus Freud locates the *unheimlich* within the logic of the familiar. The homely is always already unhomely in that the familiar is repressed in the form of a secret and the unhomely is 'what was once familiar [homely, 'homey']. The negative prefix *un-* is the indicator of repression' (Ibid, p. 151). Through the use of German *Heimlich/unheimlich* and the blurring of separation between the two terms, Freud explicitly frames a discussion of the uncanny in terms of domestic architecture. The conflation of homely with unhomely points to an anxiety around the stability of boundaries between inside and outside, public and private and the stability of the home itself. The conceptual instability of foundations and origins has already been seen in the reversal of this logic in the unfinished roof. The semantic shift in *al sateh* from roof to surface allows for a thinking of 'home' as the unhomely repressed coming to the surface of the image. 'Home' here is conceptually founded on mistrust and betrayal, the familiar always already unfamiliar. A disquieting scene in the first ten minutes of *The Roof* occurs in a scene of domestic 'normality' in the Ramle house. After a scene in which the family dine together in virtual silence, there is a cut in extreme close-up to a hand on the edge of the sofa. The extreme closeness and shallow-focus photography that (de)frames the twitching, hairy hand evokes a Freudian sense of the uncanny.[8] The effect of the framing of the scene creates a cinematically disembodied hand which, until the frame pulls back to reveal Aljafari's uncle, gives the viewer a shock of the uncanny, particularly given the lack of animation of many of the 'bodies' in *The Roof's* mise-en-scène.

[8] For Freud, disembodied corporeal elements betray a heightened uncanniness. He writes that 'Severed limbs, a severed head, a hand detached from the arm (as in a fairy tale by Hauff), feet that dance by themselves (...) – all of these have something highly uncanny about them, especially when they are credited, as in the last instance, with independent activity' (Ibid, p. 150).

The uncanny hand in *The Roof*. ©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The preceding scenes at the dinner table, and prior to this as the preparations for dinner are made, are notable for the foregrounding of the television in the mise-en-scène. Both scenes feature the prominent character of the television, arguably a dominant and dominating presence in the home. What is key in these scenes is not the television itself, but the flow of images emanating from it. In the first scene the quiet domesticity of food preparation is in stark contrast, and subordinate to, the stream of bright images rapidly and violently edited. In this first scene, the television is broadcasting an MBC[9] channel with what appears to be a news programme cutting rapidly from story to anchor to explosive action in an incessant loop. This creates a dizzying and disorienting flow of images not intended to be watched as such, but to create an uninterrupted stream that renders distance or interpretation impossible. For Jameson, drawing on the work of Raymond Williams, this 'total flow' evacuates the subject of an entry point with which to engage, leaving 'no room for interpretation of the older kind, or when mainly temporal in its 'total flow' [...] no time for it either' (Jameson, 1991, p. xv).

[9] Middle East Broadcasting Corporation, a satellite broadcasting company, with multiple news and entertainment channels which broadcast across the Arabic-speaking world

'Total flow' of the television in *The Roof*. ©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Jameson posits that 'total flow' elides space and time and, significantly, memory:

> For it seems plausible that in a situation of total flow, the contents of the screen streaming before us all day long without interruption [...], what used to be called "critical distance" seems to have become obsolete. [...] Indeed, if anything like critical distance is still possible in film, it is surely bound up with memory itself. But memory seems to play no role in television, commercial or otherwise (Jameson, 1991, p.70).

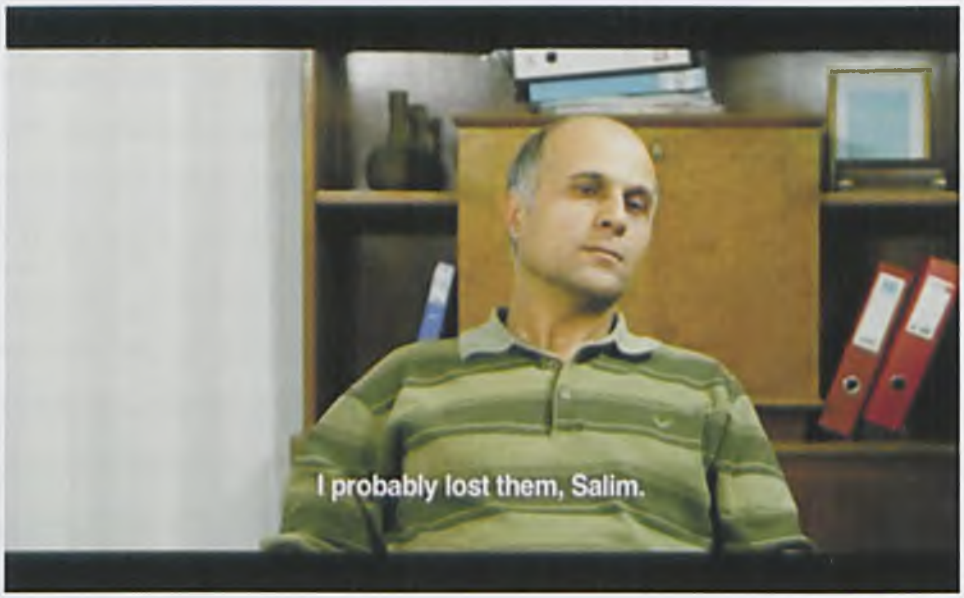
In the subsequent scene around the dinner table, the television again dominates proceedings as the family dine in silence while the same flow of images, from soap opera credits to chat show, continue their unpunctuated cycle. The television then, acts as a repressive element in the mise-en-scène, suppressing memory and removing critical distance and holding the characters in limbo without room (space) or time to stage an interruption. Television takes up and engulfs the cinematic space before Aljafari's camera. In its relentless streaming of images, it might be argued that the television brings obscenity, at least in a Baudriallardian sense, into the domestic space. While Jameson alludes to an abbreviation of the space of critical distance at work in total flow, Jean Baudrillard collapses this space more overtly, referring in a number of works to the concept of the 'ob-scene'. Rather than the understanding of the obscene as being that which is shocking and concealed, Baudrillard seemingly draws on the Latin prefix, *ob* being against. In this sense, the obscene violently obliterates the space for mediation the scene (in a theatrical sense) allows. Thus Baudrillard's obscene isn't connected to a perverse form of concealment as much as an effect of excessive visibility.

> It is no longer the obscenity of the hidden, the repressed, the obscure, but that of the visible, the all-too visible, the more visible-than-visible; it is the obscenity of that which no longer contains a secret and is entirely soluble in information and communication (Baudrillard, 1988, p. 22).

If the television allows no room for concealment, rather bringing a logic of unmediated revelation, then the repressed spatial excess of the unhomely can be seen through a displacement into other aspects of mise-en-scène. This spatial excess will be further explored in relation *Port of Memory* a film also focussing on uncanny architecture.

Port of Memory is, like *The Roof* before it, a film about the repressed element that dwells beneath the surface of the home. The film takes place in Jaffa, and the narrative concerns the loss of the deeds to Salim's house. The threat of eviction hangs over the characters. A scene

from the film—which deals with wider questions of loss, erasure and gentrification in Jaffa—shows Salim's lawyer (A Palestinian in Israel) betraying a similar 'administrative amnesia' to the military court, which 'lost' Emad's evidence in *5 Broken Cameras*. The scene in question shows (or perhaps more accurately, *obscures*) a dialogue between Salim, the film's protagonist, and his lawyer; they are discussing the whereabouts of the deeds to Salim's house. The lawyer, i.e. the law, is a disembodied voice of authority. The shot is framed initially from outside his office, where we hear him dismissing the previous client. When Salim enters, the scene is framed from the perspective of the lawyer, and doesn't cut to a reverse shot. This does not engender any empathetic perspective from the viewer but rather creates a faceless temporality of the law. It is a particularly Kafkaesque scene, not least because Salim finds himself both spatially and temporally, before the law.



The absent, absent-minded law in Port of Memory (2010). ©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The temporality of the law manifests itself in Salim's faceless, nameless interlocutor- an eternal logos, an absent-minded voice alluding to a forgetful law, or a 'law that is in force without signifying' (Agamben 1998, p.52). Salim finds himself abandoned 'before' the law, which renders him an outlaw through the temporality of forgetfulness (dis) embodied in this scene by the invisible voice of the lawyer.

Like *The Roof*, its predecessor, the character of the film is arguably the architecture itself, as the human characters are often dwarfed by the interiors. Often at the edges of frames or shot from windows or doorways, the characters are dispersed and dislocated. Exterior shots have a similar formal composition to those in *The Roof* with long shots highlighting the dilapidated architecture of Jaffa, with characters occasionally passing into and out of frame. The interior scenes range between long, architectural tableaux, and frequent close-ups of specific elements of the mise-en-scène. What is striking in the mise-en-scène of a number of scenes of interiors is the lack of negative space. Every surface is covered and/or decorated, walls are adorned with pictures hung at all levels. These spaces are saturated with ornamentation. The following scene depicts such excess.

Wall/Surface as memory/assemblage in *Port of Memory*. ©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The main character Salim, has just returned from leaving some food at a doorway for Samir, a character we never see and who remains absent, albeit the food is eaten. On returning, Salim enters through the hallway and to the right of the frame we see the reception room. A chest of drawers is covered with two decorative cloths, upon which sit three family photos and an ornamental vase. Above these can be seen three more portraits, arranged at varying heights. This creates a cluttered mise-en-scène, and one that is largely conspicuous by its ornamentation. The image below it takes place in the other interior of *Port of Memory*, that

of a pious Christian woman tending to her elderly, frail mother. As can be seen in this shot, the walls are covered with religious iconography, while off-screen a dramatization of the Baptism of Jesus can be heard on the television. Read alongside Salim's wall, with its somewhat altar-like dresser seen to the right of the image, the interior wall can be seen as an assemblage; a heterogeneous jumble of portraits, memories, religious symbols and bric-a-brac. These cluttered, orthodox religious surfaces abound in the interiors of the film. Indeed, the orthodox brings us back to the conceptual interior. Its opposite, *al-kharij* conveys a double sense; both the notion of exterior, a spatial outside, but also the sense of being cast out, banished from a religious community or order. Thus, the cluttered collection of memories, portraits and images of religious orthodoxy can be seen as an attempt to maintain and reproduce the putative orderliness of *al-dakhil*. Yet this notion of *al-dakhil*, as belonging to an interior order, is problematic from the start. Within the geopolitical context of the state, the Palestinians of Jaffa are caught on the outside of the interior: present absentees blocked from accessing the interior and thus obsessed with reproducing its symbolism. A strikingly similar shot to the long-shot of Salim entering his house occurs later in the film, and is a close-up of the same wall. However, there is a spatial disjuncture, as this scene reveals an almost identical mise-en-scène, as we see four portraits of the same woman (Salim's wife) but between the two lower portraits is a previously unseen portrait of an infant, hanging below what appears to be a rather abstracted tapestry of the al-Aqsa mosque.

©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

This emergent spatial *excess* echoes what Said (1986) calls a 'fundamental rift or break.' Speaking of the uncanny repetition of Palestinian interiors, he writes:

> We keep re-creating the interior—tables are set, living rooms furnished, knick-knacks arranged, photographs set forth—but it inadvertently highlights and preserves the rift or break fundamental to our lives. You see this if you look carefully at what is before you. Something is always slightly off, something always doesn't work. Pictures in Palestinian houses are always hung too high, and in what seem to be random places. Something is always missing by virtue of the excess (Said 1986, p. 58).

Said's evocation of excess is of particular interest. The word evokes the remainder that cannot fit into a system and is thus left outside, disorderly.[10] This further problematizes the notion of the interior, as that which is behind that excess or remainder that troubles the order of the interior. The spatial excess of the interior thus acts as a perversion, bringing the outside, the outcast and the decadent into the structure of domestic space. The negation of negative space, the abundance of decoration and spectacle suggests an interior architecture of loss. The interior for Said becomes a spatial arrangement suggesting otherness. We have seen in the example above how excess creates a disjuncture. This otherness is not explicit but rather implicit, in the disjuncture of the repetition of gestures, behaviours, rituals and ornaments. Said (1986, p. 59) writes that 'this compulsion to repeat is evident in the interiors of Palestinian houses of all classes. The same food and eating rituals organized around a table or central space occur with maddening regularity.' He later goes on to state that 'Every time it occurs, the repetition introduces an almost imperceptible variation' (Ibid, p. 60).

The earlier scene from *Port of Memory* can be read for as an example of spatial excess, but can also be read as an example of spatial iterability. Derrida's concept of iterability 'combines the Latin *iter* ('again') with the Sanskrit *itara* ('other')' (Morgan Wortham 2010, p. 8). The Derridean notion of iterability posits that an event in its singular occurrence, or its marking, leaves open the possibility of its re-marking. A text for Derrida is thus repeatable (and open to otherness) in that it lives beyond its inscription or initial reading and always calls

[10] Perhaps the most famous thinker of excess is Georges Bataille, with the concept of the 'accursed share' a general economy that isn't contained by that which is proper and is thus expenditure, excess destined for waste. This expenditure manifests itself in 'luxury, mourning, war, cults, the construction of sumptuary monuments, games, spectacles, arts, perverse sexual activity.' (Bataille, 1997, p. 169). For Bataille, these 'unproductive expenditures': 'constitute a group characterized by the fact that in each case the accent is placed on a *loss* that must be as great as possible in order for that activity to take on its true meaning.' (Ibid, p.169)

to an 'other' outside the empirical present. There is sameness in the repetition which nonetheless, *others*. Lena Jayyusi (2007, p. 110) highlights an iterability of the experience of the Nakba of 1948, that is, 'the iterability of same/different tales and trajectories provides the glue of what can be proposed and constituted as a collective tragedy.' However, iterability here is used as a stable binding agent, a vessel in which to contain and understand trauma. Jayyusi focuses on the temporal aspect of iterability, yet neglects its fundamental alterity. This alterity, I argue, can be found in the pathology of repetition.

A repeated scene occurring later in the film depicts Salim's wife, who cares for her elderly mother, washing her hands at a sink after finishing some chores. Minute details are slightly different in the two scenes. In the earlier scene the soap is on the other side of the sink, a different towel is present, the outfit changes. Also the angle of the shot is higher and closer. Yet the duration, gesture and movement are almost identical. Both scenes last a little over a minute, and are striking in both the mundane routine and its duration of affect. The duration renders the routine almost pathological and its repetition familiar yet uncanny due to the subtle difference in angle and lighting. The warmer colours of the earlier scene giving way to the more clinical colours of the latter hint at the something 'slightly off' that Said sees in compulsive repetition.

Every repetition inevitably alters– *Port of Memory*. ©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Much like in *The Roof* a scene of supposed domestic comfort or routine featuring hands (the twitching, almost disembodied hand on the sofa in the former film, the routine yet almost pathological hand-washing described above) point to a latent uncanniness in this domestic space.

5.3 Degenerate Corpo-realities in *Ana Arabia*

Amos Gitai's *Ana Arabi* is primarily a film about decay. It shares with Kamal Aljafari's *Port of Memory* an exclusive liminality, in that it takes place at the edges of Jaffa and Bat Yam, and in the shadow of Tel Aviv, its monolithic neighbour. Despite largely taking place 'outside', the film has a feeling of interiority, both from the spatial structure of the enclave, and the camera, which much like Aljafari's lingers at walls and frames tightly—often with little distinction in hierarchy between human subjects and the non-human architecture which enframes them.

A mise-en-scène of enclosure in *Ana Arabia* (2013) and *Port of Memory* (2009). ©Agav Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker), ©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The film unfolds in real time, as the 'main' character Yael, a journalist, 'investigates'[11] the story of a Jewish holocaust survivor, who converted to Islam and married a Palestinian. Technically, the film is almost without precedent, consisting of a single shot lasting 81 minutes.[12] The location is an important element of the film's mise-en-scène, it essentially being a threshold space. It is an enclave that exists as a liminal space in a number of ways; geographically, it sits between but outside cities (on the edges of both Bat Yam and Jaffa). In that sense, it dwells beyond and outside the *polis*. The significance of this liminality is that

[11] Rather than investigating , Yael is instead more of a conduit for the absences which structure the film, as will be seen later in the chapter.

[12] The forebear to *Ana Arabia* is Alexander Sokurov's *Russian Ark* (2002), a vertical history of Russia and Europe.

this enclave community constitutes a community of outcasts. That is, the figures dwelling in this space have all been expelled from a community. The absence that structures the film, the figure of Hannah Kiblanov, who became Siam Hassan (known by her Arabic nickname *Ana Arabia*) was born Jewish, converted to Islam and declared herself an Arab. However, it was the transgressive act of marrying Yussuf which brings her into the space, with the marriage causing problems among friends and family.[13] Sara the Jewish woman who was married to Jihad, (one of Yussuf and Siam's sons) was also subject to ostracism from the sons of his previous marriage, who gave Jihad an ultimatum. Her own marriage became violent, and the violence and madness that ended in Jihad's death in Nablus suggests a complex religious fault line beneath Gitai's professed message of secular co-existence. As seen in the analysis of *Port of Memory* earlier in this chapter, the term *al-kharij* contains within it a semantic ambiguity. It is both 'the exterior', that which is outside of *al-dakhil* but also carries, in a religious sense the meaning of leaving or being cast out from an order. This space of *Ana Arabia* thus plays out this tension of *al-kharij* both outside of, and caught within *al-dakhil*; its inhabitants cast out of a religious and political order, yet still contained (or perhaps abandoned) within the interior.

The spatial structure and movement of the camera lend the film both a warmth and claustrophobia, as the camera spirals around a network of central absences which hold the film together. The presence of absence dominates the film throughout. A structural absence at the centre of the film is the role of Yael, the journalist. Despite her putative job title, she has a role more akin to the 'seer' of neo-realism, observing, listening but not acting as she wanders the alleys of this enclave, and is passed between conversations, the film having what might be termed a peripatetic structure.

This enclave space appears to share a similar spatial politics to Kamal Aljafari's *Port of Memory* (2009), also set in Jaffa. That is, the shadow cast by the threat of gentrification and eviction, as Tel Aviv bears down on Jaffa. This punctuates the flow of conversation at times, most strikingly in the group of old men's reaction to Yael arriving in this enclave for the first time. As she introduces herself, she asks 'Is this where you live?' to which Hassan, one of the men, replies somewhat nervously: 'yes, what's wrong with it? We aren't leaving,' betraying a suspicion of this outsider. Later, as Yusuf walks and talks with Yael, he claims

[13] Yussuf confesses that 'in the 50s and 60s, "friends" of Hannah would threaten to kill him. Hannah fled her family to be with Yussuf, being returned by the police on the first occasion before escaping again. This life outside her family and religious community led Yussuf to fear that every time she left the enclave, it might be the last.

'the municipality wants to evict me.' The initial assumption that Yael is an agent of the state hints at an existential threat to this enclave, which even upon warming towards Yael, surfaces again when Yusuf admonishes Norman (the other man) for raising the issue of not being given permits with the curt response: 'don't talk so much.' Beyond these early exchanges, the politics outside the enclave goes unmentioned, as the camera follows Yael's exchanges with the members of this small community as she wanders from conversation to conversation, asking few questions as little detail is revealed.

An interesting grammatical feature of the film is that of interruption. In a number of interviews given at the release of the film, Amos Gitai has spoken of his desire for both a different way of consuming images of Israel/Palestine, but also for the use of the single take so as not to 'interrupt' the relation between Arab and Jew.[14] This grammatical structure is interesting in that it constructs and dissolves a separation between Arab and Jew, which Gil Anidjar (2003) recognises as a relation between ethnic and religious markers. This choice of wording is particularly significant as the film deals with the conversion of a European Jewish woman (Hannah/Siam, the dead woman at the 'centre' of the narrative) to Islam in order to marry Yusuf. Ella Shohat, in both her work on Israeli cinema (1989, 2010) and postcolonial studies (2006) has critiqued the euro-centric approach of constructing Arab and Jew in opposition, and also the binary that has evolved aligning Jewish and Christian identity as Western, and Muslim as Eastern. In her essay 'Taboo Memories, Diasporic Visions: Columbus, Palestine and Arab-Jews', Shohat recognises that any re-articulation of an Arab-Jew identity:

> in a contemporary context that has posited Arab and Jew as antonyms can be disentangled only through a series of positionings vis-à-vis diverse communities and identities (Arab Muslim, Arab Christian, Palestinian, Euro-Israeli, Euro-American Jewish, indigenous American, African American, Chicano/a) that would challenge the devastating consequences that the Zionist-Orientalist binarism of East versus West, Arab versus Jew, has had for Arab-Jews (or Jewish Arabs) (Shohat, 2006, p. 208).

In its construction and erasure of the Arab/Jew binary, *Ana Arabia* somewhat plays into this Orientalist structure by ignoring the figure of Arab Jewishness. This erasure of the hyphen is

[14] Gitai has spoken of this interruption in interviews at the release of the film. In a 2014 interview with Nienke Huitenga, he states: 'as a citizen of Israel, I think the relation between Jews and Arabs should not be interrupted. So when I translate this to my own language of film, to the syntax of cinema, I also don't want to interrupt.' Source: Gitai, A. (2014) 'Interview with Amos Gitai'. Interviewed by Nienke Huitenga for *wzzzt.com*, 17 July [online]. Available at: https://wzzzt.com/2014/07/17/interview-with-amos-gitai/ Accessed: 03/11/14

cited by Shohat (2010) as a tactic of political Zionism, which falsely 'rendered the concept of "Arab-Jew" oxymoronic' (Ibid, p. 266).

The unnamed presence of the Arab-Jew also constructs a double haunting in Kamal Aljafari's *Port of Memory* (2009). That film engages in the spatial politics of Jaffa by unconsciously highlighting the figure of Mizrahi[15] as that of the oppressed in the Menahem Golan film *Kazablan* (1973) as an erasure of Palestinian presence in Jaffa. In doing so, the film highlights a double move by the hegemonic state: the marginalistion of the Arab-Jew and the elision of the Palestinian. The figure of the Mizrahi thus for Shohat (Ibid) is a detotalizing figure for both Israeli and Palestinian nationalisms, forming an 'in-between figure, at once inside and outside, "in" in terms of privileged citizenship within the Jewish state, in contrast to the Palestinian citizens of Israel, but hardly "of" the hegemonic national culture.'

Formally, the use of a single take steady-cam shot lends *Ana Arabia* an unnerving claustrophobia. The camera floats in a circular motion (or more accurately spirals), as it slowly follows Yael through the lanes and buildings of this enclave, as stories are told, and at times madness and violence is revealed. One of the structural absences of the film is the figure of Jihad, Yusuf's son who had been married to Sara, a woman who lives in the enclave with Yusuf. We are told of the breakdown of the marriage, when Jihad's children gave him a choice between her and them. How he began to beat her, and eventually left for the sea in Nablus. 'There is no sea in Nablus,' says Yusuf, but still 'he built a boat.' We are told of his abundance of maladies, that eventually he collapsed and died painting his boat. This is one of the few moments the film gives autobiographical detail, pointing to the darkness both within and without the enclave.

Towards the end of the film, the camera, for the first time, enters an architectural interior, as it follows Yael, Sara and Miriam into a lounge area, where the absence of Siam/Hanna/Ana (her Muslim, Jewish and nickname respectively) haunts this space from every wall, her solemn face in several repeated stoic portraits as the conversation alludes to her dominant presence in life and death. The room is empty of furniture, save for a strikingly empty day bed.

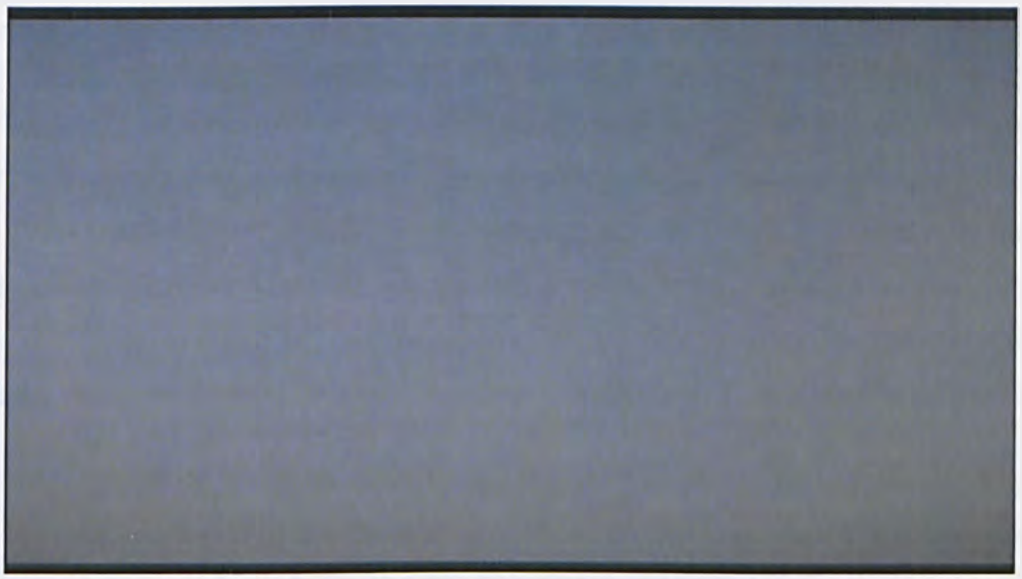
[15] In Hebrew, literally 'Eastern' (Shohat, 2010, p. 154)

The maternal void as traumatic Real in *Ana Arabia*. ©Agav Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The structuring absence that conditions the film, and maintains its spiralling structure, is the notion of the maternal void. Theorized at length, notably by Jacques Derrida and Julia Kristeva, the notion of *chora*, first posited by Plato in the *Timaeus* as a receptacle and maternal void, is something without form that can, nevertheless, shape surfaces and leave a trace on subjects. In Kristeva's (1984) formulation, *chora* is a pre-Euclidean, pre-linguistic space, a haptic space of sense rather than form, a space celebrated by Kristeva for its rupturing alterity, but also castigated as something to be left behind as the subject emerges, lest it remain in a schizophrenic *cul de sac*. As a concept, which resists symbolisation and which the subject leaves behind upon emerging into language, it is correlate to Lacan's register of the Real. The Real is troubling for its very resistance to representation and symbolisation. It is both the pre-linguistic state from which we are delivered, and traumatic irruption through which language and symbolisation fail. The figure of the maternal and its relation to the Real is a key element of Jacques Lacan's Seventh Seminar of 1959-60. The figure of the mother in the register of the Real is one of both oppressive nearness (as object of dependence) and frustrating inaccessibility (as other). In Seminar VII, Lacan frames the essence of what he terms (1988, p. 67) 'the maternal thing' as that of forbidden desire, this being 'the essential, character of the maternal thing, of the mother, insofar as she occupies the place of that thing, of *das*

Ding.'[16] The 'horror' that reveals itself towards the end of *Ana Arabia* is precisely the inaccessible X around which the film has been spiralling, the X which marks the maternal void, a forbidden object around which the film's subjects spiral, before the film itself opens out onto the *last sky*, its final movement towards death in an ascending vertical movement. The image of non-emergence, a spiralling that leads nowhere is striking in the framing of Ana Arabia, as its cryptic revelations and irruptions of madness lead us through a spiralling around a void, getting simultaneously closer and further away.

This absence, is perhaps paradoxically the presence that dominates the film throughout, the void around which the camera spirals and the structuring absence which holds the film together. The film opens and closes with an image between life and death. The opening camera movement, held for almost a minute, is an image of three starkly bare trees against a blue sky, before the camera slowly pans down into the enclave. In a striking closing pan, lasting fully three minutes, the camera slowly rises above the enclave, revealing a darkened Jaffa with Tel Aviv rising in the distance, before gradually tilting up until nothing but sky fills the frame. The film closes on an unbroken image of darkening blue.



The last sky: The closing shot of *Ana Arabia*. ©Agav Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Jean-Michel Frodon (2014) interprets the image of this sky in a somewhat utopian manner, as a 'single sky' for all. However, with the film's spiralling around a void, and its visual and

[16] *Das Ding* Lacan draws from the work of Freud, noting the existence in German of two words for thing: *das Ding* and *die Sache*. While the latter conveys the representation of a thing in reality, the former for Lacan is 'the beyond-of-the-signified' (1988, p. 54) and as such characterized by 'primary affect.' It is thus within the register of the Real, and as such, irrupts into the Symbolic and the Imaginary as trauma.

linguistic images of death and decay, this closing image can be read as Mahmoud Darwish's (1986, p. 9) 'last sky'[17], which Sobhi al-Zobaidi (2008) interprets as the 'last possible movement before decay and death.' The tomb like quality of the space in which the characters find themselves (and are unable to leave), haunted by death in present-absence (the central absence of Ana Arabia and the mausoleum-like room at the end of the film), but also absent-presence (the death of Jihad in Nablus) exist in a sacred, liminal zone; outside the city and banished from the community and thus in a political sense, already dead.[18]

5.4 The Wound and the Underground in *Forgiveness*

Udi Aloni's *Forgiveness* is a film about tracings, a disavowal of ideological claims of origin, and rather an *avowal* of the non-place of origin, in order to begin anew. Rejecting the impossibility of over-determined territorial space as a site of understanding and recognition, the film rather chooses the subterranean as a space of coming to terms with, and rejecting claims of origin. The subterranean is a theme that runs through the film, as it takes place in a mental health facility on the grounds of a ruined Palestinian village, Deir Yassin. David, the main character arrives at this institution in a catatonic state, rendered static and without language by some as yet concealed trauma. The film opens with the discovery of a skull, as Yaakov—a blind Holocaust survivor referred to as both the Musselmann[19] and the mole—leads the patients in a form of excavation therapy. Yaakov is an in-between, Tiresias-like[20] figure who inhabits a liminal but crucial space in the film, between life and death and the surface and subterranean. After giving a Hamlet-like speech to the skull, a lament for the village beneath, the scene cuts to David's impassive face, his figure slumped in a catatonic state against a Yew tree. The temporal structure of the film is fractured, as it utilizes both

[17] Darwish's oppressively corporeal poem, in which nature offers no refuge to the Palestinian, renders the Earth as a hostile entity, violently rejecting the Palestinian. It also offers a de-familiarizing image of natural unboundedness (birds in the sky) juxtaposed with language in which the present moment is delimited by finitude ('Where should the birds fly, after the last sky?')

[18] In Part 2, Chapter 6 of *Homo Sacer*, entitled 'The Ban and The Wolf' Agamben (1998, p. 104-5) examines the liminality of the outlaw and the bandit, in which he suggests the act of banishment outside the city and thus the law, renders he who he banned as essentially already dead. There are numerous references throughout the film to the Holy Land, and the Eden-like quality of the enclave. Yet the only exit from the space appears to be death. If it is indeed a sacred space, it is a space that hinders on the ambivalence of the sacred, rendered in Agamben (1998, p. 78) by the notion of both sacred and accursed conveyed by *sacer*. In Arabic, *haram* conveys a similar duality: that which is both set apart (sacred) and forbidden (profane).

[19] The name given in the camps (Levi, 1947) to those closest to death, beyond speech and sentiment, in a state of pure apathy 'hence the ironical name given to him' (Agamben, 1998, p. 185).

[20] In Greek mythology, a blind prophet of Apollo

flash-forward and flashback to seek the traumatic event (or perhaps more accurately, *history*), the void around which the temporal and psychological narrative fragments.

David's initial move to Israel stems from a desire to antagonise his father, Henry, a pianist, and like Yaakov a fellow survivor. Unlike Yaakov, Henry has chosen to 'live' by forgetting—both the trauma of the camp and the state of Israel, where he fought in 1948. When David objects to being manipulated into summer work, he threatens to join the IDF, challenging his father's imperative 'don't start with that again' with the challenge: 'why? What are you going to do about it?' Indeed, the film has a triptych of father-figures; Henry, the biological, impotent father; Yaakov, the mad father of traumatic memory, and the doctor who attempts to rehabilitate David, Itzhik—the reluctant figure of state forgetting who has abandoned psychoanalysis for chemical suppression of memory.

Yaakov is precisely the embodiment of traumatic history as he is a liminal figure, neither dead nor alive, neither mad nor sane, and dwells in the lacuna between death and survival, 'the very oscillation between life and death' which Cathy Caruth (1996, p. 7) sees as constitutive of traumatic experience, and which allows for the possibility of history. This in-betweeness erupts in an argument between Yaakov and Henry over David's departure from the facility. When Yakkov pleads with David to stay as he 'isn't ready to leave', Henry, turns to him, and the following dialogue ensues:

> Henry: 'you gave up on life and chose to be with the ghosts but I have to push them away...to fight them every single day to play my music [...] to make them fall asleep [...] I can't let you hijack my son just because you chose death.'
> Yaakov: 'I chose nothing, therefore I live between the worlds.'

These two father-figures—Henry, who chose 'life' through forgetting in the United States and supressing the memory of the camps, and Yaakov who welcomes the ghosts, understanding that haunting is a deconstructive process, moving between life and death and presence and absence; through ignoring this haunting, both present and past remain foreclosed to any reconciliation. This reconciliation, for Yaakov, comes firstly through the acknowledgement of the other, and then through the subterranean so as to allow a new history to begin.

The fracturing, or perhaps more accurately the *forking* of the film's temporality through both flashback and flash-forward opens up a temporal contingency. In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze speaks of the 'forking' of time in the use of the flashback as one pole of the

recollection-image. The recollection-image, says Deleuze (1989) following Bergson, exists in relation to attentive recognition,[21] and thus between 'the real and the imaginary, the physical and the mental, the objective and the subjective, description and narration, *the actual and the virtual*[22] [...]' (Deleuze 1989, p. 46). For Deleuze, the flashback can function in one of two poles of the recollection-image, either as 'a closed circuit' (Ibid, p. 48) moving from present to past and back, or at the other pole, leading to a divergence of possible temporalities.

> There is no longer any question of an explanation, a causality or a linearity which ought to go beyond themselves in destiny. On the contrary, it is a matter of an inexplicable secret, a fragmentation of all linearity, perpetual forks like so many breaks in causality (Ibid, p. 49).

What Deleuze is interested in, is not the *success* of the recollection image, but in the breakages that emerge in its very *failure*, for this is where an authentic time-image occurs. It can be argued that this failure occasions an image of traumatic temporalities, an image where the actual 'enters into relation with genuinely virtual elements, feelings of *déjà vu* [...], dream images, [...] fantasies' (Ibid, p. 55). Through what Deleuze terms 'disturbances of memory and failures of recognition,' emerges a taxonomy of traumatic temporalities. These breakages and failures are indicative of a wider sense of trauma and crisis which underpin the movement between Deleueze's cinema books. The 'unthought' which emerges in *Cinema 2* is an element of traumatic latency; the deferral of thinking which constitutes 'judgement' in the movement image which in turn precipitates its crisis. This latency returns in the time image as 'something intolerable in the world [...] something unthinkable in thought.' (Ibid, p. 169). It is the latency of trauma, the simultaneous innaccessability and endless impact of belated experience which, for Cathy Caruth (1996, p. 8), allows for a new thinking of history through the 'unbearble nature of [trauma's] survival.' Similarly, for Deleueze (1989, p. 169-170), it is the crisis and traumas of World War II which alow that which is intolerable to occasion cinema's thinking the world otherwise.

Caruth's work on trauma, notably her 1996 text *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, pioneered the field of what would come to be known as Trauma Studies, giving both a temporal and topological structure to trauma. Essentially, the book

---

[21] In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson separates *automatic* or *habitual recognition* from *attentive recognition*, with the latter being out of a sensory-motor framework, 'the *object* remaining the same, but passing through different *planes*' (Deleuze 1989, p. 44).

[22] For Bergson and Deleuze, the actual and the virtual are both categories of the real, the first being more associated with action and movement, the latter with time, memory and dream.

permits a re-thinking of history where immediate experience is unobtainable. What Caruth defines as history, in the texts she works with, is 'a kind of double telling, the oscillation between a *crisis of death* and the correlative *crisis of life*' (Caruth, 1996, p. 7). Much of Caruth's thesis is derived from her reading of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), in which he rearticulates Moses as an Egyptian and thus opens out Jewishness to a non-Jewish background. Caruth's reading of Freud will be read alongside Edward Said's in *Freud and the Non-European*, in order to read the traumatic temporalities in the Cinema of Palestine-Israel.

Trauma, deriving from the ancient Greek for wound, separates itself from its corporeal origins in as much as it is uncoupled from its cause. Unlike the physical wound, which is suffered and then heals, the notion of trauma is an effect that seems to exceed its cause. Indeed, Cathy Caruth, following Freud, claims that its evental origins are bound up with non-knowledge, because the traumatic event 'is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor' (Caruth 1996, p. 4). Citing Freud's example of the departure of the Hebrews and the subsequent arrival of the Jewish nation, alongside his own departure from Vienna, Caruth views history as both the incomprehensibility of traumatic departure, 'what *cannot be grasped* about leaving' (Ibid, p. 20) and the arrival within a history no longer one's own, 'precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas' (Ibid , p. 24).

Caruth's work has been critiqued through a postcolonial framework in recent years, primarily for its perceived Eurocentrism (Rothberg, 2008), in both definitional terms and subject matter. Rothberg's critique draws on a privileging of event-based trauma; that is, the singularity and historicity of the event. Caruth defines trauma in general terms in the early stages of *Unclaimed Experience* as 'an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled, repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena' (Caruth 1996, p. 11). Rothberg contends that this focus on catastrophic or sudden events, drawn from psychiatric definitions, elides the continuing traumatic experience of colonial and post-colonial experience, arguing that this model relies on the presupposition of 'the completed past of a singular event— while colonial and postcolonial traumas persist into the present' (Rothberg 2008, p. 30).

Arguably, what a postcolonial critique of Caruth's reading of Freud misses is twofold. Firstly, a binary separation of a 'singular event' from 'ongoing trauma' misreads Caruth's reading of traumatic history as an oscillation; that traumatic history is not merely the

inaccessibility of the traumatic event, but the ongoing trauma of survival. It is thus arguably a process, a constant negotiation between terms. Secondly, in focussing on the Eurocentrism of Caruth's Freudian approach, which draws heavily on her reading of *Moses and Monotheism*, it ignores the contradictions and complexities of that text, what Edward Said refers to as the 'irascible transgressiveness' of what he terms Freud's 'late style' (Said 2003, p. 29). This transgressiveness manifests itself in a contradictory, alienating style that has little interest in closure, but is rather interested in questioning. Said sees this questioning in both Freud's questioning of his own approach and admission of his advancing years, but also in a questioning of his own Jewish identity,[23] and the limits of identity in general. Said's reading of Freud is not to discard the work as historically flawed, but to open its reading to the outside; that is, both its historical context and its unforeseen consequences. The context of the European anti-Semitism through which Freud lived, the shifting meaning of the marker 'European' and 'non-European' in the aftermath of the Nuremberg Laws, and then the founding of Israel, finally, a context in which Freud would have non-European readers. Said's Freud is one whose opening of Jewish identity to its non-Jewish background through his stubborn insistence that Moses was non-European, in a context when Jewishness and Jewish intellectualism was 'thought of as European, or at least belonging to Europe' (Ibid, p. 50) stems from Freud's cosmopolitanism, the 'cosmopolitan consciousness of someone who is both inside and outside his or her community' (Ibid, p. 53).

Said evokes the image of architecture, so often weaponised by nationalist claims, in articulating Freud's 'excavating the archaeology of Jewish identity' (Ibid, p. 44) which reveals a non-Jewish, non-European path which 'has now been erased' (Ibid, p. 44). That is, not so much a search for origins, as for currents running between present and past. Said (Ibid, p. 50) states that 'for a Palestinian, archaeology must be challenged' so that it can be critically opened to other histories and voices. In fact, what Said infers from Freud's 'excavation' of identity resonates with what Giorgio Agamben (2009) refers to as 'Philosophical Archaeology.' This concept will be returned to at the end of the chapter, as it is a key to understanding the traumatic displacement (and disavowal) of origin in *Forgiveness*.

What appears as the inaccessible violent trauma at the centre of *Forgiveness* emerges through latency to have been the killing of a young girl while on patrol in the West Bank. However, the film seeks not to locate an originary past trauma to find causation in its traumatic present, but rather a field of multiple pasts and contingent futures, which emerge as failed

[23] Freud had a complex relationship with both his faith and with Zionism, as both Chemouni (1988) and Said (2003) recognise.

recollection-images and dream images. There is David's chemically repressed past on patrol in the IDF, but also Yaakov's past of the violence of Deir Yassin and the memory of the camps. These provide the multi-layered hauntings of the traumatic present, as well as the opening to contingent futures.

The network point of topological trauma in *Forgiveness* (2006). ©Udi Aloni (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

In fact, trauma works in the film as a topological constellation, a set of coordinates through which psychic and material space converge. Amal is the network point through which Deir Yassin, New York and the West Bank fold into one another. Amal is the daughter of a Palestinian woman David meets and has an affair with in New York, in one of the films contingent timelines. However, she also haunts other temporalities and spaces of the film, as a traumatic revenant, who first appears by coming back, haunting the surface of the hospital from the depths of Deir Yassin. The traumatic folds in space and time, which separate and connect the repressed memory of the camps, the repressed violence of the state, and the repressed memory of the Palestinian, converge around the figure of Amal (which literally means 'hope' in Arabic).

The contingent futures of the film hinge on a decision David makes two-thirds of the way into the film, namely, whether or not he leaves the hospital, with Yaakov telling him he isn't ready. This leads to a network of virtual futures, or rather virtual future perfects,

exploring what could have been and might have been in order to uncover what will have been, and thus what could be—the possibility of a new history. The first fork leads to a number of hypothetical outcomes as David returns to New York, continues to take his medication, meets a girl and descends into madness. David contemplates patricide, homicide (Amal/the displaced traumatic memory of the dead girl) before finally committing suicide with his father's old service revolver. The pulling of the trigger splits the time of the film from this virtual past/future, back to the present as the decision to stay is played out.

In this contingent fork, Yaakov leads David into a subterranean chamber where, during a purification ritual, we see another contingent future in which David murders Amal rather than kill himself. It is this hypothetical act of killing, through latency that allows David to acknowledge not only his own act of killing (Amal/the revenant, revealed to be a child David shot while on patrol in the West Bank), but also his complicity in an ideological structure of violence; a continuation of a historical tradition that refuses to acknowledge the other (the figure of the Palestinian, the dead of Deir Yassin) and thus to uncover a past (and thus access the present) that has been 'covered over and repressed by tradition' (Agamben, 2009, p. 102). It is in this space, the underground where the film's archaeological work is revealed. The film's Hebrew title, *Mechilot*, contains within it a phonetic slippage in meaning, as Yael Ben-Zvi Morad (2017, p. 232) explains. 'The Hebrew word 'burrow'—*mehila*—and 'forgiveness'—*meheela*—are homophones.' The underground is thus a place to regress to, so as to start over.

In chapter 3 of *The Signature of Things*, Giorgio Agamben traces the concept of a 'philosophical archaeology,' drawing on Kant's metaphysics and Foucault's genealogy. The work of philosophy, and thus philosophical archaeology, is not just concerned 'with what has been, but also with what ought to and could have been' (Agamben, 2009, p. 82). It is precisely this that gives archaeology a curious temporality of a future perfect, or as Agamben (2009) terms it, a future *anterior*. It is only through the completion of a philosophical archaeology that an *arché* will be revealed, thus it is a regression that reveals a past that will have been, a past that has been concealed and thus not lived through.

The archaic underground in *Forgiveness* (2006). ©Udi Aloni (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

In this link between archaeological regression and traumatic repression, Agamben engages with Cathy Caruth's work on trauma in *Unclaimed Experience*, in order to trace the currents that link memory and forgetting to perception of the present. 'The point of archaeology,' Agamben tells us, 'is to gain access to the present for the first time, beyond memory and forgetting, or rather, at the threshold of their indifference' (Ibid, p. 106). The threshold is a key figure in Agamben's thinking of the *archē*, as it is something stretched between past and present, informing possible futures. Thus it is better understood as a force than an event. As such, 'The *archē* is not a given or a structure, but a field of bipolar currents stretched between anthropogenesis and history, between the moment of arising and becoming, between an archi-past and the present' (Agamben 2009, p. 110). Agamben's work marks a break in an understanding of how archaeology is often employed in politics (particularly nationalist politics) to bind an *archē* to a *telos*. That is a historical claim that can be 'scientifically' harnessed to a national-political goal. This is of marked contrast with the 'biblical archaeology' that Edward Said criticises in *Freud and the non-European*.

Yaakov, who is referred to throughout the film as 'the mole'[24] performs the role of the philosophical archaeologist in *Forgiveness*, moving between surface and underground, and using the latter as a space to excavate the possibility of history, a history that undoes tradition, ideology and national archaeological claims to origin, and works back through contingent

[24] With references throughout to his blindness and existence between worlds

timelines, explores what has been alongside what could have been and ought to have been to arrive at the real space of the underground. This space corresponds to what Derrida (2002, p. 57) terms the 'desert in the desert' *archaic* in the Agambian sense, a place to regress to, both 'uprooting the tradition that bears it' and liberating 'a universal rationality.' It is this archaeological regression that the film performs; through its temporal structure of traumatic fields of both past and present, alongside contingent futures, which bring about its arrival in the underground; a place beyond historical tradition and one that speaks to a possible future.

> The future at issue in archaeology becomes intertwined with a past; it is a future anterior. It is the *past that will have been* when the archaeologist's gesture (or the power of the imaginary) *has cleared away* the ghosts of the unconscious and the tight-knit fabric of tradition, which block access to history. Only in the form of this 'will have been' can historical consciousness truly become possible (Agamben, 2009, p. 107).

Forgiveness seems to suggest that it is only in the clearing away of the ghosts of *al-dakhil*, of imaging a political otherwise than an *archē* bound to a *telos* that the contemporary stasis of Palestine-Israel can be overcome.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the complex topological structure which constitutes the interior of Palestine-Israel. This is an interior characterized by a logic of haunted surfaces and repressed depths. This haunting, a tension between visibility and invisibility, characterises both the being of the 'present-absentee' Palestinian, and haunts the peripheral vision of the Israeli cinematic frame. The cinema of the interior is essentially, a cinema of ghosts; the ghost of the unfinished roof of the house in Ramle, in Aljafari's *The Roof* (2006), which traps its occupants beneath the weight of *al-nakba* and creates a contemporary excess of home/sickness; the Palestinian of Jaffa who ghosts the edges of the frame of Israeli cinema's Jaffa productions in *Port of Memory* (2009) and *acts back* on the space of that cinema and *speaks back* against a cultural history of erasure. There is a double haunting at work in *Port of Memory*, in the figure of the Palestinian who haunts Israeli cinema, but also the figure of the Arab-Jew, a figure at the margins of the very cinema Aljafari's film is haunting. It is also the space between the Arab and Jew, the erased hyphen that Ella Shohat speaks of, which haunts Gitai's *Ana Arabia* (2013) and its attempts to bridge the space between these two figures, a space in which

the Arab-Jew already dwells. It is precisely this logic of haunting which opens Gil Hochberg's *In Spite of Partition*, where he (2007, p. 1) highlights the short story by Orly Castel Bloom, in which an elderly Arabic-speaking woman appears under the bench of a young Israeli woman, insisting on their kinship, which the young woman denies, doubting the reality of the encounter. The slippage between Hebrew and Arabic which defines the encounter, along with the haunting figure that dwells beneath the surface as a repressed traumatic memory, hint at the resistance of the interior to partition, be that spatial or psychic. A key spatial marker of this haunting beneath the surface is the figure of the cave or the ruin from which the Palestinian literally, or psychologically emerges. The cave *within* the ruin is a key feature of Habiby's *The Secret Life of Said the Pessoptomist* (1974), in which the cave beneath the ruined village of Tanturah lies a family treasure. The treasure itself is something of a Macguffin, more figuratively engaging Said with a quest to locate the remnant of Palestine within Israel. Lital Levy (2012, p. 12) has traced the history of the allegorical cave in both Israeli and Palestinian tradition, noting that 'Avot Yeshurun's 1952 poem "Pesah 'al kukhim" (Passover on Caves) [...] ties the cave to the suppressed Palestinian presence within Israel.' He also recognises the figure of the cave in the work of Habiby, Shammas and Khoury as constituting 'a multidimensional spatiality that is at once psychological, political, and historical in nature.' This spatial marker is a key site of encounter where the Palestinian can no longer be repressed, witnessed by David's descent into the caves beneath Deir Yassin in *Forgiveness*, Soraya's emergence from the cave-like ruined building in Dawayima (necessarily a space of *al-dakhil*) in *Salt of this Sea*, and Salim's 'ghosting' of the ruined port of Jaffa in *Port of Memory*.

Chapter 6:

From We, to You, to They: Topologies of *Al-Ghurba*

The aim of this chapter is to examine the topology of *al-ghurba*. As outlined in the opening chapter, precision of language is crucial when thinking Palestinian-ness outside of the Occupied Territories and Israel. To speak of a Palestinian 'diaspora', or Palestinians 'in exile' cannot begin to account for the juridical, temporal and subjective complexity of the legal statuses and identifications of those living *fil-kharij* (in the exterior). Thus, following Said, the films featured in this chapter I term as constituting a cinema of *al-ghurba*—the closest translation being *estrangement*. The psychological winter and structural contrapuntalism that Edward Said (2000, p. 186) associates with this condition structure this topology. With this in mind, the films selected to illustrate this condition bring together points of the four topologies under study; in the estrangement of the encounter between *al-ghurba* and *al-dakhil* in *Wajib*, the encounter between the Palestinian-American and the laws of the West Bank and *al-dakhil* in *Salt of this Sea*, and the network of colonial topologies, both political and cultural, which Basma Alsharif constructs in *Ouroboros*. The estrangement from, and convergence with both other Palestinian subjectivities, and a history of images in which 'Palestine' is simultaneously elided and re-inscribed conditions—this chapter argues—the 'liminal contrapuntalism of the cinema of *al-ghurba*.

6.1 The Missed Encounter of *Al-Dakhil* and *Al-Ghurba* in *Wajib*

Annemarie Jacir's *Wajib* (2017) tells the story of a single day in Nazareth, through a road trip around the city taken by a father and son, Abu Shadi and Shadi. Shadi is returing to Nazareth for the first time in many years for his sister Amal's wedding. The purpose of the trip is to hand-deliver the wedding invitations to friends and family. Edward Said's concept of *al-ghurba* (estrangement) is examined through a family portrait of a father who saw it as his duty to remain in Nazareth, and a son who had to leave by necessity but has grown up *in* and grown accustomed *to* the diaspora, having met a Palestinian woman in Rome, where he lives. The film depicts a series of polite, sometimes awkward encounters with friends and extended

family amid the tensions of a strained father/son relationship and an estranged mother with a sick husband who may miss the wedding. These familial and generational tensions underpin the broader tensions of ways of looking at and imagining Palestine *min al-dakhil* (from the interior) and *fil-kharij* (from the exterior/outside).

The film's title, *Wajib*, ostensibly refers to the ceremonial 'duty' of delivering invitations by hand to the guests, a Palestinian, but particularly Nazarene tradition Jacir (2017b, para. 4) observed her husband perform for her sister-in-law's wedding. The film examines the concept of *wajib* (duty). However, throughout the film, *wajib* (which also translates as necessity) corresponds to a whole complex and networked structure of *nomos* that runs throughout the film, a series of intersecting personal and societal necessities. These modalities of the law, and how they order paternal and spatial relations, will be the focus of this section of the chapter.

The film takes 'place' in Nazareth. Or perhaps more accurately, Nazareth provides the backdrop, as the film uses the car as a structuring 'non-place' that holds the figures of father and son (Abu Shadi and Shadi), and Palestine's interior and exterior, together relationally, as the two main protagonists journey through the city. The car itself, an ageing Volvo saloon, evokes the image of an old Mercedes in the opening chapter of Said's *After the Last Sky*; an old Mercedes beside which stands a sombre-looking wedding party. That car, writes Said, is the 'all-purpose' heterotopia 'one uses for everything- funerals, weddings, births, proud display, leaving home, coming home, fixing, stealing, reselling, running away in, hiding in.'(1986, p. 11). Crucially however, in relation to Palestinians and place, the car is 'a delegate of the forces that both dislocate and hem them in' (Ibid). The complex spatiality of the car as a network of contradictions blurs binary distinctions between life and death, lines of flight and dead-ends, hiding and incarceration, the no-where and everywhere. The liminality of the car, which holds, joins and separates the situated political subjectivity of *al-dakhil* Palestinian and the *al-ghurba* Palestinian, provides the non-localizable force which occasions the topological encounter between these two figures.

The car as structuring non-place in *Wajib* (2017). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The term *wajib* in Arabic has a far richer meaning than the mere dutiful observation of a custom. The term itself has a contemporary meaning as a necessary act, one of the five categories of *aḥkām* (provisions, or rules) within Islamic law. However, the concept of philosophical necessity can be traced back to the thought of Ibn Sina, a Neo-Platonist philosopher whose metaphysics structured being around necessary existence (*wajib al-wujud*), contingent existence (*mumkin al-wujud*) and impossibility. The monotheistic interpretation of Neo-Platonism sees *wajib al-wujud* as *the One*, the necessary being, which occasions contingent existence. Robert Wisnovsky's *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context* (2003)[1] examines Ibn Sina's metaphysical system, its antecedents and influences from Aristotle through to Thomas Aquinas. Wisnovsky (2003, p. 219) interprets *mumkin* (contingency or the possibile) in the sense of *being caused*, and *wajib* (necessity) in the sense of *being uncaused*. Through this logic, beings are contingent upon (that is, *caused by*) an a-priori logic of necessity, *wajib al-wujud*. It would seem then that *wajib* carries within it both a sense of logical necessity and moral obligation.

Ibn Sina's reading of *wajib* as necessity which causes contingent beings—a causal relationship between necessity and contingency—bears striking parallels with Vardoulakis' reading of Mosaic law in Spinoza's *Theological Political Treatise* (1670). Spinoza was a contemporary in the critical sense of the word, and this work was a radical critique of political and religious authority. However, it should be noted that Spinoza's thinking of necessity and

[1] It is worth noting that 'Avicenna' is a Latinization of Ibn Sina.

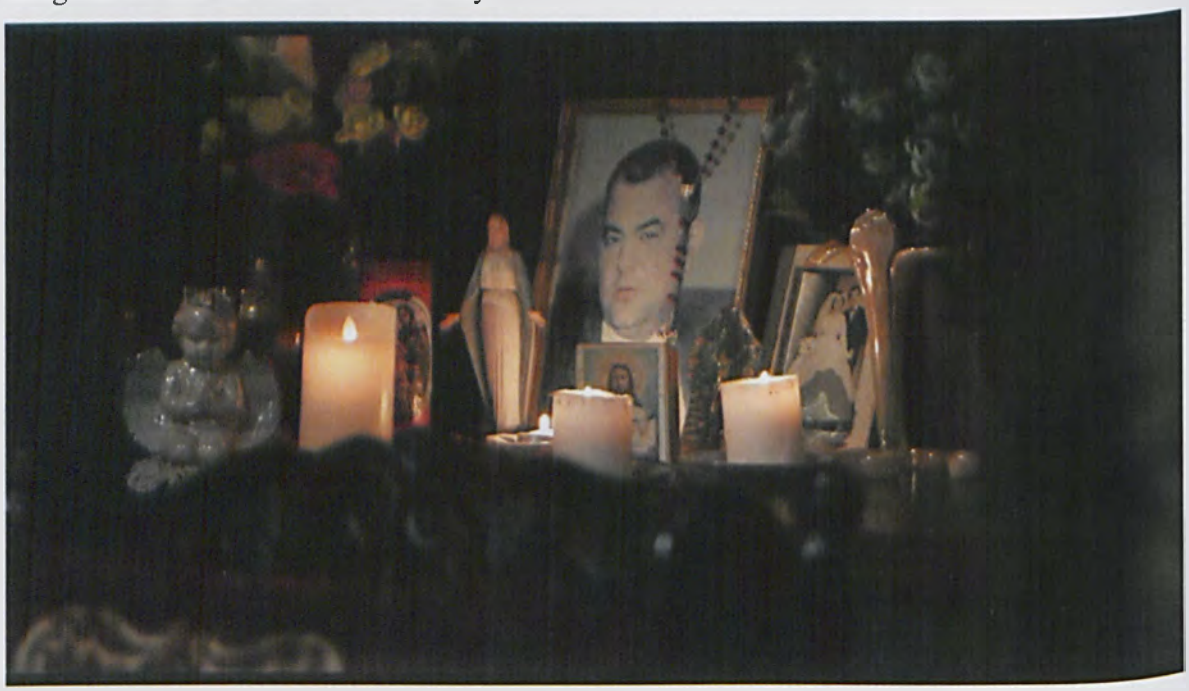
contingency as coexistent in religious and political authority is at odds with his metaphysical thinking of existence expressed in Part 1 of his *Ethics* (1674). Spinoza's (2002a, p. 234) thinking of modalities in relation to existence initially seems in line with Ibn Sina's, in that a creator is essentially a necessary existence. However, in Proposition 29 of Part 1, Spinoza seems to refute the modality of contingency for other existents outside God, seeing either self-determination or not coming into existence as 'an impossibility, not a contingency' and claiming that 'all things are determined from the necessity of the divine nature not only to only exist but also to exist and act in a definite way. Thus, there is no contingency.' (Ibid) Nonetheless, Spinoza's thinking of religious law, his concept of the theologico-political that Vardoulakis (2013, p. 34) cites as crucial to a thinking of the law as empty, rests on the conjunction of the modes of necessity and contingency. For Spinoza, the sole demand of scripture and thus law, is that it be followed—that is, perceived as *necessary*. Indeed, Spinoza makes clear in the opening of Chapter 13 of the *Theological Political Treatise* that Scripture 'inculcates nothing but obedience' (2002b, p. 510). While pure obedience of the command constitutes the modality of necessity, contingency appears in that, following Saint Paul, the entire law is contingent upon a radical abbreviation; that is, 'the entire Law consists in this alone, to love one's neighbour' (Ibid, p. 515). When considering the functional aspect of law articulated by Spinoza, Vardoulakis writes: 'defining the law in terms of such contingency and necessity makes the law a means—a pure functional element. This co-presence of necessity and contingency denominates "state religion" and the theologico-political in Spinoza' (Vardoulakis 2013, p. 36).

The theologico-political tension in *Wajib* is the co-existence of necessity and contingency in the laws that shape *al-dakhil* in Abu Shadi's Nazareth. These are the unwritten codes of shame, honour and tradition at a micro level, but also at the macro level, the obedience he deems necessary to exist within the apparatus of the state. The structuring tension in the film is the encounter between these laws of *al-dakhil*, and Abu Shadi's acceptance of necessity, and Shadi's refusal of them, as he finds himself unable to map them onto his own laws of *al-ghurba*.

The film opens with a foreshadowing of Israel's recently passed Nation States Law,[2] as Abu Shadi sits impassively in an old Volvo, smoking and listening to audio obituaries of men and women of a similar age in Acre, Lod and Nazareth. As shown in the previous chapter,

[2] 'The Basic Law entitled 'Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People' was passed by the Knesset on July 19th 2018, in which Arabic was granted 'special status' after being downgraded from an official language: https://knesset.gov.il/spokesman/eng/PR_eng.asp?PRID=13979

with reference to Suleiman's films, this theme of decay, of an elderly population, trapped in unhealthy bodies abounds in Nazareth. Abu Shadi is recovering from a heart bypass, and keeping his continued smoking clandestine. The first two visits see him struggling up flights of stairs, wheezing as he delivers an invitation to the widow of a friend who died from a heart attack. While *Wajib* doesn't present the pathological patriarchs of Elia Suleiman's Nazareth,[3] the maladies and ill health of ageing male bodies dominate these opening scenes, suggesting a city in decline. It is through corporeal decline that Abu Shadi sees Nazareth, his progress through the city halted by physical exertion reminding him of his own mortality, and later, gridlock on a street that turns out to be a funeral procession for one of Abu Shadi's contemporaries. The differing ways of seeing are highlighted in this funeral scene, as Shadi, who sees a metropolitan and societal decline, assumes the gridlock is being caused by a poorly designed intersection. This view *mil kharij* (from the outside) conditioned by *ghurba* (estrangement) structures Shadi's perception of a disjuncture between the Palestine of his imagination and his father's home city.



No country for old men: The spectre of death in *Wajib* (2017). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

[3] These bodies and the space they condition are explored in detail in Chapter 5. The intertextuality of Suleiman's Nazareth and the Nazareth presented in *Wajib*, 15 years later, is quite striking.

The film's opening shot slowly zooms out to reveal the Nazarene skyline, as a radio announcement declares the Israeli Ministry of Transport has agreed to remove Arabic announcements on public buses 'due to complaints.' Nazareth has the unique situation of being essentially a Palestinian city within Israel, having an almost entirely Arab population.[4] The presence of the Israeli state is mostly off-screen throughout the film, its machinations broadcast, largely in the radio announcements, alluding to diminishing civic rights and corruption in Netanyahu's government.[5]

[4] Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics records the population of Nazareth as 72,200, of which 100% are recorded as Arab—69% of those recorded as Muslim, 30.9% Christian, and 0.1% Druze. Source: CBS (2013) *Nazareth Census 2009* [online] Available at:

https://web.archive.org/web/20131011103441/http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications11/local_authorities09/pdf/254_7300.pdf

[5] Towards the end of the film, a news story reporting the police questioning of Benjamin Netanyahu's wife Sara and former Chief of Staff, Gil Sheffer, on misuse of public funds. In July 2018, Sara Netanyahu was charged with fraud. Source: Beaumont, P. (2018) 'Sara Netanyahu charged with fraud over catering allegations' *The Guardian*, 21 June [online] Available at:
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/21/sara-netanyahu-charged-misuse-public-funds-israel

The erasure of the *Arab al-dakhil* in *Wajib* (2017). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The only 'visible' presence of the state occurs in a café where Shadi and his father are drinking tea. Two IDF soldiers walk in, in full uniform, which makes Shadi deeply uncomfortable, but for Abu Shadi such a sight is a quotidian experience of *al-dakhil* life. 'They are here most Saturdays,' he tells his son. 'They like our falafel!' This quotidian normalisation of militarized civilian life is disquieting, and in marked contrast to the figure of the soldier in the Occupied Territories, often the figure arbitrarily enacting force of law on the Palestinian.

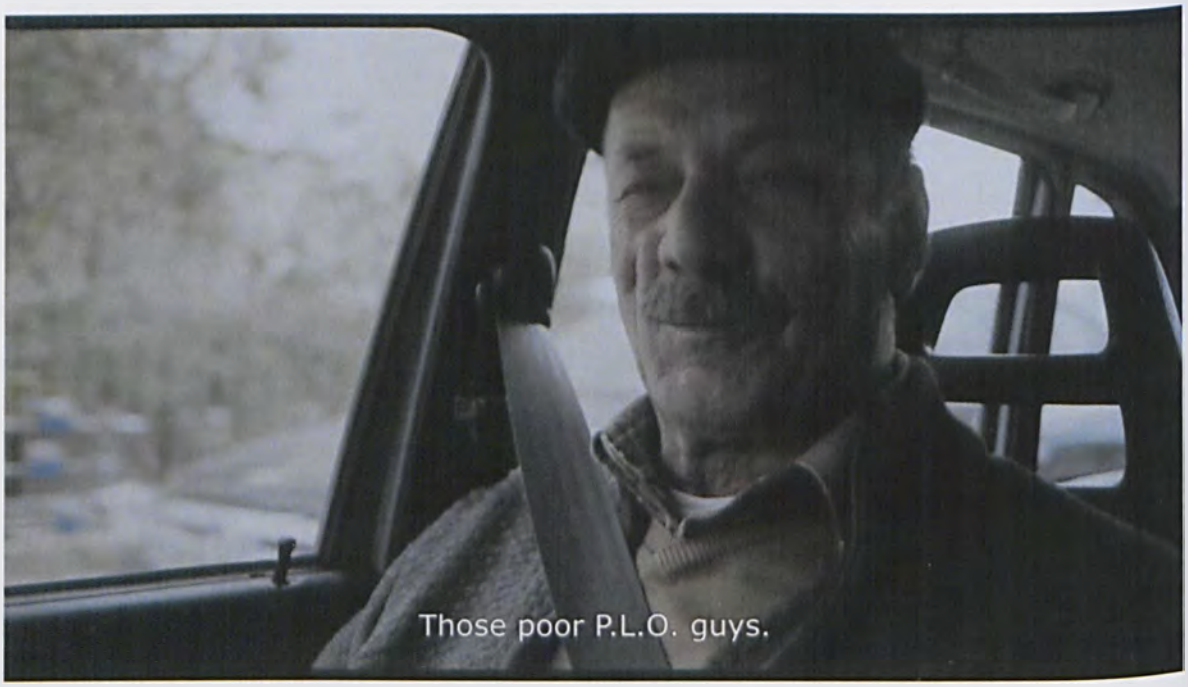
The quotidian presence of military-civilian life in *al-dakhil* in *Wajib* (2017). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The other 'unseen' presence is Abu Shadi's 'friend' and colleague, Ronnie Avi. As the car moves towards Nazareth Illit,[6] Shadi becomes suspicious of the unfamiliar cityscape. The urban planning of Nazareth Illit is such that it is, both physically and metaphorically, a site of surveillance, overlooking the larger city of Nazareth from a position with a maximised field of visibility, unnoticed by the city below.[7] The figure of Ronnie Avi holds a similar position, an unseen colleague at Abu Shadi's school, whose role is to 'observe' the classes. The nature of this observation provokes the film's first tension. On discovering the reason for the visit to Nazareth Illit, Shadi stops the car, refusing to deliver an invitation to a man he blames for his enforced departure from Nazareth, 'for his own security.'

Shadi's own experience of *al-ghurba* has seen him build a life in Italy as an architect, living with a Palestinian partner, Nada, in Rome. The differing ways of seeing of *al-dakhil* and *al-ghurba*, highlighted by Edward Said's (1986, p. 51) view of the interior from exile, first irrupt into the car early in the film, when Shadi refers to Nada's father as an intellectual. With sarcasm, Abu Shadi laments: 'those poor PLO guys... They have a difficult life.' To which Shadi replies with an irritated tone: 'yes, they really did.'

[6] Literally 'Upper Nazareth, a Jewish town founded in the mid-1950s as a Jewish counterpart to the Arab city below.

[7] This architectural politics of verticality is explicated in detail—in the context of the hilltop settlements of the West Bank, but also the mountain settlements of the Galilee—in Chapter 4 of Eyal Weizman's *Hollow Land* (2007, p. 131), in which he clarifies that the latter type of settlement 'is referred to in Hebrew as *Mitzpe* (Lookout) settlement, a term that itself indicates the primary function of settlements in the mountain region.' Although in an interview with *The Times of Israel*, Nazareth Illit's Mayor, Ronen Plot, claimed the cities were on 'excellent neighbourly terms' (Staff 2018), the geographical location of the smaller Jewish town above the larger Christian and Muslim city lends it a crucial demographic 'axial visibility' (Weizman 2007, p. 131).

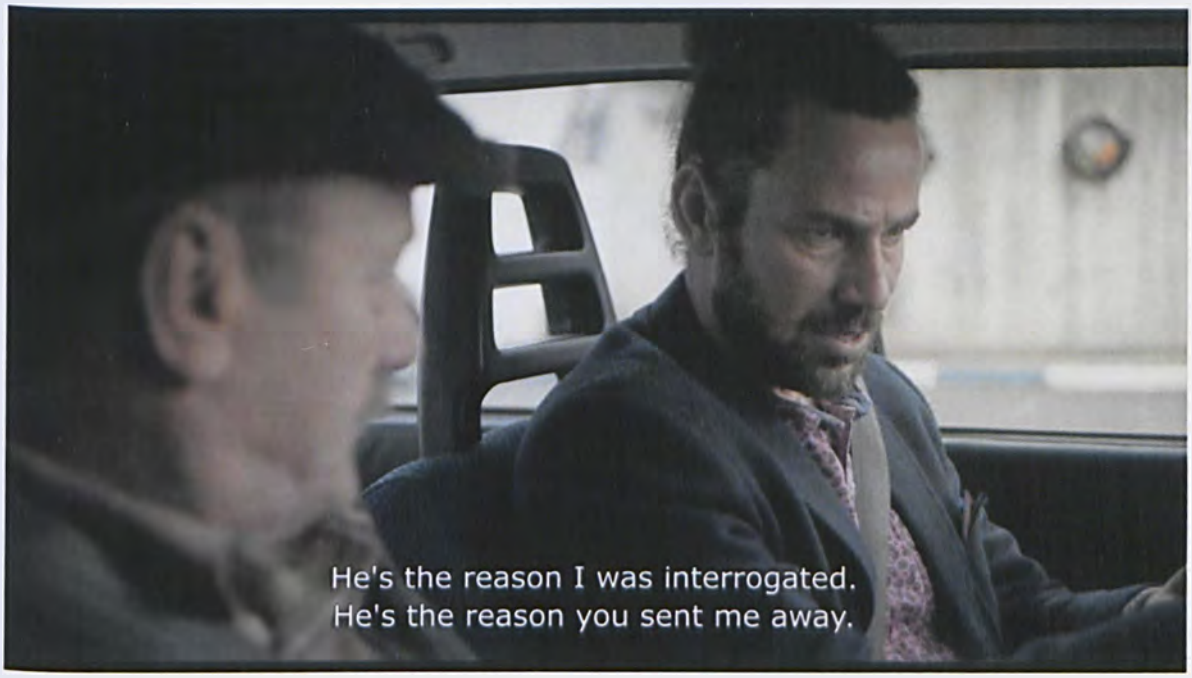


Irruption of tensions between *al-ghurba* and *al-dakhil* in *Wajib* (2017). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

This schism between *al-dakhil* and *al-kharij* marks a response to Said's reflection on *al-dakhil*, upon whom perspective shifts between pejorative difference and privileged difference as the network of Palestine's exilic structures waned since the 1970s (nostalgically referred to at a family dinner as the 'golden age'). Here the Palestinian of the interior 'speaks back,' reflecting on what he sees as the 'privilege' of exile and the luxury of distance, a view tinged by longing for his son and resentment of this ersatz father figure in Europe. This initial 'tremor' foreshadows the film's explosive clash around 25 minutes in, as the car leaves Nazareth for Nazareth Illit, the purpose of the detour initially unclear as Shadi looks at the changing cityscape and asks, "who lives in this settlement?" Abu Shadi replies, both scornfully and somewhat nervously: 'you're crazy! Half of Nazareth lives here!' When the reason for the visit is revealed, Shadi immediately stops the car. In the ensuing argument by the side of the road, father and son, interior and exile take up antithetical positions. For Shadi, the notion of surveillance takes on both spatial and corporeal form in this argument, as Nazareth Illit, a town planned around surveillance, is the home of Ronnie Avi, a colleague of Shadi whom Shadi claims is an agent for *Shabak*,[8] and whose job it is to keep an eye on Arab schools and report back. Abu Shadi denies this, and not for the first time, suggests Shadi is

[8] The acronym Shabak (meaning in Arabic both 'net' and 'entanglement'), is a common term used in both Hebrew and Arabic for the Israeli Security Agency, the domestic arm of military intelligence. The name is an acronym of the full Hebrew title, *Sherut ha-Bitahon haKlali*.

paranoid, claiming that Ronnie came to the house 'to help' rather than to inform on Shadi. He also insists on his own volition and agency in the decision to send Shadi away, for 'his own good,' rather than at the behest of Ronnie Avi.



The patriarchal *wajib*, in the sense of obeying the will of the father who ordered Shadi to leave home, requires the son to suspend disbelief in attributing the decision to the father and not to the external pressure of the security state. This semblance is essential to Abu Shadi to assert his authority. The father wants to be respected, a respect he feels his son lacks towards him. It is this patriarchal *wajib* that Shadi rejects most strongly in his father's suffocating fidelity to tradition, honour, and his insistence on the necessity of the law to 'love one's neighbour.' This political fraternity, rooted in an asymmetrical power relation that both Shadi and Abu Shadi seem to understand but only the former acknowledges, leads to the film's major schism. That is, the legitimacy of the *wajib* to invite a political 'friend' to the wedding.[9]

The pejorative difference that Edward Said identifies as historically framing the figure of *al-ghurba's* perception of the *Arab al-dakhil* appears alive and well in Shadi's

[9] According to Carl Schmitt, the relation 'between friend and enemy' both defines and conditions the political sphere and the very notion of the political (Schmitt 1996, p. 26). However, Jacques Derrida (2007) and Gil Anidjar (2003) challenge a separation of the spheres of friendship and enmity, and public and private. Derrida (2007, p. 16) casts doubt on the semantic certainty of Schmitt's ability to distinguish friend from enemy.

contemporary experience of *al-dakhil*.[10] Of his own exilic view of Palestinians in Israel in the decade previous to *After the Last Sky*, Said confesses:

> We always felt that Israel's stamp on these people (their passports, their knowledge of Hebrew, their comparative lack of self-consciousness about living with Israeli Jews, their references to Israel as a real country, rather than 'the Zionist entity') had changed them (1986, p. 51).

In what he sees as his father's refusal to acknowledge a relation of subjection to the state power embodied by Ronnie Avi, Shadi tacitly suggests a betrayal of the *al-qadiyya* (the Palestinian cause) and is openly enraged at what he deems should be a relation of enmity, or at least resistance. Indeed, following Schmittian logic, one can argue that Shadi's anger at his father's refusal to frame his relationship with Ronnie Avi as one of enmity; he is abandoning the political itself. While Jacques Derrida (1993, p. 375) attempts to think a politics of friendship which moves away from an 'oppositional' friend-enemy distinction—whereby the former is only determined relationally by the latter—he does acknowledge that Schmitt's logic provides a prescient analysis of the contemporary geo-political status quo.

> In truth, it is the *political* as such, nothing more or less, that would no longer exist without the figure and without the determined possibility of the enemy—that is, of an actual war. In losing the enemy, one would simply lose the political itself (Ibid, p. 355).

By implicitly framing his father as a figure of compromise and even collaboration, the politics of friend/enemy is in fact disrupted and blurred, a disruption augmented by Abu Shadi's own ambiguity towards the machinations of the security state.

In contrast to Shadi, Abu Shadi sees a politics of enmity not in relation with the Israeli who monitors his class, but the Palestinian intellectual of *al-ghurba*. 'I'm the one who decided to send you abroad,' he retorts, 'and look what you did. You found a girlfriend whose father is in the PLO.' This triggers an angry monologue in which Abu Shadi denounces the life of the exilic intellectual, traveling the world, he enquires 'at whose expense since he's a revolutionary?' Interestingly, this puts Abu Shadi at odds with those in the film who lionize the 1970s as 'a Golden Age.' Abu Shadi has no time for nostalgia, but is rather consumed by the quotidian struggle of sustaining a life in Nazareth.

---

[10] Said (1986, p. 51) identifies this pejorative view as correlative with the peak of both Arab and then Palestinian nationalism in the early 1970s, but shifting to a more positive perception since.

Abu Shadi's marked contrast with his family reveals an underlying tension in the feeling of revolutionary nostalgia that Laura Marks (2015, p. 99) charts as emergent in the last decade of filmmaking across the Arab world (seen in the previous chapter's study of Jacir's previous film, *When I Saw You*).

One of the tensions mapped onto the *al-dakhil/al-ghurba* topological encounter is that between Palestine as place and Palestine as idea. The tension between place or detail, and idea, is one Said returns to on his reflection on both the phases of Palestinian historical consciousness, which are termed (1986, p. 106) a politics of accommodation, a politics of rejection and a politics of revolution, the latter two aligned with first Arab and then Palestinian nationalism. A common thread to all three, and a wider problem Said sees in Palestinian culture, is a ceding of detail to concept, claiming that 'the concrete detail of Palestinian existence was sacrificed to big general ideas' (Ibid, p. 107). The place/idea dichotomy emerges again in Said's reflection on an emergent interior consciousness of which he admits envy, defining these figures thus: 'their *sumud* is real, concrete, solid: They are in Palestine, which is not an idea, as it is for us but a place.' These schisms between understandings of *sumud* and framings of Palestine as lived experience of place versus Palestine as idea play out throughout the film. A scene in the film's latter stages, when Nada, (Shadi's girlfriend) calls and Shadi insists on handing the phone to his father, Abu Shadi, who can never quite accept Shadi's 'European' lifestyle, reluctantly takes the phone, and after initial pleasantries, launches into an ironic, performative description of the Palestine as idea which Nada holds

dear.[11] When asked to describe the beauty of the land, Abu Shadi looks through the car windscreen at the shop where they have stopped to buy tarp. Taking in the cheap teddy bears, novelty Father Christmas decorations and balloon animals, and the busy road next to where they are parked, he proceeds to describe an imagined landscape of Palestinian signifiers—'olive groves, orange trees and the lush hills of Galilee.' This image of Palestine as a lost Eden is a resonant one in the Palestinian exilic imagination, as Mahmoud Darwish explains in an interview with Helit Yeshurun. For the exilic poet, says Darwish (2012, p. 51) 'Andalusia was the lost place. Later, Palestine became Andalusia. The popular poetry written about Palestine in the 1950s and 1960s formulated the comparison: We lost Palestine just as we lost Andalusia.' This evocation of a lost Eden also has a lineage in Palestinian cinema, with the rural idyll imagined by Abu Shadi to fit Nada's perspective conjuring the mise-en-scène of Michel Khleifi's *Wedding in Galilee* (1987), which presents an idealized, rural Palestinian village of stone houses and olive trees within contemporary, industrialized Galilee, bringing a lost past anachronistically into the present.

A descriptive 'image' of Palestine for *al-ghurba* in *Wajib* (2017). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

[11] While Shadi and Nada live in Rome, a legal distinction separates them. While Shadi's way of seeing, and politics have been cultivated in *al-ghurba*, as a Nazarene he is a legal citizen of Israel, and as such is an *Arab al- dakhil* by birth. Nada, however was born to a Palestinian exile and as such cannot visit Nazareth.

Shadi's pejorative view of *al-dakhil* extends beyond just a complex relationship with his father. The suffocating traditions of patriarchal *wajib* that he associates with Abu Shadi extend into a critical eye towards both the aesthetics and ethics of the city. As an architect based in Rome, Shadi turns a critical eye to urban planning in both cities, in the aforementioned assumption of poor infrastructure causing traffic jams, and in his criticism of the uncollected rubbish in the streets. Meanwhile, he expresses revulsion at Nazarenes' treatment of the fabric and facades of their city, casting a disdainful eye over the use of tarp to cover balconies, lamenting the debasement of 'one of the most ancient cities in the world' with what he sees as local kitsch ruining aesthetic tradition.

Aesthetic criticism of *al-dakhil* in *Wajib* (2017). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Conversely, it is the very adherence to another tradition—of patriarchal codes, the *nomos* of honour and shame presiding over Nazareth, against which Shadi also rails. Part of this stems from immediate family, the shame of the abandoned patriarch. One of the structuring tensions of the film is the absence of Shadi and Amal's mother, who is in the United States looking after her dying husband, and whose attendance at the wedding is contingent upon this situation. The 'scandal' of this departure is mentioned at the mid-point of the film, as clients at the salon of a family friend discuss the "absent mother". While Shadi's mother chose to leave Nazareth, whereas, Shadi was sent away, the sense you get from the film is that both mother and son are repelled by the patriarchal *wajib,* which conditions existence in Nazareth. This emerges again in the figure of Fadya, Shadi's cousin, an articulate, attractive lawyer who represents one of the few younger people who've moved back to, rather than away from Nazareth (a lament Abu Shadi makes on a number of occasions). Fadya returned to take care of sick parents, and represents a contrasting filial *wajib* to Shadi. Having returned and built a successful career as lawyer, she hints at an existent culture Shadi has no idea about. After he waxes lyrical about showing Fadya the sights, smells and tastes of Rome someday (including Italian wine), she confounds Shadi's preconceptions of *al-dakhil* by offering Shadi some award-winning wine from a vineyard in the North in Iqrit, made by descendants of those who left in 1948.[12]

Despite her dynamism, it transpires that Fadya had a prior relationship that didn't work out, and her partner left, married and had a family. In Nazareth's deeply conservative society, she is considered 'dumped' and thus has resigned herself to being single. The conversation in the car between father and son reveal the layers of patriarchal structures that operate in Nazareth. Shadi and Abu Shadi's pity that in spite of being dynamic, successful professional, she is defined by being alone both consciously expresses regret at 'how things are' but also unconsciously (particularly in Abu Shadi's case) reinforces that very structure.

At several points in the film, Shadi seems bemused by the laws of patriarchal *wajib*, where he assumes the logic of freedom, which fundamentally runs against the local logic of necessity. This is illustrated in a scene where he discusses the details of the wedding band with Amal. The wedding singer Abu Shadi insists on hiring, Fawzi Baloot, has a terrible voice. He has, however, sung at every family event—and thus tradition dictates this as another

[12] Iqrit was a Palestinian-Christian village depopulated in 1948, whose residents either fled across the border into Lebanon, or left for the town of Rameh (al Rama). The area has seen a renaissance in recent years. Source: Sherwood, H. (2013) 'Return to Iqrit: how one Palestinian village is being reborn', *The Guardian*, 15 May [online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/15/return-iqrit-palestinian-village-israel

wajib. It must be this way. Shadi, having failed to argue an alternative to his father, pleads his case to Amal what she wants. 'And you?' 'It isn't about me,' comes the response. 'Of course it is. It's *your* wedding. Day,' he insists. Amal, a product of the *nomos* of *al- dakhil*, understands perfectly that the logic of patriarchal *wajib* demands only necessity; that is, unquestioning obedience to tradition. 'You still don't get it, do you.' comes Amal's withering reply.

The double sense of *stasis* in Nazareth examined in Elia Suleiman's *Divine Intervention* (2003) in the previous chapter is reflected in *Wajib's* Nazareth, despite the decade and a half between them. In *The Evolution of Film* (2007), Harbord dedicates several pages of analysis, in the chapter entitled 'Inertia: on Energy and Film,' to Elia Suleiman's *Divine Intervention*. Of the film's opening passage, she writes:

> Progression has no currency here, there is only action and reversal, an endless dialectic of aggression and response, where victim becomes aggressor and vice versa. If this can indeed be described as a dialectic, an exchange of positions, it is a movement without negotiation (Harbord 2007, p. 157).

The opening 30 minutes of Suleiman's film are indeed a cyclical movement of aggression/counter-aggression, opening with the violent stabbing of Father Christmas, and closing with the sudden collapse of Suleiman's own father. What is missing from Harbord's analysis, however, is an awareness of territorial specificity. She describes the film as 'set in Ramallah and Jerusalem' (Ibid, p. 156), which while not untrue, elides the fact that the first half-hour takes place exclusively in Nazareth, Suleiman's hometown. Suleiman's Nazareth is a violent, stoic place, a pressure cooker of tension.[13] The spaces of Suleiman's interior are examined at length in the previous chapter of this thesis. However, the striking intertextuality of Suleiman's and Jacir's Nazareth is worth examining here, as is the political stasis of the city on screen. While Gertz and Khleifi (2008, p. 171) argue that Suleiman's first two feature films, *Chronicle of a Disappearance* (1996) and *Divine Intervention* (2002), reflect what 'had transpired in Palestinian society in general and its cinema in particular between the signing of the Oslo peace accords and the Second *Intifada,*' a close reading of Nazareth on screen in both of Suleiman's films and *Wajib,* on the contrary, reveal a resistance to such discrete

[13] The film ends on Suleiman's E.S and his mother watching a pressure cooker whistle at increasing pitch, before the mother says 'that's enough.'

periodization—in Nazareth in particular and *al-dakhil* more generally. Rather, there is a continuum of quotidian tedium, punctuated by episodic aggression.

A recurring vignette in *Chronicle of a Disappearance* is one where a car screeches to a halt outside a Nazareth café, before two men leap out bickering, before breaking into a physical struggle. While car and relation change, the pattern remains the same. In the first vignette, two friends have to be separated beside their white saloon car, as each attempts to attack the other with a jack. In the second, a small red car stops suddenly, and a father and son get out and start fighting, again separated by the café owner.

Episodic violence in *Chronicle of a Disappearance* (1996). ©Elia Suleiman (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The Nazareth that exists outside the car in *Wajib* has some remarkable coincidences with Suleiman's Nazareth in *Divine Intervention*, despite the fifteen years that separate the two films. The escalating violence in Nazareth is first mentioned in passing at an early 'invitation stop' in the context of intra-family violence, with a case of fratricide in a Nazarene family. The first visual eruptions of aggression mirror the neighbourhood tensions that simmer in Suleiman's Nazareth of *Divine Intervention*. On a visit to a family friend, Abu Shadi is making small talk when suddenly a bag of rubbish drops past the living room window. Enraged, the friend leaps up and curses the neighbour for using his garden as a rubbish dump. The scene mirrors one in *Divine Intervention*, when we see the culprit this time, casually leaving his house with a black bag, before tossing it over his neighbour's wall. When the bags come back and a confrontation ensues, the man calmly highlights how shameful he sees it to throw the rubbish back without 'discussing the matter!'

Neighbourly enmity in *Divine Intervention* (2002). ©Elia Suleiman (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Intertextuality in *Wajib* (2017). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Neighbourly hostility in *Wajib* (2017). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

On the same visit, when Shadi and his father return to the car they find the tyre of their Volvo slashed, having parked it in an ambiguous part of the neighbourhood. This dialectic of aggression and response in which Shadi and Abu Shadi get caught up is evocative of a similar act of petty revenge in Suleiman's Nazareth. A repeated sequence centres on the repair of a road and its retaining wall, which are consistently sabotaged to thwart the approach by car of

the neighbour seen dumping rubbish earlier. In a previous scene, he manages to avoid the missing asphalt, but in a later scene, illustrated below the car becomes stuck.

Civic sabotage in *Divine Intervention* (2002). ©Elia Suleiman (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

While the intertextuality of the two films' portrayal of Nazareth suggests an homage-like quality to *Wajib's* mise-en-scène, there is also a commentary on the continual economic and political stasis of Nazareth, despite the decade and a half between the two films. In an interview with Stephen Elphick, Jacir (2017a) states that contemporary 'Nazareth is a violent, tense city.' These sentiments echo Suleiman's description of his hometown fourteen years previously in an interview, as a 'claustrophobic space' of explosive tension (Suleiman 2003b, p. 71).

The most dramatic emergence of corporeal violence in *Wajib* (2017) escalates rapidly from a moment of stasis, about an hour into the film, when Shadi and Abu Shadi stop to fill up their car. A driver cuts in to the front of a queue at the petrol station, causing an argument, which unfolds through the windscreen of the Volvo, escalating into a mass, armed brawl as two drivers each get a metal pipe from their boot. At this point, Shadi intervenes in an attempt to deescalate, and both lose his shirt pocket and gain a split lip. It is this dual play of dialectical forces, erupting physically with the *arab al-dakhil* of Nazareth, and discursively within the car between Shadi's *al-ghurba* figure and Abu Shadi's *al-dakhil* figure which renders the Nazareth of *Wajib* topologically distorted by *al-ghurba* estrangement.

The escalation of everyday violence in *Wajib* (2017). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Wajib's penultimate movement brings the two figures back to the edges of Nazareth Illit. The preceding moments have brought some connection, as Procol Harum's *A Whiter Shade of Pale* comes on the radio, a song that triggers memories of Shadi's childhood trips in the car, in which he also learned to drive. There is a moment of contented silence, shattered by the realization that Abu Shadi is directing his son back to Ronnie Avi's house. This precipitates the film's final confrontation, as Shadi's logic of freedom of choice runs against Abu Shadi's logic of *al-dakhil*, in which will is always already before the law,[14] and as such, actions are determined by necessity. Shadi attempts to explain the logic behind his mother's leaving, contending that she deserves respect for having had the courage to realise she needed something more, and the judgemental backlash that it would bring from family and friends. This, in the context of the brewing row over the final invitation, brings a furious response from Abu Shadi, who, in his logic of *wajib* sees his ex-wife as almost an outlaw, for 'taking the easy option again and again and again,' to which Shadi's reply that 'at least she did what she wants and not what society wants,' betrays the same outsider freedom/necessity logic that put him at odds with Amal.

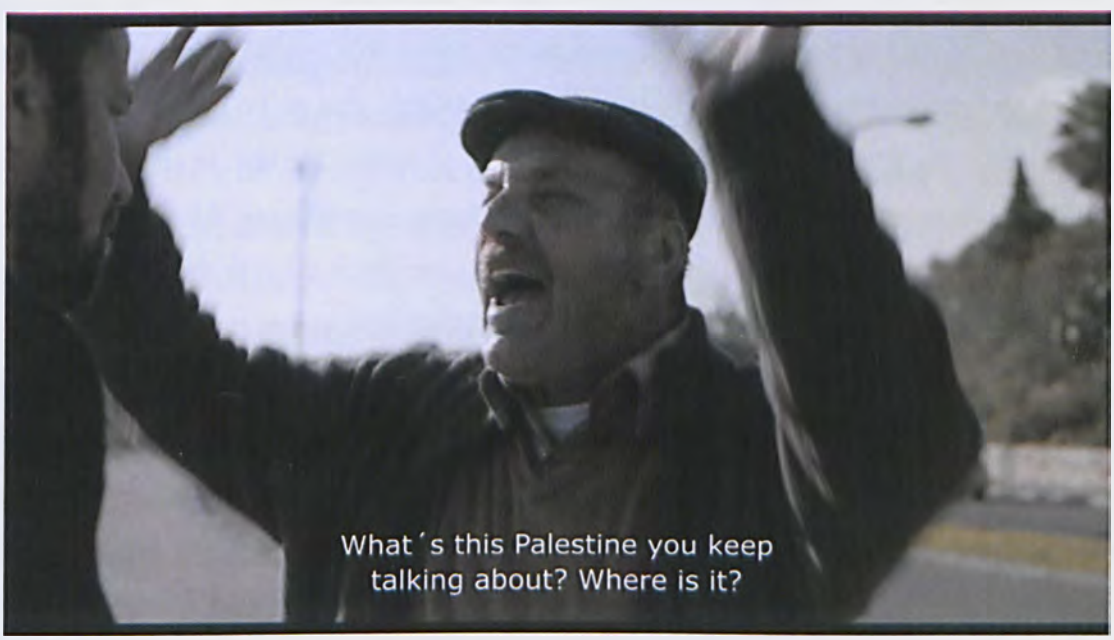
Shadi's logic of *al-ghurba* frames a binary choice between courage and cowardice, the former the act of leaving and living, the latter remaining and existing without being.

[14] Here signifying not just the legal apparatus of a state, but following Agamben (1998, p. 51) 'the entire text of tradition in its regulative form, whether the Jewish Torah or the Islamic Shariah, Christian Dogma or the profane *nomos*.'

Shadi's resentment of what he sees as his father's subjection and supplication erupts in this scene as he laments having to watch his father beg for recognition, in a state apparatus only interested in keeping him in a relation of strict subjection. There is also the defensiveness of the distance of *al-ghurba*, which Said admits as structuring his view of the interior, confessing that:

> [when viewing] experiences of an interior I cannot inhabit – I am reconfirmed in my outsider's role. This in turn leads me, defensively perhaps, to protect the integrity of exile by noting compromises of life in the Palestinian interior- the forgetfulness and carelessness that have historically characterized the losing battle with Zionism, the too close perspective that allows thoughts to be unthought, sights unrecorded, persons unmemorialized and time thrown away (Said 1986, p. 84).

It is these divergent perspectives, the too close and the too far, which characterize these ways of seeing Palestine from *al-ghurba* and *al-dakhil*, as an idea and as a place. Thus, in despair Abu Shadi disparages a life in Europe, sitting in parlours discussing the liberation of Palestine. 'What's this Palestine you keep talking about?' he demands. 'Where is it?' 'I'm living it here,' he scolds.



Palestine as idea versus Palestine as place in *Wajib* (2017). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

6.2 Chronotopes of Post-Memory: Becoming Out/Law in *Salt of this Sea*

Annemarie Jacir's *Salt of this Sea* (2008) is a film of surfaces, and depths. As such, it deals with the framing of landscape particular to a West Bank Palestinian (Emad) and a Diaspora Palestinian (Soraya) and how the dual forces of law and archaeology topologically transform their cinematic space. Soraya is making her first trip to Palestine-Israel, having been born in New York to parents born in the Lebanese camps, and with a grandfather from Jaffa. Emad, whom she encounters in Ramallah, is waiting on an exit visa so he can leave for Canada. Structurally, the film enacts a movement from coming against the law, to standing outside it. While representative figures of the law and colonial bureaucracy dominate spaces and produce subjectivities of the film's first half, an emergence outside the law and into the fictitious national spaces of the interior creates complex new spaces and becomings.

The question of law frames the temporality of each main character, as Emad has been confined to Ramallah for almost two decades, while Soraya, who has been raised on narratives of Palestine, has been granted a visa for just two weeks. Emad frames landscape as a Palestinian who has been 'stuck' in Ramallah for seventeen years and sees 'elsewhere' as an idealised space to escape to, while Soraya frames an idealised Palestine formed by her parents' and grandparents' stories. Soraya's estrangement from these narratives grows as the film progresses, through both her encounters with Palestinians in Ramallah, mystified by her wish to seek *al-awda* (return). Upon arriving in Ramallah to meet her friend Corinne, she discusses her return with friends over dinner, who state 'Return? That'll be the day. Who wants to return here?' Soraya's ways of seeing consistently clash with those in the territories. Initially, this is

seen upon her arrival in Ramallah. A series of shots are framed from Soraya's perspective as she gazes through the window of her taxi. This 'touristic' gaze takes in the main sights (the main square Al-Manara, the lion statues, dancing policeman) and, most curiously, the consciously 'filmed' faces of the locals.

The touristic gaze of Soraya in *Salt of this Sea* (2008). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Perhaps unintentionally, the faces of the extras in these opening Ramallah shots appear to react to the presence of a film crew, looking into the camera. The elevated reactions in these scenes heighten both Soraya's strangeness *within*, and estrangement *from* those around her. A later scene of contrasting perspectives concerns Soraya's near-eidetic description of Jaffa to Emad. This scene takes place in one of the film's threshold zones, a space in the hills at the limits of Ramallah, which is legally as far as Emad can go from the city where he has been held for almost two decades. After having the topography of the view described to her, with Jaffa and Tel Aviv and the sea gestured to beyond the horizon, Soraya depicts a vivid image of her grandfather's walk through Jaffa, and the library, café and cinema her grandparents frequented. Somewhat naively, she asks Emad 'ever been there?' to which he replies 'are you sure you haven't?' before stating that he hasn't seen the sea in seventeen years, having been unable to leave Ramallah. This scene betrays Soraya and Emad's contrasting ways of seeing the land, with her chronotopic space of Palestine formed by Postmemory— imagined spaces formed at a spatial and temporal remove— whereas Emad's lived reality of a cageless incarceration in Ramallah leaves him longing to escape to Canada. The militarized reality of the West Bank is emphasized in the second of these threshold scenes, where Emad and

Soraya's conversation is muffled by the diegetic sound of fighter jets passing overhead, a sound which clashes with the spare, rural landscape of the hillside.

The figure of Soraya articulates, throughout the film, a form of double vision. That is, her encounter with the Palestine in which she is present collides with the imagined Palestine handed down to her through parents and grandparents. The imagined distorts Soraya's perspective of the real in the scene in which she describes the streets of Jaffa, her assumption of Emad's ability to move freely between Ramallah and Jaffa and, in particular, her eventual arrival at her grandfather's house in Jaffa. The latter scene, which occurs in the film's second half takes place when Soraya, Emad and their friend Marwan visit Soraya's grandfather's house. An Israeli woman now living there welcomes them in. While Emad and Marwan sit with the woman, Soraya wanders the house, silent with a sense of both reverence and disquiet. There are elements of the original house, but the furniture has been replaced, its features at odds with the image of the house Soraya has projected. This scene bears a striking resemblance to the dramatic structure of Ghassan Kanafani's novella, *Returning to Haifa* (1969).[15] In the novella, Said and his wife Safiyya 'return' to their former house in Haifa from Ramallah in 1967 when Israel opens the border after the occupation of the West Bank. The 'return' is thus framed ironically, as Said and Safiyya are only able to return to what they lost in the *nakba* due to the impending loss of territory in the *naksa*. The early interactions between Said and Miriam—the Jewish woman now living in the house—centre on the displaced and missing objects, the changes made during the twenty years passed; Said notices his books are gone, a peacock feather is missing, the original objects of the house are itemised in negation. The dialogue between Said and Miriam is not framed in a binary friend/enemy relation, but rather through the prism of homeland and dispossession. Miriam acknowledges Said and Safiyya's ownership of the house, and Said permits her to stay. Miriam is also no Zionist, critiques the myths of Jewish nationalism as just that, and telling Said of her intention to leave the state upon witnessing the brutality of the dispossessions of 1948. Her reason for staying creates the other structural relation of the novella—an infant child, Khaldun, whom Said and Safiyya were forced to leave in the chaos of 48, and who was raised as Dov by Miriam and her husband Iphrat.

In the novella, the trauma of dispossession is an acute memory for both the Palestinian couple, estranged from Haifa, and Miriam, who has survived the Holocaust and fled Poland.

[15] Published in Arabic as *'Ā'id ila Haifa* (1969) and English as *Returning to Haifa* (2000)

In *Salt of this Sea*, the memory of dispossession and departure is not her own, but mediated through the stories of the previous two generations. This temporal and spatial distance from the event and the narratives that have shaped an experience in the diaspora create a particular way of framing a present encounter with a past that one has never had access to. This is what Marianne Hirsch (1996) terms postmemory. The transformative effect this form of memory can have on one's present means this other past can dislocate one's present.

> Postmemory is a powerful form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through imaginative investment and creation [...] Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are displaced by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by traumatic events that can neither be fully understood nor re-created (Hirsch 1996, p. 662).

While Hirsch's research stems from the experience of the children of Holocaust survivors, she is mindful that this form of 'traumatic recall [...] at a generational remove' (Hirsch 2008, p. 106) is not exclusive to this specific experience, but 'may usefully describe the second-generation memory of other cultural or collective traumatic events and experiences' (Hirsch 1996, p. 662). Soraya's 'return' to the Jaffa on whose narratives she was raised, and in particular to the house, occasions a clash of temporalities between the over-determined presence of postmemory and the contemporary experience of the house (occupied by a sympathetic Jewish woman who owns 'End the Occupation' mugs while urging Soraya not to dwell on history). The overwhelming experience of the encounter between postmemory and the displaced object of the family house provokes an aggressively visceral reaction; initially rendering Soraya silent as she wanders the house, as the disjuncture between the house of the narratives and the house she's in build, she leaves and is physically sick in the garden. This scene is one of several points of discordance in the film where Soraya's chronotope of postmemory is displaced, or perhaps more accurately, 'undone'[16] by her encounters with the administrative force of law.

The chronotope, while never explicitly and rigorously defined, is a narrative device for manifesting the representation of time in space in the literary novel. Early on in the essay *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics,*[17]

---

[16] Bakhtin (1981, p. 250) cites the chronotope as 'the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied.'

[17] Originally written in the 1930s, not published until 1975, and in English in 1981 as: Bakhtin, M. (1981) 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics' In M. Bakhtin. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin (1981, p. 84) defines chronotope, '(literally, "time-space") [in relation] to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature.' Explicating its image-like quality, where 'time [...] thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible [while] space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history,' Bakhtin underscores the artistic quality of this 'intersection of axes and fusion of indicators' in the notion of the chronotope. Bakhtin is, nonetheless, careful when developing the concept to not overdetermine its meaning, while insisting on its polysemic dimension. As such, the Bakhtinian chronotope is better thought as a network operating at both macro and micro levels. Indeed, towards the end of the essay, Bakhtin suggests a topological structure of chronotopes operating relationally. In his concluding remarks Bakhtin moves away from the 'generic forms,' or structural chronotopes of the historical novel, claiming that 'each such chronotope can include within it an unlimited number of minor chronotopes' (Ibid, p. 252). At this level, Bakhtin tells us, chronotopes exist in a complex network of relations, where they 'are mutually exclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complicated interrelationships' (Ibid). These complicated interrelationships can be seen throughout *Salt of this Sea*, as discordant chronotopes both co-exist and displace one another. At the major level, the film can be said to exhibit the chronotope of the heist, as the narrative is driven by Soraya 'liberating' her grandfather's money from the British Palestine Bank in Ramallah,[18] before going on the run in Israel. However, within this generic structure there are co-existent and even conflicting minor chronotopes. The most pronounced of these are the displacement of Soraya's chronotopes of postmemory by what might be termed colonial-law chronotopes. That is, Soraya's framing of the imagined space of Palestine, from the sights and smells of Jaffa, to her unbounded understanding of travel between *that* city and Ramallah, is displaced by her encounters with bureaucratic functions of law.

In its organization of law, space and subjectivity, the film can be separated into two distinct parts. The film's first half deals with the biopolitical and legal-administrative forces that the two main characters are submitted to in the West Bank. Subject positions are given (rather than taken), or more accurately *produced* by power through subjection. In this way, Soraya is positioned as a 'returning' Arab (and thus a threat) at customs through her family

[18] This is a fictional bank, but appears to be based on 'Arab Bank Palestine', which lost its branches in Haifa and Jaffa after the British Mandate withdrew, and later opened in Ramallah, which mirrors the film. However, Arab Bank Palestine claims to have recovered deposits of those who were forced to leave. The frozen and lost assets of Soraya's grandfather are her raison

name 'Tahani'; an outsider in the West Bank, a tourist (temporally—through her Visa), an American legally. Throughout the first half of the film, Soraya is subject to these roles. One of the few exceptions is when, upon meeting Emad's family, Soraya is explaining her lineage to his mother. After explaining that her parents were from the Nahr al-Bared camp in Lebanon, his mother responds '*bint mukhayyamat*' (A girl of the refugee camps), to which Soraya replies '*bint mukhayyamat Amrika*' (of the American camps). Despite her American passport (which is often held up to her as a mark of privilege) and being a Brooklyn native, she doesn't identify as a U.S. citizen, but rather a refugee who happens to be in the U.S.

Emad and Soraya's movement through Ramallah is controlled, compartmentalised and subject to the arbitrary decisions of biopolitical actors. These are realised militarily for Emad, as he is confined to Ramallah, where his encounter with biopower literally renders him a 'bare' body when he is stopped and ordered to strip by soldiers on a night patrol.[19] Ramallah for Emad is essentially an open prison, and within it, his body framed as a biopolitical threat. Soraya's own encounters are with actors of a more bureaucratic nature. Many of her key scenes take place in administrative spaces.

The first of these involve a meeting with a sympathetic middle manager of the British Bank of Palestine, whom she implores to take responsibility for her claim to her father's money, although the branch in Jaffa—much like the British Mandate where it was located—no longer exists. A follow up scene sees a meeting with the branch's British manager. This is a far less sympathetic figure who accuses Soraya of a performative gesture while negating her Palestinian-ness, accusing her of 'coming from America for a few Palestinian pounds.' The figure of the manager provides another parallel with Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa*. During the 1948 scenes of the novel, the assault on Haifa by the Haganah catches Said by surprise, as it is revealed 'as far as he knew, the British still controlled the city and this whole situation should have taken place in three weeks, when the British would begin to withdraw in accordance with the date they had fixed' (Kanafani 2000, p. 153-34). Thus accountability for the loss of the city is blamed on the early withdrawal of a colonial power, along with the implication that the British and Jewish forces are in cahoots. In *Salt of this Sea*, The Imperial figure of the British Mandate is presented in the contemporary bureaucratic entity of the British Palestine Bank as a figure that absolves itself of historical responsibility and is merely a benevolent, administrative presence.

---

[19] While Ramallah falls within Zone A of the West Bank division under the Oslo Accords, after Operation Defensive Shield (Israel's military response to the Second Intifada), incursions, patrols and raids by the IDF are a common occurrence, as witnessed by Emad's comment to Soraya that 'this is normal'.

The bank as benevolent colonial presence in *Salt of this Sea* (2008). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

This is a tradition seen in the cinematic framing of the Mandate period (through Ministry of Information films), which, as Francis Gooding (2009) argues, frames the colonial presence through a 'common narrative of benevolent British administration.' This narrative is also careful to both naturalise the colonial presence and absolve itself of any responsibility, most explicitly in the closing lines of the 1947 Ministry of Information film, *Portrait of Palestine*: 'the Jews claim Palestine as their ancient home. The Arabs have lived there for a thousand years. Palestine's problem is whether these two kindred races can be reconciled and can live and work together in peace.' Soraya's accusation that 'your bank is responsible' repositions this claim for accountability in a contemporary setting. The senior bureaucracy of the bank are seen dining lavishly at the restaurant where Emad and Soraya work, and are treated with reverence, particularly the British manager; meanwhile Emad and Soraya's wages are delayed. 'Be patient' says the manager, 'things will improve,' to which Emad replies 'mmm… hilm al Arabi (the Arab dream).[20]

[20] This can be read as a critique of the neighbouring Arab nations, in much the same way as the newspaper boy scene in Elia Suleiman's *The Time That Remains* (2009) discussed in the previous chapter. Both phrases here signify a willingness to wait and talk which leads to nothing

A contemporary critique of the British Mandate in *Salt of this Sea* (2008). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Later on, when Soraya tries to get official recognition of her Palestinian-ness from a bureaucrat of the Palestinian National Authority, once again, her paperwork and claims to legitimacy are sympathised with, but ultimately rejected. She has birth certificates that have not been issued by the Palestinian Authority, she has family, but not in the West Bank or Gaza. Her American-ness is here highlighted as a virtue: 'you have an American passport!

What's better than that?' says the representative. The only documentation that holds weight is the passport that defines her as an American citizen and the Visa that limits her visit to two weeks.

Soraya's insistence on recourse to evidence, documentation and truth claims puts her at odds with Emad, who displays an insider's understanding of the empty, Kafkaesque law that governs space and movement in the West Bank. In an earlier scene, when discussing how she feels finally being in Palestine, Soraya bemoans having wanted to come for so long and only receiving a two-week visa. This leads to a discussion about the value of truth, after Emad tells her she should have lied about visiting Jewish friends on the chance that she may have got a longer visa. Soraya asks why she should lie, with Emad retorting: 'why should you tell the truth?' with Soraya claiming: 'all we have is the truth,' to which Emad responds: 'do you think the truth helped anyone here?' Emad's perspective on the truth contrasts markedly with Soraya's, whose idealised view of truth and justice lead her into a bureaucratic cul-de-sac, armed with perfectly useless documents. Emad understands all too well that the pervasive and arbitrary contingency of the law in the West Bank leaves no room for truth.

A key scene occurs towards the middle of the film that refigures the relation between characters and law, replacing a constricted network of 'bureaucratic' spaces of the West Bank with the 'outlawed' spaces of the interior. After being unable to claim her grandfather's savings from the Ramallah branch of the British Palestine Bank, Soraya, with the help of Emad and Marwan, decides to rob the bank to reclaim the money with interest. The robbery and subsequent flight into Israel marks a break in the films' structuring of its subject formation. Having been assigned subject positions throughout the film's first half, the scenes

of the robbery and escape are striking for the abandonment of documentation and the adoption of signifiers. When robbing the bank in Ramallah, by way of a disguise, Emad and Soraya adopt the signifiers of biopolitical enmity, past and present. Emad, wrapped in a *keffiyeh* and holding a Kalashnikov (albeit one without bullets) adopts the signifiers of a *fida'i*, a symbol of armed struggle against Israel. Soraya, is concealed in a *niqāb*, a signifier of political Islam, a symbol of anxiety in the contemporary Israeli political consciousness. By adopting these symbols, there is a subversive performance of the biopolitical threat Emad and Soraya are always already constructed as.

The robbery as performative biopolitical threat in *Salt of this Sea* (2008). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The aftermath of the robbery sees another subversion, or 'weaponising' of subject positions. While the first half of the film is dominated by administrative struggles against the law, having actively taken subject positions 'outside' the law in order to pass through the checkpoint and access *al-dakhil* (the interior—Israel), they simply adopt the signifiers of Jewish tourists. After having her Americanness imposed upon her at the expense of her Palestinian-ness, Soraya subverts this subject position through adopting a Religious Zionist aesthetic and using her own American accent. When the Israeli soldier peers into the open window of the car, he is greeted with a series of signifiers of Religious Zionism. Emad and Marwan are both wearing *kippahs* and Emad has an ultra-nationalist t-shirt with an image of an F16 fighter jet and the words 'America don't worry— Israel is behind you' emblazoned across it. Soraya's hair is covered with a *mitpachat*,[21] and when approached by a soldier a

[21] A headscarf typically worn by orthodox Jewish women

simple smile and a friendly 'hey!' are enough for any doubts to be assuaged and the car to be waved through.

Becoming Outlaw: the weaponizing of subject positions in *Salt of this Sea* (2008). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

What is remarkable in these two scenes is that in the subversion and performance of a number of subject positions, they capture a Foucauldian movement from the logic of biopolitical subjection to a more active (and arguably, resistant) logic of subjectivation. In the mid-1970s, relations of power framed Michel Foucault's thinking as to the formation of the subject *of* power, and as the double genitive suggests, a subject *produced by* power relations. This subject of power emerges as Foucault traces a movement from disciplinary power to biopower, the former in *Discipline and Punish*, and the latter in *Society Must be Defended,* his lecture series given at the Collège de France between 1975 and 1976. At this stage of his thought, Foucault's thinking of the subject is framed strictly in terms of subjection. This can be seen both in the workings of disciplinary power, which 'produces subjected and practised bodies, docile bodies' (Foucault 1977, p. 138), and later in the terms by which the relation between the subject and power is framed. In a lecture of January 21st 1976, Foucault states that the question starts not with the subject itself, but in how power produces it, claiming that 'we should not, therefore, be asking subjects how, why, and by what right they can agree to being subjugated, but showing how actual relations of subjugation manufacture subjects' (Foucault 2003, p. 67).

Some of the ambiguity in Foucault's thinking of the subject comes from the complexity in translating his use of the French term *assujettissement*. This can be rendered in

English as both subjugation and subjection, while the latter exists in French as *sujetion*. Mark Kelly (2009) recognises an ambiguity in both usage and interpretation of *assujettissement* in that it is used in *Discipline and Punish* and *Society Must be Defended* to connote a passive subjection, whereas in *The Will to Knowledge*[22] Foucault refers to 'subjection [*assujettissement*], or to subjects' constitution as "subjects" in both senses of the word' (Foucault 1978, p. 60). This seems to convey active subject-formation. Kelly (2009, p. 89) also criticises Judith Butler's (2007) translation of subjectivation as *assujettissement* (when it is in fact Foucault's own creation in French), thus erroneously creating 'a single account of subject(ivat)ion' in the history of Foucault's thought.

Subjectivation, which Foucault first brings into use in the early 1980s, is 'the process by which one obtains the constitution of a subject, or more exactly, of a subjectivity, which is obviously only in one of the given possibilities for organising self-consciousness' (Foucault 1996, p. 472). This evolution of Foucault's thought seems to suggest a move away from a consideration of the subject as an effect of power toward a more complex process of active subject formation. That is, the continuous forming and reforming of self through the active taking of subject positions. We see this move begin to develop through *Salt of this Sea*, as Soraya moves beyond the passive subject positions produced for her by her encounters with the force of law (Arab, American, tourist, non-Palestinian), and actively takes the subject position of the outlaw, subverting and weaponising the outsider-status she has been subjected to by bureaucratic manifestations of biopolitical law, while adopting a range of subversive subject positions in what might be termed subjectivation as critical practice.

In Emad and Soraya's discussion of truth, and the virtues of hiding this truth, a number of archaeological metaphors arise. Soraya claims not to see the logic in lying, claiming 'I have nothing to hide. They'd search until they found the secret: A Palestinian!' Emad responds: 'let them waste their time digging away.' This metaphor of the hidden Palestinian in Israel is realized in a striking scene of emergence in the film's second half.

Towards the end of the film, after leaving Jaffa, Soraya and Emad head for Dawayima,[23] the village where Emad's family come from. When they arrive they find only ruins. Having no place to stay, they reclaim the site and make a home of it; lighting a fire, making a bed and putting up a 'Home Sweet Home' sign. This peace is disturbed after a few

---

[22] This is the first volume of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*. This first volume, initially translated into English by Robert Hurley under the title *Volume I: An Introduction*, was later given a more faithful rendition of the French, *La volonté de savoir*. It is Hurley's 1978 translation which is cited here. Source: Foucault, M. (1978) *The History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books.

[23] A village that was de-populated and destroyed in 1948, on the site of which stands the Israeli town of Amatzya.

days when they are awoken by a history teacher[24] (and unreconstructed Zionist), showing a group of Israeli students 'ancient ruins' to learn about their 'biblical roots.' Soraya emerges from this fictional biblical archaeological space, in her disguise as an American Jew, awakened by the Hebrew voice of the history teacher echoing in this reclaimed space, demanding to know what she is doing here.

The secret Palestinian in *Salt of this Sea* (2008). ©Philistine Films (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The emergence of the 'hidden' Palestinian from fictional biblical space in *Salt of this Sea* (2008)

This emergence of the Palestinian body from the acoustic space of political Zionism, a Hebrew voice telling her she isn't allowed in this 'ancient' ruin (because camping is

[24] Interestingly, this character is played by Juliano Mer-Khamis, the founder of the Freedom Theater in Jenin; Mer-Khamis was born to a Jewish mother. And a Christian-Arab father, and was an actor, director and activist who identified as 'Palestinian-Jewish' and was an advocate of both bi-nationalism and a 'cultural intifada' (Shatz 2013)

forbidden) bears a striking resemblance to a scene in Kamal Aljafari's *Port of Memory* (2009). In this scene, through digital manipulation, Salim, the film's main character is inserted into a similar acoustic space. The scene begins with a graphic match, as Salim (played by Aljafari's uncle) is inserted into shots from which the scenes were taken, an Israeli film *Kazablan* (1973). This film manages to layer a fictional cinematic occupation on top of the factual occupation of Jaffa during this period, as the film tells a narrative of oppressed Mizrahi Jews living in Jaffa, and the scene in question is the sung lamentation of Ashkenazi oppression, a narrative which, as Aljafari states, 'completely elides not only Jaffa's Palestinian history, but also its remaining Palestinians, enacting a virtual, cinematic emptying of the city' (Aljafari, 2010). As the character wanders the crumbling architecture of an abandoned Jaffa, he sings the lyrics to Yesh Makom, his song to his former life in Morocco:

> There is a place beyond the sea,
>
> Where the sun shines over the market, the street and the port,
>
> Home beyond the sea...

Salim interrupting the acoustic nationalist space in *Port of Memory* (2009). ©Kamal Aljafari (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Salim's spectral appearance troubles this scene, briefly haunting the frame from the edges and fracturing and undermining the fictional narrative of the scene's Mizrahi lamentation. By re-appropriating a Hebrew song of loss and longing the scene counters a hegemonic space, the national territorial by highlighting the fictional unity of the centre. The complete elision of the Palestinian, or *Arab al-dakhil*, is countered and perforated by the staking of the claim that there have always been *peoples* in Israel-Palestine, never simply *a people*. Soraya's

emergence from the ruins of Dawayima into the acoustic space of Zionist nationalism enacts a similarly resistant claim.

6.3 Five Broken Locations: Basma Alsharif's *Ouroboros*

Unlike the traumatic proximity of the traumatic Real, which irrupted into Soraya's exilic return to the Palestinian interior in *Salt of this Sea*, it is the 'luxury' of distance which informs Basma Alsharif's vision of the elsewhere of Palestine, where the trauma of postmemory dissipates into a logic of forgetting. Exilic ways of seeing inform the resistant images of Alsharif's 2017 film *Ouroboros*, creating a topological network of place, time and language. The ontological state of *al-ghurba* informs a cyclical structure in which the 'index' of an Image of Palestine can be traced through liminal spaces of historical and contemporary colonialism. The film takes its title from the Ancient Egyptian legend of the snake devouring its own tail, a symbol of cyclical destruction and creation. This cyclicism manifests itself both temporally, with its bi-directional movement of time, but also through space, covering locations from Gaza to Los Angeles, the Mojave Desert, Basilicata and Brittany. These locations, while ostensibly beginning and ending with Gaza, exist on a topological plane. They fold into one another and are both discrete but connected—implicating a network of places and histories in what Alsharif terms Gaza's 'perpetual present.' The film's broader temporal structure shifts between dawn, noon, dusk and night. However, like the film itself, these shifts have little concern for linearity. The film's primary concern, which will be the focus of this section, is how a topological structure can situate Gaza at the intersections of Colonialism, violence and erasure.

Ouroboros opens with an extraordinary, uncanny scene signifying that the time is out of joint. A vertical drone shot frames the sea, held static above the Mediterranean as the waves break away from the shore, rolling back into the water. The drone-shot visual is matched by an aural drone of a hurdy-gurdy playing a repetitive hypnotic tone. The simultaneously beautiful and unsettling image of waves receding back into the sea appears to suggest a paradoxical image of crisis and hope. The strangeness of waves un-breaking suggests ecological crisis alongside the physical near impossibility of reaching Gaza, while simultaneously creating a spatial expansiveness in a territory of extraordinary geopolitical striation.

Uncanny openings: the ocean recedes from Gaza in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

This militarized gaze continues throughout the film's opening six minutes as the vertical 'drone-eye' tracks steadily back from the shore, before following the arterial road along the shore, dilapidated rooftops framed vertically as mere surface areas, targets in the frequent assaults on the strip. The cool and crisp digital image, along with the vertical perspective of buildings, cars and trucks, not only functions as an opaque vision that commonly frames Gaza from the outside as an assemblage of surface area and statistics, but also extends upon Paul Virilio's (1989) convergence of the gaze of war and cinema as 'the deadly harmony that always establishes itself between the functions of eye and weapon' (Virilio 1989, p. 69).

The 'drone-eye' tracks over surface areas in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

In *War and Cinema* (1989), Paul Virilio charts the historical trajectories of image making (or rather, *manipulation*) of military and cinematic perception. Both war and cinema emerge as a mode of perception in modernity. Most strikingly, Virilio highlights the lineage from the Gatling gun and the Colt rifle, from whose revolving units 'Etienne-Jules Marey then perfected his chronophotographic rifle, which allowed its user to aim at and photograph an object moving through space' (Virilio 1989, p. 11). The rifle scope, which, writes Virilio (Ibid, p. 49), 'increased the depth of the visual field while reducing its own compass,' is just one manifestation of the manipulation of the image that unites the military and cinematic gaze—a gaze at the threshold of visibility and invisibility—through panning and tracking shots, the zoom in and zoom out that links the emergence of modern cinematic ways of seeing with the emergent way of seeing provided by aviation. In the second chapter, which Virilio titles 'I See, I Fly' it is precisely this manipulation of geometric space and production of depth through movement that links the cinema-eye to the aviator's (or perhaps more accurately, reconnaissance-eye), prompting Virilio (Ibid, p. 17) to observe that 'cinema and aviation seemed to form a single moment.'

While Virilio was writing in the mid-1980s, his genealogy of the trajectories of war and cinema and the convergence of the two into what Virilio (1989) terms the 'spectacle' of the 'war machine' is difficult not to see in the simulacra and spectacle of the two Gulf Wars,[25]

[25] As articulated by Baudrillard in *The Gulf War did not take place* (1995)

along with engagement in Gaza, packaged and sold as 'wars' despite enormous disequilibria of power and force.

The co-implication of viewer and camera in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

This detached, but nonetheless spectacular eye/weapon gaze is employed in the opening 6 minutes of *Ouroboros* as a crisp, flat vertical image of striated, cartographic space is traversed by a drone-eye. In the context of this cinema, however, the logistics of perception, which maximises the field of visibility while minimizing the surveillance object's own visibility, does not operate by stealth in the same way. That is to say, the viewer is co-implicated in this way of seeing, this drone-eye view of Gaza even as the camera itself is without a guiding hand. This visual co-implication is reinforced by the dirge of the hurdy-gurdy, a visual and aural strategy that both co-implicates the viewer *in* and alienates them *from* this spectacle. Further, the omniscient vertical perspective of this drone-eye corresponds to what Eyal Weizman (2007) terms 'the politics of verticality.' When thinking the geometry of occupation in the West Bank, Weizman is keen to stress that control of space doesn't merely function horizontally, at the surface level, but rather vertically, through subterranean resources[26] and

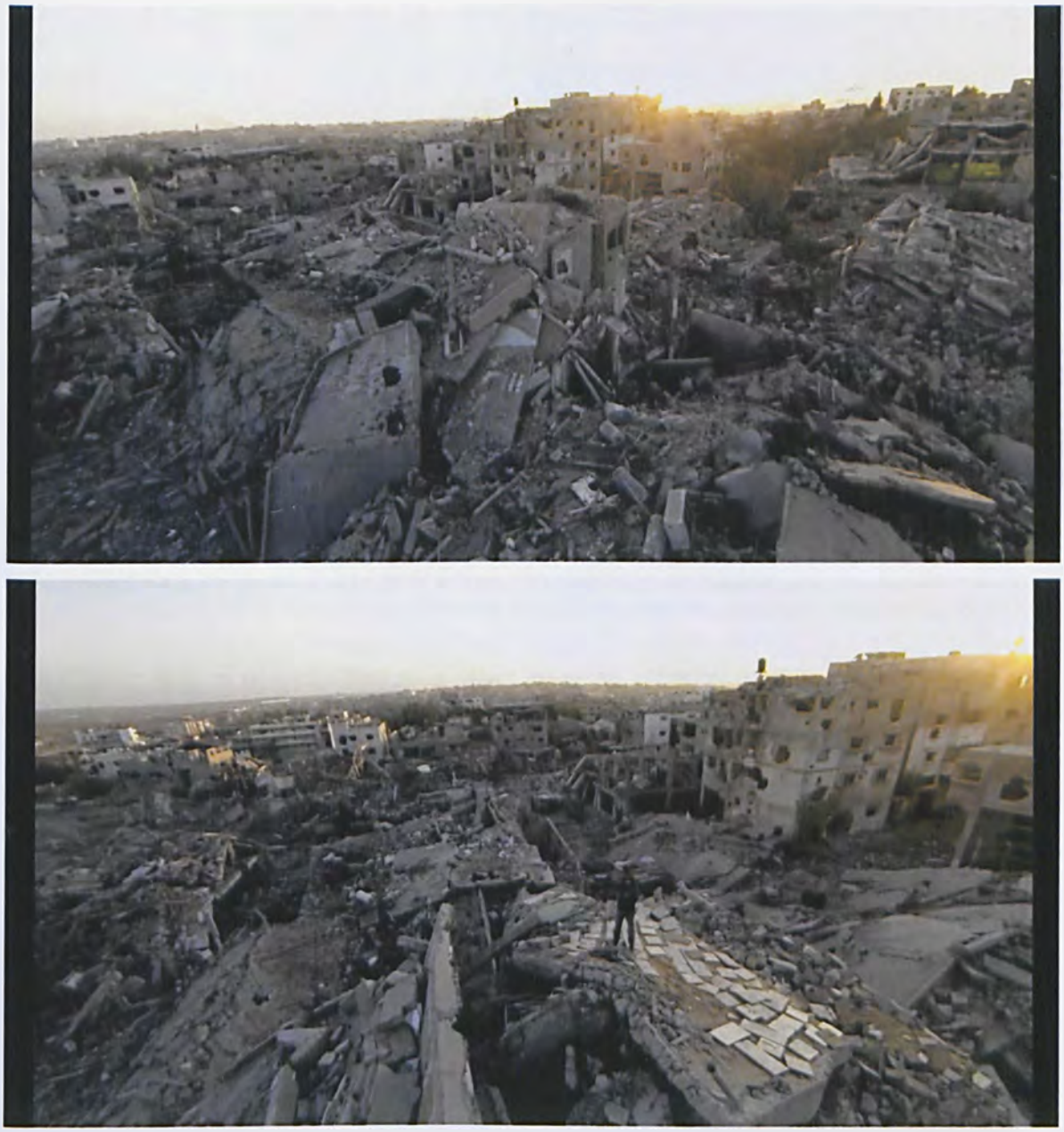
[26] The mountain aquifer, located in the West Bank, is the sole source of water West Bank Palestinians have. Despite this, 'Israel uses 83 per cent of its annually available water for the benefit of Israeli cities and its settlements' (Weizman 2007, p. 19).

militarized skies, which leads Weizman to categorize the Occupied Territories as a 'hollow land', which is:

> Cut apart and enclosed by its many barriers, gutted by underground tunnels, threaded together by overpasses and bombed from its militarized skies, the hollow land emerges as the physical embodiment of the many and varied attempts to partition it (Weizman 2007, p. 15).

This verticality extends to Gaza, over which—despite official withdrawal in 2005—Israel retains vertical control over airspace and maritime space alongside control of all land crossings, barring the Rafah Crossing with Egypt. It is this politics of verticality that the viewer finds him/ herself implicated in during these opening sequences, in the point-of-view of the drone-eye as it surveys the topography of Gaza. Stephen Graham (2011) speaks of the vertical geopolitics of 'drone space', noting that 'Israel is a global pioneer in the use of aerial drones for the persistent and ubiquitous surveillance of subject populations in "low-intensity conflicts"' (Graham 2011, p. 141), and that Gaza has acted as a 'laboratory' for both aerial surveillance and assassinations. The 'harmony' of eye and weapon that Virilio alluded to back in the 1980s is, in the case of the drone, reaches a level of directness far beyond, one imagines that Virilio envisaged.

The most devastating of the multiple assaults on Gaza enters the mise-en-scène in violent fashion as the drone tracking, having almost imperceptibly shifted its temporality to a forward motion, dissolves into a medium drone-shot documenting the near total destruction wreaked on Gaza by Israel's 2014 assault. As the camera floats, spectrally and with grace, above a cityscape razed to shells and stumps of buildings, an extraordinary flicker of life grounds this otherwise non-anthropocentric sequence. The camera skims above the devastated buildings, seemingly devoid of human life, before floating above a lone figure who gazes up and reaches towards the drone; a solitary sign of life in an otherwise apocalyptic landscape.



A drop of life in an ocean of destruction in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

What is extraordinary in this scene, indeed this whole opening section, is the intrusion of human life into what has been, until now, a rigorously non-anthropocentric image. The figure of the human here is somewhat out of place, and doesn't re-establish an anthropocentric centring of the image. The depth of focus in this sequence has a horizontal effect on the hierarchy of the image, what Laura McMahon (2015, p. 110) terms a 'non-anthropocentric horizontalization of representation' in which the human object takes no precedence over non-human, the 'impassive lens' Bazin (1967, p. 15) highlights in 'the ontology of the

photographic image.' While human action/habitation is framed as a target object in the vertical drone-eye point-of-view shots which open the film, in these brief scenes of post 2014 destruction, the camera surveys an almost post-human landscape, over which the emergence of a lone figure is passed as impassively as the rubble.

The film's disaggregated use of sound and image precipitates the transition from destruction to creation, as the drone of the hurdy-gurdy gives way to ambient street noise preceding a jump cut to an unscarred cityscape of Gaza with the ocean in the distance. These temporal shifts and architectural transitions between dilapidation, destruction and renewal positions Gaza as a threshold space, a space where the Benjaminian *interpenetration* of erasure and formation becomes indistinct, where 'one can scarcely discern where building is still in progress and where dilapidation has already set in' (Benjamin 2004, p. 416). Edward Said sees this threshold of creation and ruin as innate in Palestinian architecture, writing that 'each Palestinian structure presents itself as a potential ruin' (Said 1986, p. 38).

Gaza as threshold of destruction and renewal in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

What follows this shot is an extraordinary sequence of the domestic uncanny lasting around 9 minutes and consisting of two long takes. These sequences open in the courtyard of a large private house. A woman in a headscarf is framed from behind, beneath lemon trees. This framing continues, as a Steadicam tracks her movement backwards through the garden, touching the lemons as she shuffles through the courtyard.

The domestic uncanny in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The reverse motion of these two long takes gives an uncanny quality to these sequences, exacerbated by the woman's undulating gait, as she rocks gently from side to side, as she *recedes* through the house. The sequences also evoke the opacity of the opening scenes of the Otolith Group's *Nervus Rerum* (2008), the camera floating, almost entirely behind the woman, whose back remains turned to it. The film also employs a Steadicam, which according to Demos (2009, p. 119) performs a 'wraith-like drifting' through the Jenin camp. Similarly, *Nervus Rerum* evades faces and frames figures from reverse, thus foreclosing any Levinasian shortcuts to empathic identification. A strikingly similar tableaux vivant emerges, as can be seen below, as the Steadicam floats into the interior of one of the residences in Jenin, lingering almost intrusively at a woman in a headscarf leaning at the window. Alsharif's remote camera maintains a little more distant but the framing and use of light and shade are remarkably similar.

Dis-identification in *Nervus Rerum* (2008). The Otolith Group. Nervus Rerum (film still), 2010. Courtesy and copyright of the artists.

Dis-identification in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Ouroboros, particularly its Gaza scenes, also employs the same logic of opacity as a way to problematize a commodifiable image of Gaza which corresponds to either traumatic realism or victim reportage that too often, as Demos (2009) and Lionis (2016) have recognised,

assimilates to a set of codes employed by mainstream reporting. This is achieved in these domestic scenes in both formal and textual means. The soundscape of the domestic scene is a single reverberating bell, looped throughout the nine-minute sequence. The courtyard scene transitions into the interior via a cut to the front gate of the house.

Beneath the surface in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The camera, pausing and having momentarily lost track of the woman draws back through the entrance and into the hallway passing her as she begins her backward motion through the house. The formal disorientation of this audio-visual 'tour' is reinforced by the change in perspective. Having been implicated in the drone-eye aerial view of Gaza in the opening sequences and thus the spatial and structural violence enacted upon it, these domestic scenes frame Gaza in such a way as to act back on external representations of it. The film presents a Gaza rarely seen, that is a Gaza of large, bourgeois houses. The house is Alsharif's family home, and as such is the most autobiographical sequence in the film. However, with its reverse motion and disquieting soundtrack, along with the scale and emptiness of this house, the effect is haunting. The home, and the purpose it serves, is quite literally a museum of exile. In a 2017 interview with Andréa Picard, Alsharif explains the caretaking role of the woman in the house:

> Neemah ensured that the house would never seem abandoned, or uninhabited. As it turns out, this is what kept the house intact, protecting it from being bombed in the wars that followed, as Israel often targets homes whose inhabitants leave for a few months of reprieve from the situation (with only a small privileged fraction of the population allowed to leave) under the pretext (sometimes

true, sometimes false) that the homes are being used by Hamas to store weapons (Alsharif 2017b, p. 239).

As such, the house exists at the threshold of the *unheimlich*; mausoleum-like with the lone figure of the caretaker shuffling backwards through the homely, yet abandoned house, with full bookshelves, furniture covered in dust sheets, an immaculately preserved yet eerily empty home existing as a perpetual potential ruin. The uncanniness of this interior evokes a similar movement beneath the surface in Kamal Aljafari's *The Roof* (2006). It is worth recalling that the Arabic *al-sateh* translates as both 'roof' and 'surface'. In Aljafari's film, the unfinished roof of Aljafari's father's house in Ramle buries its occupants beneath the spectre of abandonment, the house remaining unfinished by its owners who fled in 1948.

Uncanny domesticity in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

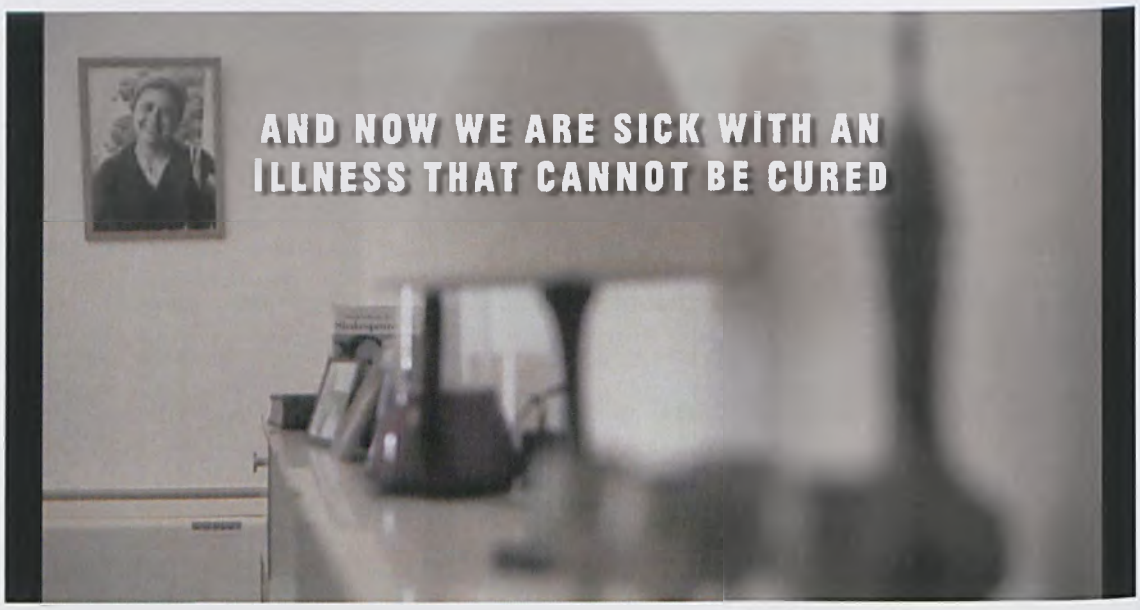
In Alsharif's film, Gaza is spatially compressed through both the flatness of the vertical perspective, and through a framing of roofs as surface areas. The first time the camera goes beneath these surfaces we find uncanny corporeal gestures and scenes of domestic abandonment. While it is the historical absence of presence of the unfinished second floor which haunts Aljafari's Ramle house in *The Roof,* it is the contemporary *presence of absence* which makes Alsharif's Gazan house disquieting. Alsharif (in Smith, 2017) refers to the temporal experience of Gaza as the 'perpetual present', a condition where either entering or creating a history is rendered almost impossible. This condition corresponds to something between Mahmoud Darwish's (2002) definition of the temporality of siege as that in which

'time becomes place, fossilised in its eternity' and Achille Mbeme's (2001) thinking of 'emerging time' as that from which anticipation is blocked and memory recedes.

Alsharif's thinking of the contemporary situates her alongside Edward Said; a fellow Palestinian exile who used his critical distance to critique the problematic site of contemporaneity that is the Palestinian present. Eyal Sivan (2015) has referred to Alsharif's work as 'Post-Palestinian,' That is, a form of essayistic questioning from a condition of spatial distance and contingent upon the temporal possibility of the non-emergence of a Palestinian state and the non-acknowledgement of the right of return. Both Alsharif and Said are distanced from the images with which they engage. Said was estranged from the locations Jean Mohr photographed in *After the Last Sky*. Alsharif's exilic estrangement from Gaza manifested itself in both a physical absence from the location[27] (like Said), and in the quality of images themselves. Unlike the rest of the film, which is shot on 35mm, the Gaza sequences are shot on digital, which gives them a sharpness, detachment and lack of warmth in comparison to the film images that come between them.

The film displaces itself beyond Gaza, in a topographic and aesthetic shift, but not before introducing its 'narrative' voice, which both occasions the first transition to North America, and introduces the film's de-territorialization of language. The film's spoken interjections are sparse, but when they come, act as interruptions of a major language. A monologue on loss is delivered in Chinuk Wawa, while simultaneously subtitled in in embossed white font. The film's two monologues bookend the film, as do the two Gaza sequences over which they lay.

[27] In an interview with Gusatvo Beck, Alsharif (2017a) clarifies that she 'remotely directed the scenes in Gaza.'



Loss in a minor language in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The use of Chinuk Wawa, a creole language that emerged from pidgin and is a combination of Chinook, Nuu-chaa-nulth, English and French, serves multiple purposes. Firstly, having evolved as a trade language between Native Americans and settlers, it subsequently dwindled from 100,000 speakers in the 19th Century, to just 640 in the current day—having once been on the threshold of extinction.[28] This movement mirrors the hegemony of English as a colonising, imperial language; from empire, via trade to information flows. It also has the benefit of opacity, being a language that is alien to a majority of the audience, be they English or Arabic speakers. This refusal to allow a linguistic pathway between language and image embraces the practice of dis-identification at work in constructing an audio-visual image of Gaza, an image, which both implicates a viewer in, and subverts the representational logic of Gaza. Crucially, the wider role language plays in the film is that of de-territorializing, or perhaps more accurately, *displacing* a major language. This process is illustrated most acutely in the film's relation between subtitling and narration in the Gazan house scenes. The use of English subtitles goes beyond translation, becoming a graphic feature of these scenes. This draws the eye from the mise-en-scène to the relationship between spoken and written language. English, looming in upper cased embossed white font is foregrounded to the point of conspicuousness. The 'disjunction between content and expression' that Deleuze and Guattari (1983, p. 20) see in the de-territorialization of utterances is amplified here in the de-

[28] The publication of Chinuk Wawa: As Our Elders Teach Us to Speak It (University of Washington Press, 2012) is credited with revitalising the language in the Pacific North-West.

familiarizing layering of emboldened English vowels over the unfamiliar consonant-heavy sounds of Chinuk Wawa. The act of displacement occurs in this disjunction between text and sound. The text is foregrounded to the extent that it detaches itself from the mise-en-scène in a way more familiar with inter-titling than sub-titling, rendering its use of English both conscious and constructed, occasioning a rejection of its naturalization as a global lingua franca engendered by Colonialism and Imperial trade. The fact that Chinuk Wawa both grew in prominence as a contact language through trade and exchange and was driven to near extinction by the disequilibria of those forces reinforces its subversive element when spoken back to the English text.

Interruption and subversion of the dominant, majoritarian language is a thread that runs through the film, linking the temporal and spatial folds as its shifts through its five locations. The one constant human presence outside of the Gaza sequences is the artist, Diego Marcon, a near silent 'seer' who wanders through time and space. His own act of linguistic interruption occurs in the Mojave Desert, but he initially appears in the film's first movement beyond Gaza, marked by the transition from Digital to 35mm. While this gives the film a less clinical colour palette, the sense of the uncanny is maintained by the use of temporal distortions. Retaining the reverse motion photography of the Gazan house tour, Macron first appears walking backwards along a sidewalk, before entering the house of a young Los Angelian couple. The couple seem pleasantly surprised by this arrival, while in the midst of preparing soup. The use of discontinuity editing, through a jump cut, see the sudden appearance of a full house, seemingly rehearsing dialogue for a play. This somewhat disjointed recital continues, before cutting to a scene in which the ostensible 'leader' of the group (seen below, in the beige gown) performs a song.

Subverting the acoustic space the oppressor in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The violent juxtaposition of expression and content pervades that still domestic scene as the tall, African-American man launches into a bass-baritone rendition of the opening two verses of 'Dixie':

Oh, I wish I was in the land of cotton
Old times there are not forgotten
Look away! Look away!
Look away! Dixie Land

In Dixie land where I was born in
Early on one frosty mornin'
Look away! Look away!
Look away! Dixie Land'

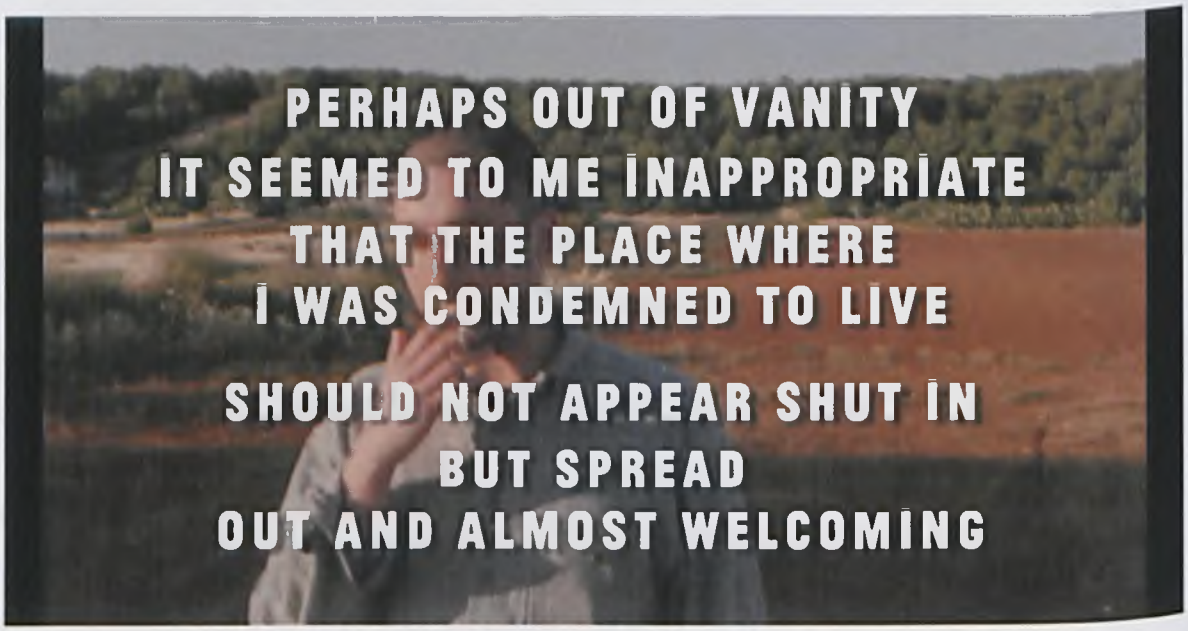
The song was written in 1859, and was performed for Minstrel shows before being adopted as an unofficial anthem of the Confederate States during the Civil War (McWhirter 2012, para. 3). The re-appropriation of a song of racist caricature, which became an anthem to anti-abolitionist secessionists echoes the subversion of the acoustic space of Colonialism enacted in Kamal Aljafari's *Port of Memory* (2009), where a Hebrew lament of Mizrahi oppression in Jaffa is 'haunted' by the discursively erased figure of the Palestinian. It is these topologies of colonialism, and the barbarism that lies beneath, which connect these discrete locations and orient them around Gaza.

The film's next movement displaces the narrative to the Matera. The framing here, like the opening sequence in Gaza, is to both subvert the logic representation, while also implicating the viewer in a Colonial gaze. Matera was the location, along with Basilicata more generally, for Pasolini's *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo (The Gospel According to St Matthew*, 1964). This displacement of biblical Palestine to Southern Italy was occasioned by Pasolini's failed search for the archaic conducted throughout 1963.

It would be too simple to dismiss Pasolini's perspective as irredeemably colonialist, despite its problematic framing of and distance from its non-Jewish subjects. Rather, a more nuanced approach is to read his work, as Edward Said (2003, p. 24) argues, 'contapuntally'—as something to be resituated and responded to. One position is to focus on what Pasolini failed to see. *Pasolini Pa* Palestine* (Ayreen Anastas 2005) is a response along these lines. Forty years after Pasolini's original, failed journey, Anastas retraces the journey, and rearticulates Pasolini's script in Arabic, with contemporary responses and correctives from Anastas herself. The film, by Anastas's own admission, is an attempt to actualize the potential in Pasolini's abandoned trip. One argument as to Pasolini's failiure to 'locate' the archaic is the very task itself is impossible. That is to say, Pasolini's approach *to* the framing *of* the archaic is impossible due to an ideological and theological tradition that obscures the *arché* for which he is searching. The *arché* is, in fact, following Derrida (2002) and Agamben (2009) a *non-place*. The task of the archaeologist is not to locate origins, but rather perform what Agamben (2009) refers to as a 'clearing away,' and Derrida (2002) as an 'uprooting' of tradition so as to gain access to the present. It is just such an archaeological approach Anastas uses in uncovering the potentialities in dialogue with Pasolini.

Alsharif's own dialogue with Pasolini in *Ouroboros* is perhaps more critical than Anastas's in *Pasolini Pa Palestine*. Highlighting the parallels between the process of location scouting and colonial exploration, Alsharif (2017a) claims that creating an image to correspond to the mind's eye and overlaying that image on a site involves 'inherently exploiting the landscape and population there.' Clarifying her own engagement with the south of Italy by way of Pasolini's own, she cites a similar practice of presenting an image of opacity, shrouded by layers of symbolism and iconography. That is, 'to look at Matera as an image, what it symbolises in regards to its history and what it represents today: the serene pastoral landscapes, the preserved ancient city.' Alsharif's engagement with the Basilicata extended beyond Pasolini, to the work of Carlo Levi, specifically his 1945 memoir *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli (Christ Stopped at Eboli)* which documents his experience of internal exile, after his banishment from Turin to Basilicata in the 1930s due to his anti-Fascist activism.

The book documents the writer's own estrangement, along with the stark poverty of the South in contrast with the industrial North. In a scene that strikingly articulates the 'privileged affliction' Edward Said conveys as constituting *al-ghurba*—the estrangement of exile— a lone figure wanders through the Basilicatan countryside, smoking a cigarette as the words of Levi drift across the screen.



Exilic estrangement in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The juxtaposition of text and image works on a number of levels. Firstly, from Alsharif's own perspective, being raised in Kuwait and France to Gazan parents, the scene resonates with the filmmaker's feeling of estrangement in all three.[29] Also, the state of Gaza since 2005, no longer occupied from within but rather occupied from without, thus essentially an open prison. The passage itself is taken from Levi's (2000 [1947]) initial impression upon arriving Gagliano, and noting the unease he felt at being unfree in a landscape which conveyed openness, noting in the line which followed that 'a prisoner may find greater consolation in a cell with romantic, heavy iron bars than in one that superficially resembles a normal room' (Levi 2000, p. 15). The juxtaposition of text, image and context conveys the intersection between exile, occupation and inequality that links Gaza to Basilicata, a link discovered through a move away from Pasolini toward Levi, an 'irony' to which Alsharif (2017) admits, in that it was Pasolini who led her to Basilicata in the first place. Speaking of the impact of

[29] In a 2018 interview with Helen Mackreath, Alsharif (2018) spoke of Gaza as 'the only place that felt like home' before admitting that: 'Although, in reality, I am as much a foreigner there as I was in France or perhaps even the US.' Source: http://www.thewhitereview.org/feature/interview-basma-alsharif/

Christ Stopped at Eboli on her, Alsharif (2017) states that 'I was completely floored by Levi's descriptions of the villagers in the Southern Italian town: it was as though he were describing Gaza today.' Perhaps an irony Alsharif misses in her critique of Pasolini is that the marginalisation of one culture by another was in fact a crucial factor leading Pasolini to displace his own narrative. The Gaza Alsharif sees in Levi's Basilicata is a correlate of the Basilicata Pasolini saw in the Palestinian remnants of Israel. The notion of the remnant, alluded to throughout Pasolini's documentary, makes it most conspicuous appearance in the film's final sequence, Pasolini's final lament for the inaccessibility of the biblical world, concluding; 'Yes the biblical world appears, but it resurfaces like wreckage'.

The remnants of the archaic in *Sopralluoghi in Palestina* (1964). ©Arco Film (with the courtesy of Arco Film)

A way of seeing that also informs Pasolini's gaze is his Marxist eye, seeing the social relations and disparity of wealth in Palestine-Israel through his own European framework. This eye comes through when he sees in the non-Jewish populations of Palestine an echo of the 'European lumpenproletariat,' those set outside of history within Pasolini's own context. It is this process of displacing the remnants of the archaic to the South of Italy which Henrik Gustafsson (2015) terms an 'analogical' method. In his essay 'Remnants of Palestine, or, Archaeology after Auschwitz', Gustafsson explicates this method, writing:

> It is precisely in the remnants of Palestine—a heap of wheat, the gestures of a farmer, and, most prominently, in the pagan, pre-Christian faces extolled by Pasolini in Druze villages or among tribes

> of Bedouins in the desert—that he identifies the archaic element to sustain this analogical approach (Gustafsson 2015, p. 207).

This approach was anchored in similitude; namely, the economic disparities Pasolini saw in Palestine-Israel mirrored in Italy, which 'impelled Pasolini to displace and reimagine the Gospel in the impoverished regions of Southern Italy.' (Ibid) While Gustafsson doesn't interrogate the numerous problematic instances of Orientalism in Pasolini's work, and occasionally reproduces them uncritically, his argument for Pasolini's analogical approach does go some way to refuting the accusation of Pasolini's need to create a preserved, archaic image of the past. I would, however, argue that a reading of Pasolini's *Sopralluoghi in Palestina* which positions his archaeological method as analogous with that of Giorgio Agamben's philosophical archaeology is a little too neat, as this seems to presuppose a necessary act of displacement, an awareness of the archaic as a non-place from the outset. That said, Pasolini's Marxist consciousness sees the 'archaic' faces and places of the lumpenproletariat as constituting a disruptive force within a form of modernity bound to bourgeois capitalism. This thinking of the archaic, as Noa Steimatsky (2008, p. 134) notes, is one in which Pasolini locates an 'authentic revolutionary potential.' However, resolving the tension between Pasolini's Marxism and Orientalism, and recovering the figure of the Palestinian from his work requires situating it in relation to those works which speak back to it. That is to say, the potential and the contingency in Pasolini's failure to represent Palestinians can be found in a contrapuntual reading of his film; through both the work of Alsharif and Anastas but also Levi. Doing so creates a topological field, where lateral and temporal connections intersect. Thus when Pasolini sees in the margins of 1963 Israel a space where 'Christ's preaching has not been heard [...] even from afar,' we see correlative figures in Levi's Basilicata of 1935: 'Christ never came this far, nor did time, nor the individual soul, nor hope, nor the relation of cause to effect, nor reason, nor history' (Levi 2000, p. 12). Levi's faces in turn bring us back to contemporary Gaza, where Alsharif sees those same faces.

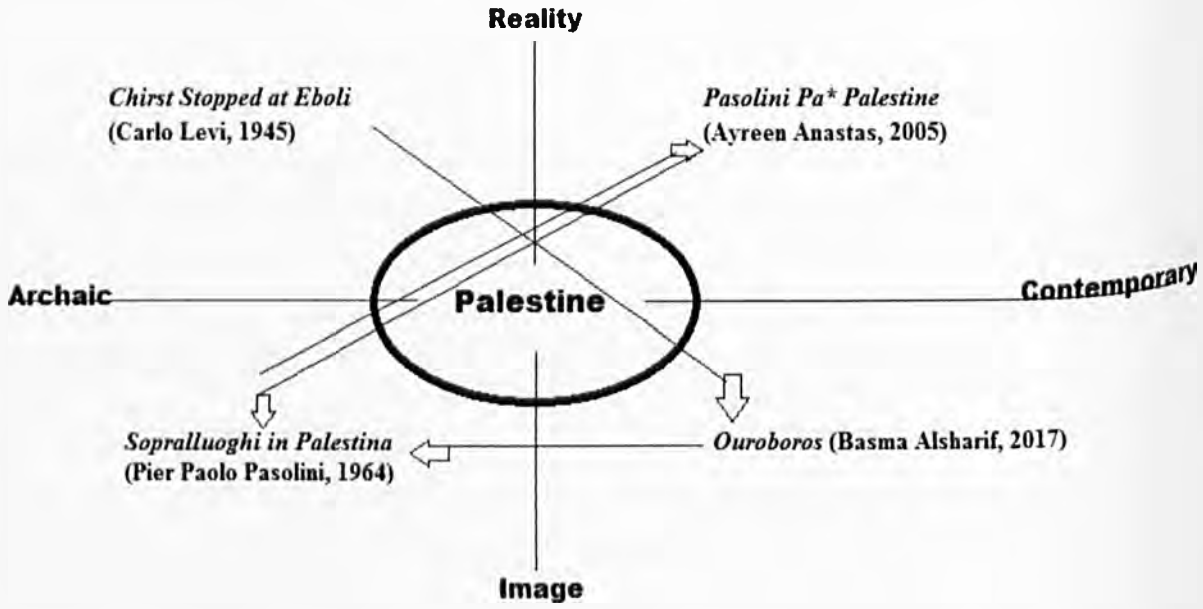
Anastas' *Pasolini Pa Palestine* articulates a conversation with Pasolini between 1963 and 2005, in a voice unheard in Pasolin's own film: female, and Arabic. It also attempts detours and diversions around his original route, necessitating by the shifting cartographic reality. These images and moments combine, creating not an archaic image, but rather, what Walter Benjamin might term a *dialectical* one. In both *On the Concept of History* (1940) *The Arcades Project* (Benjamin's magnum opus of his mature thought, unfinished at his death) the notion

of an image at a standstill, one that allows for a different conception of historical experience, is a crucial one. Benjamin's most sustained theoretical description of the dialectical images comes in Convolute N of the Arcades Project, where he writes:

> It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent. – Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is. not archaic) (Benjamin, 1999, p. 106 [N2a,3]).

Benjamin's thinking of dialectics breaks with a notion of progress, and as such is not understood as temporal synthesis (such as the way Eisensteinian montage works dialectically on film) but rather as a topological network with points of intersection, a constellation of images 'saturated with tension' (Benjamin 2006, p. 396). Clarifying this constellation, Susan Buck-Morss (1989, p. 210) defines it as 'coordinates of contradicting terms, the synthesis of which is [...] the point at which their axes intersect.' Not only is the dialectical image theorised in *The Arcades Project*, but also the book is constructed as the practice of this theory, a fragmented, laterally connected montage of scraps of history. This process of image making is correlated to what Andre Bazin termed 'horizontal' montage in the work of Chris Marker, as a critical commentary between word and image, and from one image to another.

While Basma Alsharif's *Ouroboros* lends itself to a topological reading, as one that creates a dialectical image of Palestine through its connections with other histories (both political and cinematic) and tensions between colonialism and postcoloniality, exile and home and emergence and disappearance; a contrapuntal reading of Pasolini's *Sopralluoghi in Palestina* similarly situates it topologically, on the axes at the intersection of which lies a dialectical 'image of Palestine. Visually, such an image might be imagined thus:



A dialectical cinematic image of Palestine

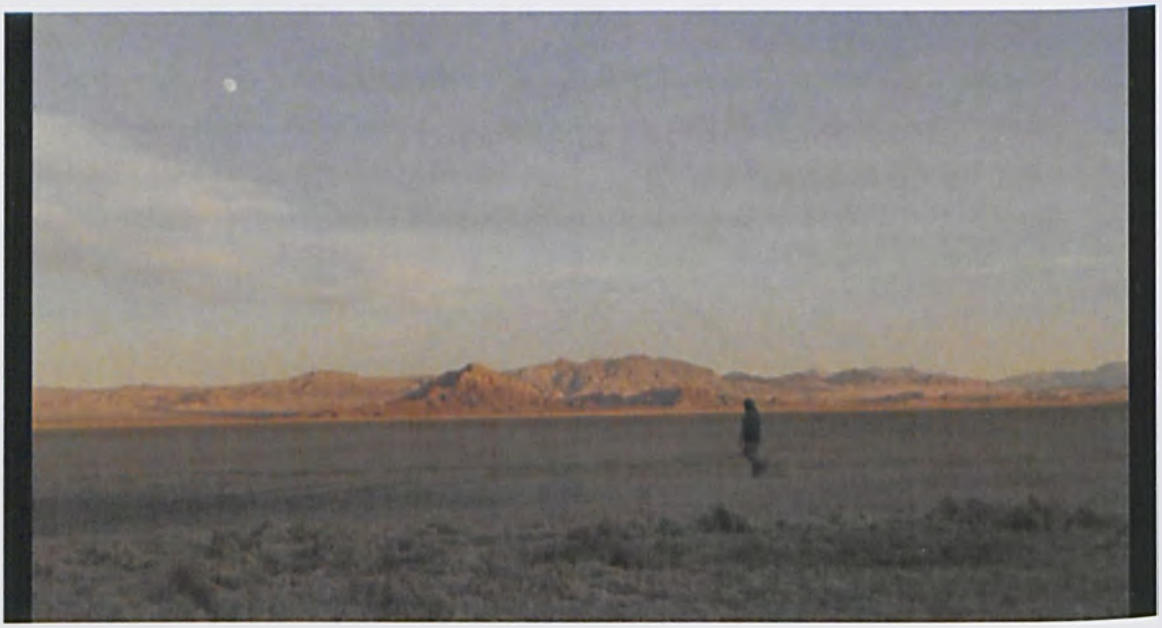
This approach highlights the continuities and discontinuities of place and language, and how contemporary Palestinian cinema often interacts with cinemas in and around it, creating dialectical images of contemporary criticality, examining the intersection of myth, image, representation and ruin. *Ouroboros*'s overt topological structure can be read, albeit more covertly, in the work of Kamal Aljafari, Elia Suleiman, Annemarie Jacir Amos Gitai and Udi Aloni, and particularly the intersections among their works.

Alsharif's own topological movement between the coordinates of colonialism and exile moves from the biblical image of Matera to the desert and specifically, the Mojave Desert. Within Alsharif's own structural logic of destruction and renewal, ruin and permanence, the Mojave Desert is a potent symbol of endings. However, the idea of the desert as something to be conquered and overcome looms large in the mythology of Zionism and the Westward Expansion of the U.S through the idea of Manifest Destiny. The dual drives of territorial expansion which frame these settler-colonial societies make the continuities between the Mojave, the Negev and Gaza clear. W.J.T. Mitchell highlights these continuities when reflecting on desert landscapes and the Holy Land in the second section of his 2000 essay 'Holy Landscape: Israel, Palestine and the American Wilderness'. In this second section, subtitled 'The Desert, the Idol and the Iconoclast', Mitchell reflects on the desert landscapes of his childhood in Nevada, asking:

> What does it have to do with Palestine? What does the American wilderness, with its Judeo-Protestant 'errands'—wanderings, ordeals, treks across the desert in search of the Promised Land—have to do with Palestine? Everything clearly. Since the beginning, Americans have been turning toward their own Western frontier as a wilderness to be traversed in search of a promised land, a Zion. (Mitchell 2000, p. 201).

It is in that very frontier culture, the construction of a wilderness to be traversed that triggers a sense of déjà vu upon Mitchell's first visit to Israel. It is also such a frontier culture that projects emptiness onto spaces necessarily rendered as 'wilderness' so as to be settled and 'civilized'. The marginalization, orientalization, and elision of native Americans historically in the North American cinematic gaze, particularly in Hollywood can be seen as bound up with the frontier mentality, an uncritical 'rough energy and optimism' (Mitchell, Ibid) romanticised and integral to building ideology. These are the same founding myths Ella Shohat traces at the nascence of Israeli cinema, the Yishuv cinema in the decade preceding the founding of the state. Focussing on case studies of *Oded the Wanderer* (Hayeem Halamichi, Nathan Axelrod, 1933) and *Sabra* (Aleksander Ford, 1933), Shohat (2010) charts the emergence of the heroic pioneer narrative and aesthetic, where the figure of the Sabra is a civilizing, benevolent presence, correlative to yet distinct from[30] the European colonial imagination, and also reliant on the production of emptiness characteristic of settler colonial societies (Veracini 2011). The frontier culture that underpins settler colonialism is rendered cinematically in the presence of the settler surviving and thriving in the desert. An inversion of this occurs in the striking opening sequence of the Mojave Desert passage. The sequence opens with an extreme long shot of a lone figure set against the empty plain, with the red, lunar-like mountains of the Mojave rising in the distance.

[30] Distinct from, in that the Zionist project didn't have the dynamic of exploitation and enrichment between colony and metropolis that characterized European colonialism, with these rather being 'located in the self same place (Shohat 2010, p. 40).



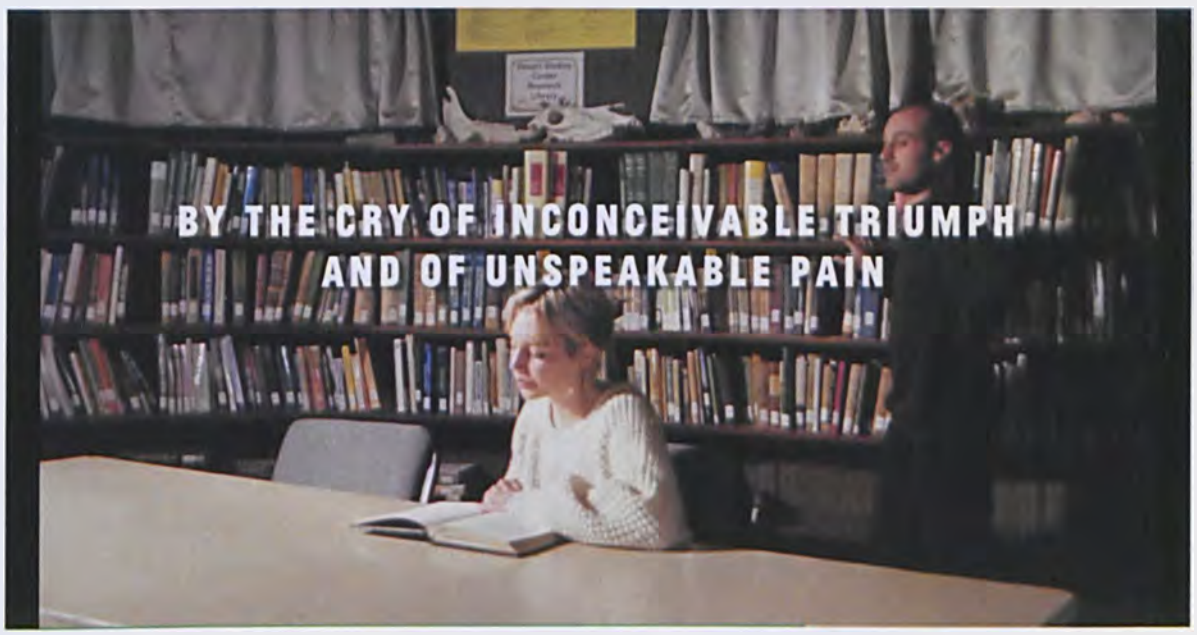
The disruptive presence of the Native American in the visual grammar of the Western in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The shot is evocative of the visual language of the Western, blurring the figure-ground relation in such a way as to suggest an almost symbiotic relationship, a continuum between harsh landscape and those who settle it. Perhaps the most famous example of such a shot is the opening scene of *The Searchers* (John Ford, 1956) in which Ethan Edwards (John Wayne) emerges from the desert, a barely discernible figure on a horse, entirely at home alone in the desert. Alsharif's shot in *Ouroboros* inserts a Native American figure in to the Mise-en-scène, the figure of Bo Gallerito, a Mescalero Apache actor, and a disruptive presence in this particular frame. The subversion of a shot of the American West so bound up with a narrative of Westward expansion and the elision of the native American, with the native American as the focal point of this landscape has a similar disruptive effect as Kamal Aljafari's technique of 'cinematic occupation', the reinsertion of the Palestinian to 'haunt' the Israeli cinematic image in *Port of Memory* (2009).

The film's next movement involves a transition from an inversion of the visual logic of settler colonialism, to an interruption of colonial history through a disjuncture between language and image. The scene opens with two characters standing impassively outside a small, dilapidated white building.

Architecture as potential ruin in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

This scene takes place in the small, austere, library on the edge of the Mojave.[31] A young woman sits at the table and begins reading aloud from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, while the Italian man (Diego Macron) who shifts seamlessly through Alsharif's topological network, paces restlessly around her. She reads from the final passage of the book, where Marlow lies to Kurtz's fiancée when asked to relay his final words. Mid-passage, the man interrupts the recital with an offer of a magic trick, a trick attempted unsuccessfully several times.



[31] The actual location being California State University's Desert Studies Center Research Library

A counterpoint to the colonial voice in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The interruption of Conrad's words, and the coloniality of those words creates an interesting parallel with Alsharif's own dialogue with Pasolini. Conrad's work has been the focus of severe criticism in the field of postcolonial studies, most notably by Chinua Achebe (1988) in his essay 'An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness,' in which he argues that Conrad's depiction of Africa as non-European 'darkness' is irredeemably racist and Eurocentric. Said's (1993, 2002, 2003) contrapuntal reading of Conrad that both recognises his contemporary attempts to critique colonialism and the historical limits and blind spots occasioned by Conrad's inability to 'see' the non-European. Crucially, this contrapuntal approach opens currents between Conrad's and response from Naipaul and Salih, the result of which is 'not only that Salih and Naipaul depend so vitally on their reading of Conrad, but that Conrad's writing is further actualized and animated by emphases and inflections that he was obviously unaware of, but that his writing permits' (Said 2003, p. 25). Intentionally or not, *Ouroboros* 's engagement with Conrad and Pasolini is a contrapuntal one, in that each of those figures had a critical relationship with their own contemporary moment, yet both were unable to see the figure of the non-European, a blind spot necessitating the contemporary response through both critique and dialogue, which *Ouroboros* offers in its linguistic interruption of Conrad's words, and its creation of a mythic 'image' of Basilicata as a response to Pasolini's 'image' of Palestine.

In sharing the exilic estrangement of *al-ghurba*, Basma Alsharif and Edward Said also share the 'double vision' that is the 'privileged affliction' of exile. That is, a double movement, from subjective to objective proximity to distance. Speaking of the sense conveyed by Jean Mohr's photographs, of Palestinian seeing themselves 'at once inside and outside our world' (Said 1986, p. 6), Said goes on to describe the similar double movement, or writing which informed his approach to writing *After the Last Sky*:

> The same double vision informs my text. As I wrote, I found myself switching pronouns, from 'we' to 'you' to 'they', to designate Palestinians. As abrupt as these shifts are, I feel they reproduce the way 'we' experience ourselves, the way 'you' sense that others look at you, the way, in your solitude, you feel the distance between where 'you' and where 'they' are.'

Alsharif's own approach to her film essay follows a similar logic, a Palestine at once intimate and distant from what she terms her 'removed perspective from the cause' (Alsharif 2018). In

a 2018 interview, reflecting on the 'post-Palestinian' identification, she elaborates on the ebbing and shifting of hope in the wake of the series of assaults on Gaza and how her own distance from it led to a reframing, claiming: 'and so my hope shifted away from Palestine, because I have this luxury in the diaspora, and towards connecting it to other histories I saw Palestine reflected in.' It is the privileged affliction of the 'luxury' of distance that allows both Alsharif through text and moving image, and Said, through text and photo to explore this lateral relation as means through which to discuss ideas around exile, displacement, colonialism and erasure. Both speak of the surface of the image as a provocation to think through ideas of history, subjectivity and displacement, with Alsharif (2017b) confessing that rather than putting personality into her images, 'everybody in the film is a kind of a surface of an idea.' Similarly, Said and Mitchell (1998, p. 17) speak of analysing Mohr's images in *After the Last Sky* not 'as photographic' images but images that triggered a response or idea through his 'double vision' of we/you.

Ouroboros' penultimate movement shifts from the arid, dusty landscapes of the Mojave to the lush verdant gardens of a Bretagne Chateau. This move is made via a transition from the failed magic trick in the Mojave with the intertitle TRY AGAIN, a command that both echoes the film's essayistic structure, but also conveys the solitude of exile, a solitude articulated by Edward Said's own reflections on the ontology of exile in his essay 'Reflections on Exile'. Said's essay conveys the loneliness of exilic wandering, observing that 'in a very acute sense exile is a solitude experienced outside the group: the deprivations felt at not being with others in the communal habitation' (Said 2000, p. 140). Marcon's solitary wanderer is a conduit for Alsharif's own exilic loneliness and wanderings through Kuwait, France and the U.S. The transition between the Mojave and Brittany alludes to another of the film's undercurrents of loss—that of a lost love and threshold of remembrance and forgetting which involves starting again. After the inter-title TRY AGAIN, we see Marcon and a woman together in a moonlit landscape, looking into each other's eyes. Marcon leans in and whispers something; a second inter-title, 'WHAT NOW?' fills the screen. At this point, the film 'starts' again, as a camera tracks up the entrance to a Bretagne chateau. This fleeting episode of love, witnessed in fragments during the L.A scenes, is left behind, yet another structure that presents as a potential ruin.

The move to the Bretagne chateau creates an architectural juxtaposition with the liminality of the Mojave and the potential ruin of Gaza. Here stands a monument to architectural permanence, a grand 15th Century chateau, enriched and preserved over half a millennium. Alsharif's camera, surveying the grandeur and peacefulness of this site, invites

questions as to the ideological frameworks that maintain and enrich some structures while others become ruins. This is the latent index of barbarism within any cultural 'treasure' that Walter Benjamin identifies in *On the Concept of History*, writing:

> For in every case these treasures have a lineage that he cannot contemplate without horror. They owe their existence not only to the great geniuses who created them, but also to the anonymous toil of others who lived in the same period. There is no document of culture that is not at the same time a document of barbarism (Benjamin 2006, p. 392).

'There is no document of culture that is not at the same time a document of barbarism.' The façade of Colonialism in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The index of colonial history carried within this Bretagne chateau tells a history of the oppressed, which situates its architectural permanence in relation to sites of erasure such as the Mojave and Gaza within the wider colonial topology that structures the film. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, nearby Nantes was France's largest slave trading port, and it is the dynamics of exploitation and colonialism behind the edifices of the opulent architecture both in and around the metropole which this sequence examines.

The film's 'return' to Gaza takes place in the interior of the chateau. A couple sit in a large drawing room while slowly the aural drone that accompanied the film's opening sequence. The aural accompaniment escalates in volume as the camera gradually pans left to

reveal the hurdy-gurdy player. An extremely slow dissolve superimposes the visual and the aural drone, as the sights and sounds of colonial France merge with the drone-eye of Gaza.

The convergence of visual and aural drone in *Ouroboros* (2017). ©Basma Alsharif (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

This graphic match of sound and image brings the film to its end and beginning, Gaza, in a perpetual state of destruction and renewal, and implicates Europe's colonial history in Gaza's present. The film ends in a double movement, a contraction and expansion of all the sound and images that have come before, as the film's five locations and multiple histories merge in a musical coda, structured to a techno beat. As Diego Marcon dances, images of destruction, renewal, desert, verdant landscape, creating dialectical images which both situate Gaza and Palestine relationally, but also explode histories of colonization that have sought to ossify and isolate Palestine as an image of stasis.

6.4 Conclusion

The films discussed in this chapter articulate the complexity of the topology of *al-ghurba*. Each film conditions a 'way of seeing'from a different form of estrangement. In *Salt of this Sea*, Soraya's estrangement stems from a juridical bind. Her American passport allows her to pass easily throughout the West Bank and Israel, although her name attracts interrogation at the airport. Throughout the film she adopts a series of disguises that borrow and subvert identities—the signifiers of Jewish identity, that of a religious Palestinian, a Spanish tourist.

All the while trying to reconcile her own Palestinian-ness and expectations of the physical reality with its bureaucratic machinations—the romance with the reality, which lends the film its critique of not just the Israeli state that negates her, but the PA and the bank of the British Mandate. The film also engages in constructing a dialectical image of Palestine—which this thesis argues is an emerging feature of contemporary Palestinian cinema—comprising its political (the British Mandate), cinematic (the Palestinian haunting the acoustic space of 'Israeli' ruins) and literary (scenes borrowed from Kanafani) history of images.

The estrangement at work in *Wajib* is structured not by juridical conditions (Shadi and Abu Shadi are both citizens of Israel), but rather as a psychological encounter between *al-ghurba* and *al-dakhil*. As such, much like Edward Said's *After the Last Sky,* it blurs the lines of being-inside and being-outside. Shadi has been shaped by tales of the Palestinian revolution *fil kharij*, during his time in Europe, so he sees his father's quotidian resilience at the margins of *al-dakhil* and the patriarchal traditions of Nazareth as defeatist. The film also refers laterally to Elia Suleiman's work on Nazareth 15 years previously, showing a city in the perpetual (and violent) grip of both temporal and civic stasis.

Ouroboros takes Edward Said's (2000, p. 186) 'plurality of vision' and multiplies it, taking the luxury of distance from Palestine *al-ghurba* occasions, and uses it as a structural means to locate echoes of Palestine in literary, cinematic and political images. With its temporal cycles of decay and renewal, its co-implication of other colonial histories of erasure into Palestine's, *Ouroboros* both resists the isolation of Gaza in particular, and Palestine in general, by placing it at the centre of a network of sites and images. However, that network of sites of erasure and forgetting contains within it an ethical demand. With its largely post-human landscapes of colonial erasure, the film appears to be asking a question of the entrenched political hopelessness of Palestine-Israel: What now?

Conclusion

When I began my research for this thesis back in 2012, my intention was to build a theoretical approach which could respond to an emerging Palestinian cinema that utilized the moving image as a form of thinking. At that time, the dominant text on the subject was Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi's *Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma and Memory*. Published in English in 2008, having been first published in Hebrew in 2005, the book's approach to what it termed 'the new directors' was perhaps inevitably conditioned by historical circumstance. Namely, a book written and published in such proximity to the Second Intifada (2000-2005) perhaps inevitably focussed on framing contemporary Palestinian cinema as a cinema of resilience, a collective form of struggle. However, during this same period,[1] Edward Said gave the keynote speech to open the 'Dreams of a Nation' Palestinian Film Festival in New York. In this speech, he underscored the importance of a politics of visibility while calling for a resistance of image, claiming that:

> Palestinian Cinema must be understood in this context. That is to say, on the one hand, Palestinians stand against invisibility, which is the fate they have resisted since the beginning; and on the other hand, they stand against the stereotype in the media: the masked Arab, the *kuffiyya*, the stone-throwing Palestinian — a visual identity associated with terrorism and violence. (Said 2006 [2003], p .3)

Said's positing of Palestinian cinema's double-consciousness—resisting both *in*visibility and *hyper*visibility—follows the logic of his photo-essay in seeking out the resistance of the image, rather than presenting images of resistance. While Said would not live to see the majority of the cinema under study, his dialectic of hyper-visibility/invisibility is remarkably prescient to the emergent themes of the films in this thesis—particularly the absent presence of the contentless, absurd law in the cinema of the West Bank, and the present absence of Palestinians in the cinema of *al-dakhil*. Further, the subversion and resistance of the hyper-visibility of reductive images of resistance is a common theme across the four topologies, as demonstrated in my analysis of *5 Broken Cameras*, *When I Saw You*, *Divine Intervention*, and *Salt of this Sea*.

[1] January 24th 2003, to be precise.

Although my contrapuntal reading of the films under study means they resist discrete periodization in the strictest sense,[2] the historical context surrounding their emergence does, I have argued mark a break with Second Intifada filmmaking. That is, the majority of films have emerged in the context of a political schism in Palestinian leadership and an engagement with questions of the law, power and space which demand a genuinely interdisciplinary and critical theoretical approach. The films under study all engaged with both a politics of space and territory and a politics of image. This development far exceeds the scope of textual approaches which neglect theory—such as that utilized by Abdel-Malek (2005) and Gertz & Khleifi (2008). The justification for my approach, which has engaged with philosophy and critical theory to interrogate these resistant images, is not only strengthened by the corpus of films—which ask philosophical questions of the law, territory and representation—but also by the filmmakers' philosophical engagements themselves; Elia Suleiman, Kamal Aljafari and Basma Alsharif have cited the influence of Blanchot, Adorno and Nietzsche, respectively, on their thinking.

The spatial contemporaneity of the films in this thesis articulate a discrete yet convergent set of topologies. This ranges from the encounter with the law through questions of legitimacy/illegitimacy and terror/territory in the cinema of the West Bank, to the framing of the Palestinian in the cinema of *al-dakhil*—as both *revenant* and *remnant*—a figure that both *haunts* Israeli consciousness and *resists* the cultural partition of Palestine-Israel and Arab-Jew. This discreteness manifests itself both formally and textually, in as much as the material experience of place conditions specific ways of *being* in the world and *seeing* the world. This is inherent to both mise-en-scène and framing in the *tableaux vivants* of *al-dakhil* films of Elia Suleiman, Kamal Aljafari and Amos Gitai. Similarly, the perpetual motion of the *West Bank* cinema, illustrated in *5 Broken Cameras* and *Omar,* articulates an embodied camera and space ordered primarily by corporeal relations which, according to Leopold Lambert (2014, p. 6) 'operate through the continuous material encounters between living and non-living bodies.'

This embodiment, as we have seen, extends into a form of the law distilled into bodies; that is, *embodied.* Guardians of the law in the cinema of the West Bank are often figures constructed by the congruence of biopolitics and territory (as political technology) in the West Bank. Thus the body of the soldier, the surveyor, the agent, the settler all form a corpus, a

[2] These films, as I have argued, display a double-consciousness, expressing resistance to the contemporary question of partition, but also contrapuntally reading a historically reductive image that conceals complex Palestinian subjectivity.

body of law without content. While formally discrete, a similar encounter with an arbitrary, contentless law emerges in the cinema of *al-dakhil*. However, whereas the encounter with the law in the cinema of the West Bank is marked by its embodied nature, in the cinema of *al-dakhil* the encounter relies on oral transmission. In *Port of Memory*, the disembodied voice of the law is framed from the angle of Kafka's gatekeeper, off-screen and maintaining the *al-dakhil* Palestinian's position before a law that cannot be accessed. The radical questioning of these forms of law, I argue, is a crucial point of convergence across the topologies. This is illustrated in the case of *Salt of this Sea* where the main characters' encounters with the law (of the banks, the PA and the State of Israel) assign her subject positions (Palestinian outsider, tourist, American, Arab) which she subverts and performs by becoming outlaw. This pertinence of the question (and questioning) of the law is, I have argued, a neglected area of study in contemporary Palestinian Cinema. This focus builds on Anna Ball's 2014 journal article 'Kafka at the West Bank checkpoint: de-normalizing the Palestinian encounter before the law', which engages with Agamben and Kafka to rearticulate the logic of the checkpoint through the notion of the law it engenders. Ball's article is a rare and welcome (if brief) engagement with how Palestinian cinema encounters the philosophical question of the law, albeit one only focussed on the West Bank.

My utilization of a topological method with which to structure my corpus was, I have argued a better framework to think through the discrete 'sites' of contemporary Palestinian cinema and how these sites interact in such a way as to be both non-identical and continuous, containing elements which render them distinct but also in the process of becoming one-another. This is illustrated by the two scenes of 'emergence' of the Palestinian from the mythic ruins of Israeli space—one cinematic (in *Port of Memory*) the other ideologically produced (in *Salt of this Sea*). While both of these scenes take place in the 'interior', the former is performed by *al-dakhil* Palestinian, and the latter comes from the outside; *al-ghurba* Palestinian (aided by her American accent and appearance which allows her to 'pass' as a Jewish-American tourist). Yet both of these approaches resist, from different positions, the cultural partitioning of the Palestinian from Israeli stories, as in each case the Palestinian is re-inscribed in a space from which they have been elided. This is crucial to understanding that while the topography of *al-dakhil* produces its own 'citizenry of the inside', a focus on the properties of *al-dakhil*, topologically speaking, allows for this space to be distorted by Palestinian memories of exile interrupting Israeli narratives of return. A topological approach to place and image allows for a relational thinking of the intersections both *between* the films under study, and *within* them. Regarding place, a dynamic, topological thinking of the

political process of territory and the law is one which allows the 'properties' of *al-dakhil, the West Bank, al-mukhayyam and al-ghurba* to remain discrete even while they converge. This can be seen in the topological space of the encounter in *Wajib*, held together by the journey through Nazareth. Likewise, the topological space of territory that is formed by the encounter with the law in *Like Twenty Impossibles* relies on the discreet properties of the Palestinians (the suspect, the tourist/outsider, and the citizen) and their interconnectedness. In *Port of Memory* and *Omar*, while the films are distinct in terms of form, movement and geographical location, it is the question of the law—that is, a generalised sense of encagement before the law—which gives the films topological sameness. However, a topological thinking of the cinematic image is also a productive approach for reading the construction of space and time within the films. To illustrate this, the sound-image of the hurdy-gurdy playing in *Ouroboros* converges with drone-eye shot of Gaza to create a topological continuum, or what Deleuze (1989, p. 63) terms 'a passage from one world to another', between Europe and Palestine and a colonial past with a colonial present.

My situating of a topology of *al-Shatat* as a way of thinking the discrete but interconnected relations of the territories of Palestine-Israel necessarily engaged in the politics of the term *shatat*. While my thesis consciously followed Edward Said in using the term *ghurba* to express the experience of estrangement that conditioned the Palestinian experience of returning to or encountering *al-dakhil* and the Occupied Territories from the outside, my construction of a topology of *al-shatat* necessitates a critical awareness of the contestation of that term, along with, I argue, a re-inscription of its political force. In her 2010 article 'Displacement and Memory: Visual Narratives of al-Shatat in Michel Khleifi's films', May Telmissany engages with the problematic terminology around the notion of diasporic Palestinians, specifically engaging with the term *shatat*. Telmissany (2010, p. 72) traces the evolution of *shatat*, 'which has come to replace *tashteet* (displacement)' It is this latter term which signifies the element of force of both the *nakba* and *naksa*, and needs to be thought of as constitutive in any thinking of *shatat* (Ibid, p. 73).

While Julie Peteet's 2007 article went someway to problematizing the concept of diaspora, it didn't fully engage with some of the linguistic ambiguity at the root of the problem, particularly the term *shatat*, which, with the exception of Telmissany's work, is often either untranslated (Peteet, 2007) or taken for granted (Hilal, 2007). The controversy around the term *shatat* is centred largely on the compatibility of diaspora with the right of return, legally recognised in UN Resolution 194. This compatibility was questioned in

Peteet's article (2007, p. 628). Historically, the political-legal status of the refugee has been seen as a way to maintain a struggle for rights in relation to initial displacement. As Sari Hanafi claims:

> For many reasons, the literature on the Palestinians has extensively used the term "Palestinian refugees," and considers other notions such as "diaspora," "forced and volunteered migrants" or Palestinians abroad, as inadequately stating or weakening the defense or "the cause" of this population. (Hanafi 2003, p. 158)

Shatat is a literal translation of 'diaspora' in the English usage, whose etymology comes from Ancient Greek. A combination of the verb *speiro* (to sow) and preposition *dia* (over). The word connotes a notion of productive scattering; seeds from a parent body in order to reproduce. Thus, the words hold in relation notions of both traumatic separation and successful reformation. It is arguably the latter half of this equation, in the context of both the colonial reality of the Occupied Territories and the struggle for rights in *al-dakhil*, which is the source of anxiety over the depoliticising elements of *shatat*. Edward Said (1994, p. 114) is cautious to avoid parallels with the Biblical Jewish experience, both to retain a sense of scale, avoid a notion of a 'redemptive homeland' and maintain a contemporary focus on rights. Indeed, in the introduction to *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994), Said (Ibid, p. xliv) highlights the 'inequity' of Jewish and Palestinian rights of return. A tension between the right of return and 'the right to remain "out of place"' is, for May Telmissany (2010, p. 83), constitutive of a contemporary thinking of *shatat*. While a productive re-articulation of *shatat*, it is nonetheless, one she applies to 'Palestinian artists of the diaspora' (Ibid).

My argument throughout this thesis has been that a radical questioning of the law—be that in *al-dakhil*, the West Bank, *al-ghurba* or *al-mukhayyam*—constructs a field in which the topology of the refugee is revealed as central to the interior, in an Agambian sense; whereby that which is excluded from the interior is most central to it. In this way, the topology can be thought *ex*timately, in which the figure of the refugee is intimately connected to *al-dakhil* through a shared questioning of the law and focus on rights. This corresponds to the topological structure of exile Mahmoud Darwish constructed in his poem to Edward Said after his death: 'The outside world is exile, exile is the world inside.' (Darwish 2004)

An awareness of the limitations of a topological approach to place an image in the films under study necessitates acknowledging what are outside its scope. For example, the question of gender and patriarchal structures is touched upon in some of the films under study and might have been an alternative avenue of research. However, this ground has been comprehensively covered by the work of Anna Ball, most notably *Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Feminist Perspective* (2012). Ball's work also draws on the materiality of the embodiment in relation to the work of Mona Hatoum. In the process of research for my own thesis the question of corporeality—that is, the Palestinian body's interaction and convergence with the built environment—framed through the thought of Nancy and Foucault was one which remained present and could provide, in relation to topology the grounds for further research. The body is itself a topological surface in which interiority and exteriority are in fact a continuum, and as such, a topological approach to a thinking of both the body and the body politic of Palestine-Israel would be a productive area of future research.

My research question has posited a 'resistance of image' within contemporary Palestinian cinema, drawing both on Edward Said's dialogue with critically resistant images in *After the Last Sky*, but also on Nick Denes' (2014) ground-breaking study of the criticality within the revolutionary filmmaking of the PLO's Palestine Film Unit. It was upon these sources that I drew a genealogy of a resistance of the image that was not in contradistinction with early Palestinian revolutionary cinema, but rather—in its formal questioning of the authority of images— the continuation of this lost criticality. In the process of completing this thesis, an important addition to the relatively neglected field of study on Palestinian revolutionary cinema has been published. Nadia Yaqub's *Palestinian Cinema in the Days of Revolution* (2018) is a comprehensive and sustained historical study of the filmmaking of the Palestinian revolution; it seeks to apply 'a Palestinian-centered approach' (Yaqub 2018, p. 12) to a revolution which was globally networked and has often been framed through theories (third cinema) and figures (Genet and Godard). It does, however, build upon Denes' (2014) thesis of the tension between revolutionary form and political propaganda.

The book's sixth chapter situates the legacy of the revolution within 21st Century Palestinian filmmakers' work, citing both efforts within the last decade to recover and digitize elements of the lost Palestinian film archive (Ibid, p. 199) and films that incorporate archival material from this period, or as is the case with *When I Saw You*, borrow from the mise-en-scène of revolutionary cinema (Ibid, p. 201). While the book's thesis diverts from my own—that a resistance of the image in the selected corpus can be traced from the image questioning inherent in early Palestinian revolutionary cinema—Yaqub's book does engage with what it

terms a 'post-national movement' emerging in contemporary Palestinian cinema, perhaps significantly, in experimental filmmaking. Citing the video art of Basma Alsharif and Sama Alshaibi, she claims that:

> [Their] relationship to the cause is characterized by distance. Their engagement with questions of national identity, state building, and the right to return to Palestine is shaped by a keen awareness of what is and is not politically possible in this historical moment. (Ibid, p. 218)

It is to this question of political possibility at a time of perpetual impasse that that I have proposed a tendency toward a post-Palestinian consciousness within the selected corpus of films, following Eyal Sivan's declaration of Basma Alsharif as a 'post-Palestinian' artist. The task of imagining the future at a time when the political status quo seemingly forecloses alternatives has thus far been engaged with more directly not in feature filmmaking, but in the more experimental field of visual art, from which Basma Alsharif emerged. The recent work of Larissa Sansour, which blends live action and digital images to construct imagined 'post-Palestinian' landscapes, imagines this 'post' temporally, but also draws on a spatial thinking of architectural and archaeological practices to imagine dystopian and heterotopian futures. Sansour's 2012 work *Nation Estate* takes Weizman's 'politics of verticality' (2007, pp. 12-16)—attempts to partition Palestine-Israel both horizontally and vertically thus layering two national claims to the same space on top of each other— to its logical, dystopian extreme. A Palestinian State is not imagined horizontally but rather as vertically partitioned from Israel. The Nation Estate of the title imagines a Palestinian state of symbols and signifiers, a museum if you will, contained within one looming high rise block.

A vertical politics of partition in *Nation Estate* (2012). ©Larissa Sansour (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

The floors are accessed by key/ID card and elements of Palestinian sites occupy vertically partitioned floors, given proper names such as Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Hebron. The problem of partitioning the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif is 'solved' by its existence in two places at once. It is both rendered on the Jerusalem floor of the building, and the original is witnessed from the window of the tower block, a 'Jerusalem without Palestinians'. While this duplication seems absurd, it reflects political proposals articulating a vertical partition in an attempt to 'solve' the Euclidian impossibility of partitioning Israel's three dimensions from Palestine's. Eyal Weizman (2007, p. 14) explains that during the 2000 Camp David Summit, Clinton suggested a vertical partitioning of the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, explaining that 'Palestinians would control the surface of the Haram al-Sharif, the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa mosque on top of it, while Israeli sovereignty would extend to the 'depth of the ground' underneath, where the temples were presumed to have lain.' The artwork imagines if not exactly the death of the two-state solution, then its coming into being as akin to a living death, a museum of Palestine securely out of the field of visibility of Israel in which Bethlehem becomes, like the other sites of the building, a mere heritage exhibit.

Bethlehem as museum-piece in *Nation Estate* (2012). ©Larissa Sansour (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

Sansour's most recent piece, *In The Future They Ate From The Finest Porcelain* (2016) again exists in some indeterminate future (as suggested by the temporal ambiguity in the title), rendered here as a post-apocalyptic site in which a representative (self-described as a 'narrative terrorist') of civilization (perhaps lost, but this remains ambiguous) drops porcelain into the desert landscape in the hope that future archaeologists might discover it as evidence of that civilizations existence on the land. The piece both satirises and interrogates the political uses of archaeology to reinforce present territorial claims. The juxtaposition of the imagery of science fiction (the plates are dropped as bombs from spaceships), Palestinian signifiers (the porcelain is decorated with the imagery of the *kefiyyeh*) and figures from Palestine's colonial past (dressed in the outfits from both the British Mandate and Ottoman periods) creates a densely layered visual language of colonialism and erasure alongside the politics of myth in creating the concept of a people.

Interrogating the politics of archaeology at the threshold of disappearance in *In The Future They Ate From The Finest Porcelain* (2016). ©Larissa Sansour (with the courtesy of the filmmaker)

While the film works as a critique of the nationalist weaponizing of architecture in Palestine-Israel, it also asks, like Alsharif's works, difficult questions as to coming to terms with loss, imagining a post-Palestinian future as an archive to be discovered as evidence of having been. A concern with the archive also informs Kamal Aljafari's most recent work, *Recollection* (2015), which is composed entirely of found footage, bringing the Palestinian (and Arab-Jewish) presence in Israeli and American filmmaking in Jaffa to the foreground.[3] This process of archiving an architecture existent as a potential ruin while simultaneously rendering the failed partitioning of a field of visibility (Palestinian presence always already

[3] Quite literally, by removing central protagonists from the frame and zooming into the margins to find those ignored, but nonetheless stubbornly present

haunts the margins of the Israeli frame) suggests a tension within this post-Palestinian consciousness. My thesis has attempted to interrogate this tension between documenting and coming to terms with loss, while simultaneously framing partition as impossible in both spatial and cultural terms.

An interesting tendency emerging as I conclude this thesis is the centrality of the focus on the archive—not as something to be revered as sacred, but rather something to inform a contemporary critical practice to question both political authority and the authority of the image itself; the co-option of the image for political capital, but also the erasure of the visibility of the Palestinian image. Recent notable examples of this include *Looted and Hidden - Palestinian Archives in Israel* (Rona Sela, 2017) and *Off Frame AKA Revolution Until Victory* (*Kharij al-Itar: Thawrah Hatta al-Nasr*) (Mohanad Yaqubi, 2016). Sela's film engages with Palestian cinematic images looted from the 1982 PLO archives and hidden in Israeli military archives, but also film and photographic images of Palestinian life in the Mandate. Sela's film attempts to render visible the partitioning of the Palestinian image from the history of Zionist histiography so as to undermine both its political efficacy and legitimacy.

Yaqubi's film recovers and rearticulates the archive, which includes PFU footage and rushes, still photographs and British Mandate reportage. It forms a reflexive juxtaposition of images made of Palestinians and Palestinian image-making, as in the case of the PFU, showcasing how contemporary Palestinian filmmakers might go about what Said (1986, p. 108) describes as Palestinians '*producing themselves*' with a critically resistant agency. Nadia Yaqub, in the closing pages of *Palestinian Cinema in the Days of Revolution*, reflects on Yaqubi's seizing of 'his right to make images of this period in Palestinian history that had been monopolised by the Palestinian Authority, just as the Palestinians of the late 1960s seized their right to make their own image' (Yaqub 2018, p. 220). Mohanad Yaqubi's recreation and re-articulation of Palestinian filmmaking of the Revolution would appear to articulate the resistance of the image that this thesis highlights as a contemporary tendency in the corpus under study. In a 2017 interview Yaqubi reflects on the specular nature of the resistant image as means to question its authority, claiming:

> For me as a Palestinian, I was looking at all of these images and thinking "What does the revolution mean, how can we see it? Where are the shots where we can see our own struggle?" But when you're dealing with cinema, you are dealing with reflection. And once you realise that, there's a kind of freedom there; it makes you disbelieve or unsettle your image of yourself and that is the process that we need (Yaqubi, 2017).

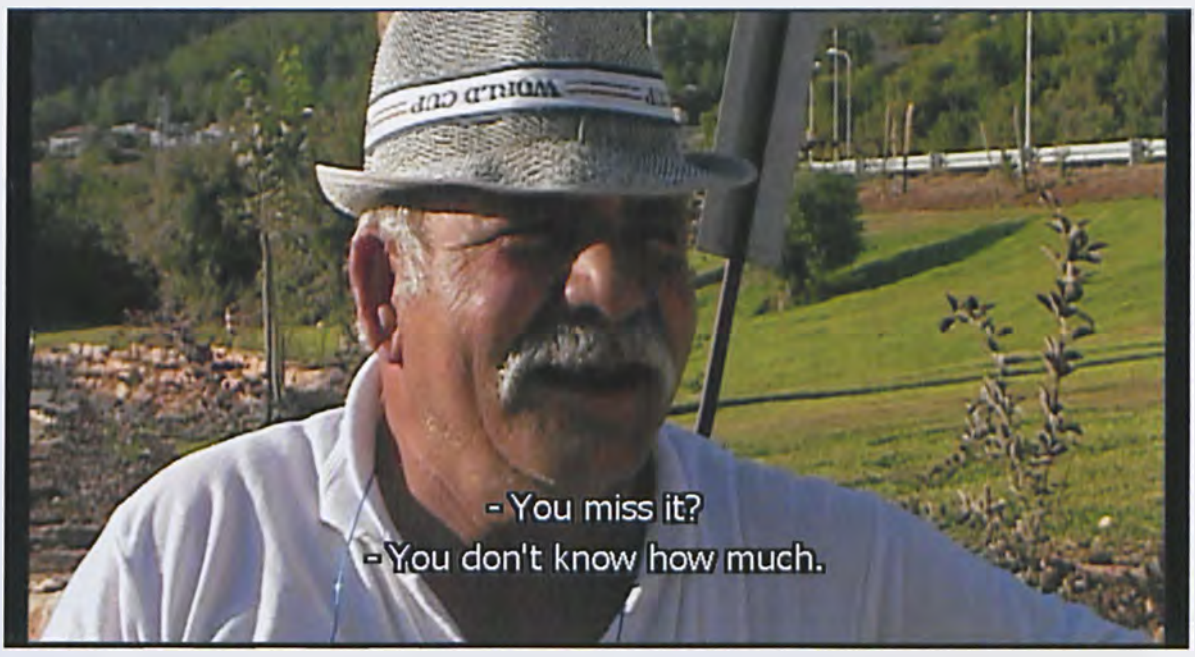
The emergence of this engagement with the archive as a cinematic 'struggle of visibility' (Yaqubi, 2017), I argue, reinforces the two main research questions underpinning my thesis: That is, the resistance *to* partition and the resistance *of* the image that articulate the capacity to imagine the political otherwise inherent in what I have termed post-Palestinian cinema.

The conception of a post-Palestinian consciousness at work in the films studied in this thesis, I argue, conveys not a sense of a temporal 'after' but rather a call to think *beyond* what Gil Hochberg (2007, p. 140) terms 'the limits of the separatist imagination', to imagine the political contemporary otherwise. This comes from a contemporary political impasse predicated on the idea of partition which persists despite its logical impossibility. This refers on the one hand, to the aforementioned architectural impossibility of partitioning the West Bank, as described in Eyal Weizman's (2007) evocation of a 'hollow land'. On the other, it refers to a cultural partitioning which is equally impossible, and has something to do with nostalgia, and by that I mean coming to terms with loss of place. A sense of loss for place is depicted in Kamal Aljafari's *The Roof* and *Port of Memory*, Amos Gitai's *Ana Arabia* and Eyal Sivan and Michel Khleifi's *Route 181*. Each of these films problematises nostalgia for place along national lines. The scene from *The Roof* described in the introductory chapter, in which Kamal Aljafari asks his friend via telephone to hold it close to the ocean so that he can hear the sea in Beirut, does not dramatize a nostalgia for the lost home of pre-1948 Palestine, but rather a yearning for Beirut, a Palestine in exile. Similarly in Aljafari's *Port of Memory*, the scene which inserts the lead character 'ghosts' the Jaffa of an Israeli musical, in which a Hebrew song of nostalgia for a Jewishness lost in the Arab world is appropriated and applied to a Palestinian sense of exile. This scene consciously resists the elision of the Palestinian from the Israeli cinematic frame, but unconsciously re-inscribes the ties that bind Arab and Jew (the erased hyphen) and folds them into a Palestinian narrative of loss and nostalgia.

The politics of nostalgia is a topic Ella Shohat (2006) explores in her essay 'Taboo Memories, Diasporic Visions: Columbus, Palestine and Arab-Jews',[4] when examining the taboo of nostalgia for the Arab world within Euro-Israeli culture in Israel. Reflecting on the

[4] This essay is taken from the edited volume of the same name, Shohat E. (2006) *Taboo memories, diasporic voices*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 201-232.

East/West partition that Zionism reinforces to also partition Palestine-Israel and Arab-Jew, she writes that 'The pervasive notion of "one people" reunited in their ancient homeland actively disauthorizes any affectionate memory of life before the State of Israel.' (Ibid, p. 222-3) This taboo nostalgia is expressed in the final scenes of *Route 181*, as the film travels to the northern border with Lebanon. In Shefer, a town near the border, the filmmakers encounter a group of older friends who immigrated from Morocco and Tunisia in the 1950s. The first man, a Moroccan Jew, expresses his desire to retire to Morocco and expresses an intense longing for it, as the filmmaker prompts him to recall some long-forgotten Arabic. The man soon introduces Khleifi and Sivan to a friend who tells them of her life in Tunisia and how she has come to resent the militarism of the State (having lost a son in the 1982 Lebanon War). She appeals to the long Jewish history in Arab countries (necessarily suppressed in the cultural logic of Zionism) as a kernel of hope for possible future imagining of Palestine-Israel.



Taboo nostalgia for the Arab-Jewish past in *Route 181*. ©Momento Films (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

Taboo nostalgia for the Arab-Jewish past in *Route 181*. ©Momento Films (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

These complex and subversive intersections of nostalgia—the Arab-Jewish nostalgia for a time before and a place beyond Israel, the Palestinian nostalgia for a Palestine in exile, rather than the land lost in the *nakba*—complicate a discrete thinking of home and exile, particularly a nationalist construal of the former, which Said (2000, p. 176) argues, exists in dialectical tension with the latter, both 'forming and constituting each other'.

The re-inscription of a lost hyphenated Arab-Jewish history in *Route 181*. ©Momento Films (with the courtesy of the filmmakers)

The implications of my research go beyond film and critical theory. I believe that they reflect a nascent shift on the political ground of debate around Palestine/Israel. A tendency in contemporary Palestinian cinema which, on the one hand, questions the political status quo—upheld by the obscenity of an empty law perpetrated by the Israeli state, and an empty political symbolism produced by the Palestinian Authority—and on the other, reveals a resistance to partition that undermines the very structure of that status quo, speaks to a growing political consciousness and activism beyond the realms of cinema.

While the cultural tradition of thinking beyond partition can be traced through post-colonial studies from Edward Said to Ella Shohat and Gil Hochberg, 2018 saw the founding of the 'One Democratic State Campaign' in Haifa. Founded by, among others Yoav Haifawi, Awad Abdelfattah and Ilan Pappe, the Campaign aims to raise awareness of a binational democratic movement within political discourse across Israel, the Occupied Territories, diasporic communities and the wider international public. The Campaign's political programme was negotiated and adopted by 50 organizers (Haifawi 2018a) and comprises a ten-point plan including, among other proposals, equal recognition before the law 'under a single constitutional democracy' and a recognition of and support for the right of return for Palestinian refugees. (Haifawi 2018b)

While the space between, on the one hand, a tendency in contemporary cinema and a nascent activist movement advocating the impossibility of partition, and on the other a political reality which is increasingly dystopian may seem vast; the stubborn resistance to partition and questioning of the law that this contemporary corpus of films articulates performs an important role in both resisting the contemporary political stasis and undermining the continued political project of partition.

Word Count: 82,403

References

Abdel-Malek, K. (2005) *The Rhetoric of Violence: Arab-Jewish Encounters in Contemporary Palestinian Literature and Film*. New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Abourahme, N. (2011) 'Spatial Collisions and Discordant Temporalities: Everyday Life between Camp and Checkpoint', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35 (2), pp. 453-461, *Blackwell Publishing*.

Abu-Assad, H. (2014) 'Caught in the middle: Hany Abu-Assad's 'Omar' follows plight of a young Palestinian'. Interviewed by Maria Garcia for *Film Journal International*, 29 January [online]. Available at: http://www.filmjournal.com/content/caught-middle-hany-abu-assad%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%98omar%E2%80%99-follows-plight-young-palestinian (Accessed 05/09/18)

Abu-Manneh, B. (2016) *The Palestinian Novel: From 1948 to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adorno, T. (1996) *Negative dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton. London: Routledge.

Adorno, T. (2006) *Philosophy of New Music*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Agamben, G. (1998) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Agamben, G. (2000) 'Means without End. Notes on Politics' in *Theory Out of Bounds, Vol. 20.* Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 15-26

Agamben, G. (2005) *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Agamben, G. (2005) *The Time That Remains,* trans. Patricia Dailey. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Agamben, G. (2009) *The Signature of All Things*. New York: Zone Books.

Agamben, G. (2015) *Stasis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Aljafari, K. (2010) 'This Place They Dried from The Sea: An Interview with Kamal Aljafari'. Interviewed by Nasrin Himada for *Montreal Serai*, 28 September [online]. Available at: http://montrealserai.com/2010/09/28/this-place-they-dried-from-the-sea-an-interview-with-kamal-aljafari/ (Accessed: 23/07/13)

Alsharif, B. (2017a) 'An Endless Cycle: Basma Alsharif discusses "Ouroboros"', *MUBI Notebook*, 09/08/17 [online]. Available at: https://mubi.com/notebook/posts/an-endless-cycle-basma-alsharif-discusses-ouroboros (Accessed 06/09/17)

Alsharif, B. (2017b) 'Future's Past and Present Uncertainty'. Interviewed by Andréa Picard for *Mousse Magazine.* June [online]. Available at: http://imanefares.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Basma-Alsharif-EN-.pdf (Accessed 06/09/17)

Alsharif, B. (2018) 'Interview with Basma Alsharif'. Interviewed by Helen Mackreath for *The White Review.* June [online]. Available at: http://www.thewhitereview.org/feature/interview-basma-alsharif/ (Accessed 15/08/18)

al-Zobaidi, S. (2008) 'Tora Bora Cinema', *Jump Cut*, (50) [online] Available at: https://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc50.2008/PalestineFilm/ (Accessed 03/02/15)

Amin, H. (2015) *"Arabian Street Artists" Bomb Homeland: Why We Hacked an Award-Winning Series* [online] hebaamin.com. Available at: http://www.hebaamin.com/arabian-street-artists-bomb-homeland-why-we-hacked-an-award-winning-series/ (Accessed 05/10/16)

Anidjar, G. (2003) *The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Arendt, H. (1958) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Arendt, H. (1970) *On Violence*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, inc.
Athlone Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1981) 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics' In M. Bakhtin. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 84-258.

Ball, A. (2012) *Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Feminist Perspective*. New York: Routledge.

Ball, A. (2014) 'Communing with Darwish's Ghosts', *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, 7(2), pp. 135-151.

Ball, A. (2014) 'Kafka at the West Bank checkpoint: de-normalizing the Palestinian encounter before the law', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 50(1), pp. 75-87.

Bataille, G. (1997) 'The Notion of Expenditure' In Botting, F. and Wilson, S. (eds.) *The Bataille Reader*. Oxford/Malden: Blackwell, pp. 167-181.

Baudrillard, J. (1988) *The Ecstasy of Communication*, trans. Bernard Schutze and Caroline Schutze. New York: Semiotext(e).

Baumann, H. (2015). 'Bodies on the line: somatic risks and psychogeographies in urban exploration and Palestinian "infiltration." In: L. Lambert, ed., *The Funambulist Papers, Volume 2*, 1st ed. New York: Punctum Books, p.27.

Bazin, A. (1967). *What is Cinema? Volume 1*, trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Beaumont, P. (2018) 'Sara Netanyahu charged with fraud over catering allegations' *The Guardian*, 21 June [online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/21/sara-netanyahu-charged-misuse-public-funds-israel (Accessed: 10/07/18)

Ben-Zeev, E. (2012) 'Mental Maps and Spatial Perceptions: The Fragmentation of Israel-Palestine' in Roberts, L. (ed) *Mapping Cultures: Place, Practice, Performance.* Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 237-259.

Ben-Zvi Morad, Y. (2017). Self-Sacrifice and Forgiveness: Religion and Nationalism in the New Israeli and Palestinian Cinema' in Demichelis, M. and Maggiolini, P. (eds.) *The Struggle to Define a Nation: Rethinking Religious Nationalism in the Contemporary Islamic World.* Piscataway: Gorgias Press, pp. 221-249.

Benjamin, A. (2013) *Working with Walter Benjamin: Recovering a Political Philosophy.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project,* trans. Howard Eidland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge/London: Belknap.

Benjamin, W. (2004) *Selected Writings Vol. 1 1913-1926.* Cambridge/London: Belknap.

Benjamin, W. (2006) *Selected Writings Vol. 4 1938-1940.* Cambridge/London: Belknap.

Berry, C. (2006) 'From National Cinema to Cinema and the National: Chinese-language Cinema and Hou Hsiao-hsien's 'Taiwan Trilogy'', in P. Willemen and V. Vitali. (eds.) *Theorising National Cinema.* London: BFI, pp. 148-157.

Bilinsky, Y. (1973) 'Moderate Realism in an extremist environment: Tunisia and the Palestine Question', *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, (13-14), pp. 109-123

Blum, V. and Secor, A. (2014). 'Mapping Trauma: Topography to Topology' in Kingsbury, P. and Pile, S. (eds.) *Psychoanalytic Geographies.* Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate, pp.103-116.

Breesheth, H. (2007) 'The Continuity of Trauma and Struggle: Recent Cinematic Representations of the Nakba', in Sadi, A.H & Abu-Lughod, L. (eds.) *Nakba: Palestine, 1948 and the claims of memory.* New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 161-187.

Brubaker, R. (2005) 'The 'diaspora' diaspora', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(1), pp. 1-19.

Buck-Morss, S. (1989) *The Dialectics of Seeing.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Butler, J (2004) *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence.* London: Verso.

Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed experience.* Baltimore, Md. [u.a.]: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

Caygill, H. (2013). *On resistance.* 1st ed. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

CBS (2013) *Nazareth Census 2009* [online] Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20131011103441/http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications11/local_authorities09/pdf/254_7300.pdf

Chaudhuri, S. and Finn, H. (2003) 'The open image: poetic realism and the New Iranian Cinema', *Screen*, 44(1), pp. 38-57.

Clausewitz, C. (1984). *On war*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Cohen, H. (2002) 'The Internal Refugees in the State of Israel: Israeli Citizens, Palestinian Refugees', *Palestine-Israel Journal*, 9 (2), *Middle East Publications*, Available at: http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=159

Collins, J. (2011) *Global Palestine.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Corera, G. (2002) *BBC Today Reports Archive: The British in Jenin.* Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/reports/archive/international/jenin.shtml (Accessed: 02/02/17)

Corrigan, T. (2011) *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, After Marker*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.

Critchley, S. (1999) *Ethics—Politics—Subjectivity*. London/New York: Verso.

Daney, S. (1999) 'Before and After the Image', *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture*, 21(1), pp. 181-190.

Darwish, M. (2004) 'Edward Said: A Contrapuntal Reading', *Al-Ahram Weekly*, (710), [online] Available at: http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/Archive/2004/710/cu4.htm

Darwish, M. (2012) '"Exile Is So Strong Within Me, I May Bring It to the Land" A Landmark 1996 Interview with Mahmoud Darwish'. Interviewed by Helit Yeshurun. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 42(1), pp. 46-70.

Deleuze, G. (1986) *Cinema 1*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London: Athlone

Deleuze, G. (1989) *Cinema 2*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, London: Athlone

Deleuze, G. (1998) 'Having an Idea in Cinema (On the Cinema of Straub-Huillet)', in E. Kaufman and K. J. Heller (eds.), *Deleuze and Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy and Culture*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, pp. 14-19.

Deleuze, G. (2000) 'The Brain is the Screen: An interview with Gilles Deleuze', in G. Flaxman (ed.), *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1983). What Is a Minor Literature?, *Mississippi Review*, 11(03), pp.13-33.

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2004) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 2nd ed. London: Continuum.

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2004) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 2nd ed. London: Continuum.

Demos, T. (2009) 'The Right to Opacity: On the Otolith Group's Nervus Rerum', *October*, (129), pp. 113-128.

Denes, N. (2009) 'The Precarious Life of the Palestinian Image: Reflections in the Wake of Gaza', *Vertigo*, 4(3), pp. 26-27

Denes, N. (2014) 'Between Form and Function', *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, 7(2), pp. 219-241.

Derrida, J. (1993) 'Politics of Friendship', *American Imago*, 50(3), pp. 353-391.

Derrida, J. (1994) *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. New York/Abingdon: Routledge.

Derrida, J. (1998) *Resistances of psychoanalysis*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Derrida, J. (2002) 'Spectographies', in Derrida J. and Stiegler B. *Echographies of Television*, trans. Jennifer Bajorek. London: Polity.
Derrida, J. (2002) *Acts of Religion*. New York/London: Routledge.

Dickinson, K. (2016). *Arab Cinema Travels: Transnational Syria, Palestine, Dubai and Beyond*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Elden, S. (2009) *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Elden, S. (2013). *The Birth of Territory*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Emmelhainz, I. (2009) 'A Trialogue on Nervus Rerum', *October*, 129, pp. 129-132.

Emmett, C. (1995) *Beyond the Basilica: Christians and Muslims in Nazareth*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ezra, E. and Rowden, T. (2006) *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Fanon, F. (1965) *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. Haakon Chevalier. New York: Grove Press.

Fieni, D. (2014) 'Cinematic Checkpoints and Sovereign Time', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 50(1), pp. 6-18.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (1978) *The History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1982) 'The Subject and Power', *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), pp. 777-795.

Foucault, M. (1986) 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics*, 16(1), p. 22-27

Foucault, M. (1996) *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961–1984*. New York, N.Y.: Semiotext(e).

Foucault, M. (2003) *"Society must be defended"*. New York: Picador.

Foucault, M. (2006). 'Utopian Body'. In: C. Jones, (ed) *Sensorium Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*, 1st ed. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 229-234.

Frahm, L. (2014) 'Metropolis in Transformation: Cinematic Topologies of Urban Space', in Brantz, D., Disko, S. and Wagner-Kyora, G. (eds.) *Thick Space: Approaches to Metropolitanism*. Bielefeld: Transcript.

Friedman, Y. (2008) 'The View from Inside: Recent Palestinian Filmmaking in Israel', *The Jewish Quarterly*, (211), pp. 58-60

Friedman, Y. (2010) *Palestinian filmmaking in Israel: Negotiating conflicting discourses*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Westminster.

Freud, S. (2003) *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock. London: Penguin, pp. 123-162

Fritsch, M. (2005) *The Promise of Memory: History and Politics in Marx, Benjamin and Derrida*. New York: State University of New York Press

Frodon, J. (2014) *Ana Arabia: un labyrinthe pour la paix* [online] slate.fr. Available at: http://www.slate.fr/story/90631/ana-arabia Accessed: 03/05/17

Genet, J. (2003) *Prisoner of Love*, trans. Barbara Bray. New York: New York Review Books.

Genet, J. (2004) *The Declared Enemy: Texts and Interviews*, trans. Barbara Bray. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Gertz, N. and Khleifi, G. (2008) *Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma and Memory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Getino, O. and Solanas, F (1969) 'Toward a Third Cinema', *Tricontinental*, (14), pp. 107-132.

Gitai, A. (2014) 'Interview with Amos Gitai'. Interviewed by Nienke Huitenga for *wzzzt.com*, 17 July [online]. Available at: https://wzzzt.com/2014/07/17/interview-with-amos-gitai/ Accessed: 03/11/14

Gooding, F. (2009) *Portrait of Palestine* [online] colonialfilm.org.uk. Available at: http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/2477 (Accessed 12/09/16)

Graham, S. (2004) 'Constructing Urbicide by Bulldozer in the Occupied Territories', in Graham, S. (ed.). *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an urban geopolitics*. Malden/Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 192-213.

Graham, S. (2011) 'Laboratories of war: surveillance and US-Israeli collaboration in war and security', in E. Zureik, D. Lyon and Y. Abu-Laban, (eds.) *Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine: Population, territory and power*. London/New York: Routledge, pp. 133-152.

Grosz, E. (2001) *Architecture from the Outside*. Cambridge, Ma: The MIT Press.

Gustaffson. H. (2015) 'Remnants of Palestine, or, Archaeology after Auschwitz', in Gustafsson, H. and Grønstad, A. (eds.) *Cinema and Agamben: Ethics, Biopolitics and the Moving Image*. New York/London: Bloomsbury.

Haberman, C. (1992) 'Israel Expels 400 From Occupied Lands; Lebanese Deploy to Bar Entry of Palestinians' *The New York Times*, 18 Dec [online] Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/1992/12/18/world/israel-expels-400-occupied-lands-lebanese-deploy-bar-entry-palestinians.html

Hanafi, S. (2003) 'Rethinking the Palestinians Abroad as a Diaspora: The Relationship between the Diaspora and the Palestinian Territories', *International Social Science Review*, 4 (1-2), pp. 157-82.

Hammer, J. (2005) *Palestinians Born in Exile: Diaspora and the Search for a Homeland*. Austin: The University of Texas Press.

Harbord, J. (2007) *The Evolution of Film: Rethinking Film Studies*. Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press.

Harrison, O. (2018) 'Consuming Palestine: anticapitalism and anticolonialism in Jean-Luc Godard's *Ici et ailleurs*', *Studies in French Cinema*, 18(3), pp. 178-191.

Haifawi, Y. (2018a) *The Campaign for One Democratic State – political and organizational perspectives* [online] mondoweis.net. Available at: https://mondoweiss.net/2018/08/democratic-organizational-perspectives/ Accessed: 13/10/18

Haifawi, Y. (2018b) *The political program of the Campaign for One Democratic State in Historic Palestine* [online] mondoweis.net. Available at: https://mondoweiss.net/2018/08/political-democratic-palestine/?fbclid=IwAR2hSgK-PhVZa3e9PKuFDJXxmWN7o25iRwA4Ygvr80rrBrGGZ1pQA7vx2OO Accessed: 13/10/18

Heidegger, M. (1995) *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude,* trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hochberg, G. (2007). *In Spite of Partition: Jews, Arabs and the Limits of Separatist Imagination*. Princeton/Woodstock: Princeton University Press.

Hochberg, G. (2015). *Visual Occupations: Violence and Visibility in a Conflict Zone.* Durham/London: Duke University Press.

Jacir, A. (2017a) 'Wajib – An Interview with Annemarie Jacir'. Interviewed by Jeremy Elphick for *4:3*, 7 September [online]. Available at: https://fourthreefilm.com/2017/09/wajib-an-interview-with-annemarie-jacir/ (Accessed: 10/10/17)

Jacir, A. (2017b) 'Annemarie Jacir on the tensions of shooting 'Wajib' in Nazareth'. Interviewed by Melanie Goodfellow for *Screendaily*, 15 December [online]. Available at: https://www.screendaily.com/features/annemarie-jacir-on-the-tensions-of-shooting-wajib-in-nazareth/5125051.article (Accessed: 10/10/17)

Jameson, F. (1991) *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Jayyusi, L. (2007) 'Iterability, Cumulativity, and Presence: The relational figures of Palestinian memory', in Sadi A.H & Abu-Lughod L. (eds.) *Nakba: Palestine, 1948 and the claims of memory.* New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 107-131.

Kafka, F. (1953) *The Trial.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Kanafānī, G. (2000) *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa & Other Stories*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner.

Kant, I (1993) *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck. New York: Macmillan.

Kelly, M. (2009) *The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault.* New York: Routledge.

Khatib, L. (2006) *Filming the modern Middle East.* London: I.B. Tauris.

Khoury, E. (2012) 'Rethinking the Nakba', *Critical Inquiry* 28 (1), *The University of Chicago Press*, pp. 250-266. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2538053

Khoury, N. (2004) *(DV) Khoury: One Fine Curfew Day* [online] dissidentvoice.org. Available at: http://dissidentvoice.org/Feb04/Khoury0212.htm

Kojève, A. (2007) *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right*, trans. Bryan-Paul Frost. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.

Kraucer, S. (1995) 'Boredom' in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. T.Y Levin. Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press

Kristeva, J. (1984) *Revolution in poetic language*, trans. M. Waller. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lacan, J. (1988) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book I Freud's papers on technique, 1953-1954.* Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press.

Lambert, L. (2013) *The Funambulist Pamphlets, Vol. 06_Palestine*. New York: Punctum Books.

Levi, C. (2000 [1947]). *Christ stopped at Eboli*, trans. Frances Frenaye. London: Penguin.

Levinas, E. (1978) *Existence and Existents*, trans. Alphonso Lingis. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Levinas, E. (1987) *Time & the Other*, trans. Richard A. Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Levinas, E. (1987) *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Levy, L. (2012) 'Nation, Village, Cave: A Spatial Reading of 1948 in Three Novels of Anton Shammas, Emile Habiby, and Elias Khoury', *Jewish Social Studies*, 18(3), pp. 10-26.

Limbrick, P. (2012) 'Contested Spaces: Kamal Aljafari's Transnational Palestinian Films' in T. Ginsberg and A. Mensch (eds.) *A Companion to German Cinema*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 218-248

Lionis, C. (2016) *Laughter in Occupied Palestine*. London/New York: I.B. Tauris.

Marks, L. (2006) 'Asphalt Nomadism: The new desert in contemporary Arab cinema', in in M. Lefebvre (ed.) *Landscape and Film*. New York: Routledge, pp. 125-147.

Marks, L. (2015) *Hanan al-Cinema*, Cambridge/London: The MIT Press.

Martin-Jones, D. (2006). *Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity: Narrative Time in National Contexts*. Edinburgh University Press.

Massad, J. (2000). The "Post-Colonial" Colony: Time, Space and Bodies in Palestine/Israel. In: F. Afzal-Khan and K. Seshadri-Crooks, eds., *The Pre-occupation of Postcolonial Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 311-346.

Mbembe, A. (2001) *On the Postcolony*. Berkley/London: University of California Press.

Mbembe, A. (2003). Necropolitics. *Public Culture*, 15(1), pp. 11-40.

McMahon, L. (2015) 'Animal agency in Le Quattro Volte', *Screen*, 56(1), pp. 108-114.

McGowan, T. (2011) *Out of Time: Desire in Atemporal Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.McWhirter, C. (2012). 'The Birth of 'Dixie'' *The New York Times*, 31 March [online] Available at: https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/31/the-birth-of-dixie/ (Accessed 10/06/18)

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968) *The visible and the invisible*. trans. Alphonso Lingis. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Mitchell, W. (2000) 'Holy Landscape: Israel, Palestine, and the American Wilderness', *Critical Inquiry*, 26(2), pp. 193-223.

Mitchell, W. and Said, E. (1998) 'The Panic of the Visual: A Conversation with Edward W. Said', *boundary 2*, 25(2), pp. 11-33.

Moore-Gilbert, B. (2018) 'Palestine, Postcolonialism and Pessoptimism', *Interventions*, 20(1), pp. 7-40.

Morgan Wortham, S. (2010) *The Derrida Dictionary*. London: Continuum.

Morrey, Douglas (2008) 'Open Wounds: Body and Image in Jean-Luc Nancy and Claire Denis', *Film-Philosophy*, 12 (1): pp. 10-30. Available at: http://www.film-philosophy.com/2008v12n1/morrey2.pdf

Naficy, H. (2001) *An Accented Cinema*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Nancy, J. (2008) *Corpus*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Parmenter, B. (1994) *Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Peteet, J. (2007) 'Promblematizing a Palestinian Diaspora' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 39(04), pp. 627-646.

Pisters, P. (2012) *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian Film-Philosophy of Digital Screen Culture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Rascaroli, L. (2008) 'The Essay Film: Problems, Definitions, Textual Commitments', *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, 49(2), pp. 24-47.

Reid, J. (2012) 'The Neoliberal Subject: Resilience and the Art of Living Dangerously', *Revista Pléyade*, (10), pp. 143-165.

Rose, J. (2007) *The Last Resistance*. London: Verso.

Rothberg, M. (2008) 'Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response', *Studies in the Novel*, 40(1-2), pp. 224-234.

Said, E. (1986) *After the Last Sky*. London: Vintage.

Said, E. (1992 [1979]) *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage Books.

Said, E. (1994). 'On Mahmoud Darwish', *Grand Street*, (48), pp. 112-115.

Said, E. (1994) *The Politics of Dispossession*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Said, E. (1995) *Peace and its Discontents: Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process*. London: Vintage.

Said, E. (2000) *Reflections on Exile*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Said, E. (2003) *Freud and the non-European*. London: Verso.

Said, E. (2006) 'Preface', in Dabashi H. (ed.) *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema*. London: Verso, pp. 1-5

Schmitt, C. (1996) *The Concept of the Political*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Schulz, H. (2005) *The Palestinian Diaspora*. London: Routledge.

Shalhoub-Kevorkian; N. (2015) 'The Politics of Birth and the Intimacies of Violence Against Palestinian Women in Occupied East Jerusalem', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 55 (6), pp. 1187–1206

Shammas, A. (2002) 'Autocartography: The Case of Palestine, Michigan', *Palestine-Israel Journal*, 9 (2), *Middle East Publications*, Available at: http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=154

Shatz, A. (2013) 'The Life and Death of Juliano Mer-Khamis'. *London Review of Books*, 35 (22), pp. 3-11.

Shehadeh, R. (1982) *The Third Way, a journal of life in the West Bank*. London: Quartet Books.

Shehadeh, R. (2007) *Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape*. London: Profile.

Sherwood, H. (2013) 'Return to Iqrit: how one Palestinian village is being reborn', *The Guardian*, 15 May [online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/15/return-iqrit-palestinian-village-israel

Shohat, E. (1992). Notes on the "Post-Colonial." *Social Text*, (31/32), pp. 99-113.

Shohat, E. (2006) *Taboo memories, diasporic voices*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Shohat, E. (2010) *Israeli Cinema*. 2nd ed. London: I.B. Tauris.

Smith, N. and Katz, C. (1993) 'Grounding Metaphor: Towards a Spatialized Politics' in M. Keith and S. Pile (eds), *Place and the Politics of Identity*. New York: Routledge, pp. 67-83

Spinoza, B. (2002a) 'Ethics', In: M. L. Morgan, ed., *Spinoza: Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett, pp. 213-382.

Spinoza, B. (2002b) 'Theological-Political Treatise', In: M. L. Morgan, ed., *Spinoza: Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett, pp. 508-526.

Staff, T. (2018) 'Nazareth Illit seeks new name to end 'confusion' with Jesus' hometown' *The Times of Israel*, 5 November [online]. Available at: https://www.timesofisrael.com/nazareth-illit-seeks-new-name-to-end-confusion-with-jesus-hometown/

Steimatsky, N. (2008) *Italian Locations: Reinhabiting the Past in Postwar Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Suleiman, E. (2000) 'A Cinema of Nowhere', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 29(2), pp. 95-101.

Suleiman, E. (2003a) 'Notes from the Palestinian Diaspora: An Interview with Elia Suleiman', *Cineaste*, 28(3), pp. 24-27.

Suleiman, E. (2003b) 'The Occupation (and Life) Through an Absurdist Lens', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 32(2), pp. 63-73.

Suleiman, E. (2010) 'A different kind of occupation: an interview with Elia Suleiman' Interviewed by Sabah Haider for *The Electronic Intifada*, 01 February [online]. Available at:https://electronicintifada.net/content/different-kind-occupation-interview-elia-suleiman/8654 (Accessed: 02/04/16)

Suleiman, E. (2016) 'Elia Suleiman: Hope and action despite pessimism' Interviewed by Daniel Tkatch for *Political Critique*, 05 September [online]. Available at: http://politicalcritique.org/world/2016/filmmaker-suleiman-hope-and-action/

(Accessed: 03/01/17)

Tawil-Souri, H. (2005) 'Coming Into Being and Flowing Into Exile: History and Trends in Palestinian Film-Making' *Nebula*, 2(2), pp. 113-140.

Tawil-Souri, H. (2011) 'Orange, green and blue: color-coded paperwork for Palestinian population control', in E. Zureik, D. Lyon and Y. Abu-Laban, (eds.) *Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine: Population, territory and power*. London/New York: Routledge, pp. 219-238.

Tawil-Souri, H. (2014) 'Cinema as the Space to Transgress Palestine's Territorial Trap' *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, 7(2), pp. 169-189.

Telmissany, M. (2010) 'Displacement and Memory: Visual Narratives of *al-Shatat* in Michel Khleifi's Films' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 30(1), pp. 69-84.

Vardoulakis, D. (2013) 'Kafka's Empty Law: Laughter and Freedom in The Trial' in B. Moran and C. Salzani (eds.) *Philosophy and Kafka*. Lanham: Lexington Books, pp. 33-52.

Wehr H. (1994) *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Spoken Language Services.

Weizman, E. (2004) 'Strategic Points, Flexible Lines, Tense Surfaces and Political Volumes: Ariel Sharon and the Geometry of Occupation', in Graham, S. (ed.). *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an urban geopolitics*. Malden/Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 192-213.

Weizman, E. (2007) *Hollow Land*. London: Verso Books.

Willemen, P. (2006) 'The National Revisited', in P. Willemen and V. Vitali. (eds.) *Theorising National Cinema*. London: BFI, pp. 29-43

Wisnovsky, R. (2003) *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Wollen, P. (2004 [1972]) 'Godard and Counter Cinema: *Vent d'Est*', In: L. Braudy and M. Cohen (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism*, 6th ed. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 525-533.

Yaqub, N. (2018) *Palestinian Cinema in the Days of Revolution*, Austin: University of Texas Press.

Yaqubi, M. (2017) 'Off Frame A.K.A. Revolution Until Victory: An Interview with Director Mohanad Yaqubi' Interviewed by Ivan Čerečina for *4:3*, 3 April [online]. Available at: https://fourthreefilm.com/2017/04/off-frame-a-k-a-revolution-until-victory-an-interview-with-director-mohanad-yaqubi/

Zurayk, K. (1956) *The Meaning of Disaster*, trans. Bayly Winder. Beirut: Kayat

Filmography

Ana Arabia (Amos Gitai, 2013, France, Israel)

Art/Violence (Udi Aloni, 2013, USA, Palestine, Israel)

Ave Maria (Basil Khalil, 2015, Palestine, France, Germany)

Balconies (Kamal Aljafari, 2009, Palestine)

Chic Point: Fashion for Israeli Checkpoints (Sharif Waked, 2003, Palestine, Israel)

Chronicle of a Disappearance (Elia Suleiman, 1996, Palestine, Israel, USA)

Divine Intervention (Elia Suleiman, 2002, France, Germany, Morocco, Netherlands, USA)

Film Socialisme (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010, Switzerland, France)

Five Broken Cameras (Emad Burnat/Guy Davidi, 2011, France, Israel, Netherlands, Palestine)

Forgiveness (Udi Aloni, 2006, USA, Israel)

Jenin, Jenin (Mohammad Bakri, 2002, Palestine)

Ici et ailleurs (Anne-Marie Miéville, Jean-Luc Godard, 1975, France)

In The Future They Ate From The Finest Porcelain (Larissa Sansour, 2016, UK, Denmark, Qatar)

Introduction to the End of an Argument (Jayce Salloum/ Elia Suleiman, 1990, Canada)

Like Twenty Impossibles (Annemarie Jacir, 2003, Palestine)

Looted and Hidden - Palestinian Archives in Israel (Rona Sela, 2017, Israel)

Nation Estate (Larissa Sansour, 2012, Denmark)

Nervus Rerum (The Otolith Group, 2008, Palestine)

Off Frame AKA Revolution Until Victory (*Kharij al-Itar: Thawrah Hatta al-Nasr*) (Mohanad Yaqubi, 2016, Palestine, France, Qatar, Lebanon)

Omar (Hany Abu Assad, 2013, Palestine)

Ouroboros (Basma Alsharif, 2017, Palestine, Qatar, France, Belgium)

Port of Memory (Kamal Aljafari, 2009, Germany, France, UAE)

The Roof (Kamal Aljafari, 2006, Germany)

Route 181: Fragments of a Journey in Palestine-Israel (Michel Khleifi/Eyal Sivan, 2004, Belgium, France, Germany, UK)

Salt of this Sea (Annemarie Jacir, 2008, Palestine, Belgium, France, Spain, Switzerland)

Since You Left (Mohammad Bakri, 2005, Israel)

Sopralluoghi in Palestina (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1964, Italy)

They Do Not Exist (Mustafa Abu Ali, 1974, Palestine)

The Time That Remains (Elia Suleiman, 2009, France, Belgium, Italy, United Arab Republic, Great Britain)

Villa Touma (Suha Arraf, 2014, Israel, Palestine)

Wajib (Annemarie Jacir, 2017, Palestine, France, Colombia, Germany, UAE, Qatar, Norway)

When I Saw You (Lamma Shoftak) (Annemarie Jacir, 2012, Palestine, Jordan)