

UC San Diego

UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Savory Politics : : Land, Memory, and the Ecological Occupation of Palestine

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/485943qz>

Author

Sharif, Lila

Publication Date

2014

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Savory Politics: Land, Memory, and the Ecological Occupation of Palestine

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy degree

in

Sociology and Ethnic Studies

by

Lila Sharif

Committee in charge:

Professor Yen Le Espiritu, Co-Chair
Professor Ivan Evans, Co-Chair
Professor Gary Fields
Professor Roshanak Kheshti
Professor Adria Imada
Professor Richard Madsen

2014

Copyright

Lila Sharif, 2014

All rights reserved.

The Dissertation of Lila Sharif is approved, and is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Co-Chair

Co-Chair

University of California, San Diego

2014

DEDICATION

For Adib and Salwa, for planting and nourishing my roots.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Figures.....	vi
Vita.....	viii
Abstract of the Dissertation.....	ix
Introduction: Writing Alongside Decimated Trees.....	1
Chapter One: Vanishing Palestine.....	29
Chapter Two: Visuality and the Consumption of Palestine.....	82
Chapter Three: The Politics of the Palate.....	146
Chapter Four: Memories and Olives.....	212
Epilogue: To Exist is to Resist.....	273
References.....	288

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Obama Plants Magnolia Tree in Jerusalem	30
Figure 2: Anti-Greenwashing Campaign	40
Figure 3: Abu Ghneim Transformation in Ten Years	53
Figure 4: Architectures of Disappearance	53
Figure 5: Architectures of Disappearance	53
Figure 6: Marthe Keller as ‘Dahlia Iyad’ in “Black Sunday” (1977)	84
Figure 7: Khaled and Said prepare for ‘special operation’	103
Figure 8: Khaled and Said’s “Last Supper”	104
Figure 9: <i>Paradise Now</i> Film Poster	109
Figure 10: Anthony Bourdain	118
Figure 11: Anthony Bourdain walks in front of the “separation wall”	122
Figure 12: Anthony Bourdain impromptu bar mitzvah	126
Figure 13: Anthony Bourdain poses with Betty of “The Speed Sisters”	139
Figure 14: Betty of “The Speed Sisters”	139
Figure 15: Anthony Bourdain at the Aida Refugee Camp	144
Figure 16: Daskara olive oil tasting at <i>Ris</i>	147
Figure 17: Daskara olive tasting features Sicilian thyme focaccia	148
Figure 18: Palestinian olive tree planted by Israeli settlement	163
Figure 19: IDF monitoring from a hill during 2012 Olive Harvest	165
Figure 20: Palestinian woman bleeding from settler attack	167
Figure 21: Canaan Fair Trade “Press Packet”	182
Figure 22: Canaan Fair Trade olive oil products	186

Figure 23: “From Our Fields to Your Table” promotional literature	189
Figure 24: Abu Adnan Abed El Salam	192
Figure 25: Mahfoutha Odeh	208
Figure 26: <i>The Gaza Kitchen</i> book cover	218
Figure 27: Famous photograph of Leila Khalid.....	225
Figure 28: Scarlet Johansson BDS image	231
Figure 29: “Buying Israel Goods Is Funding Apartheid”	233
Figure 30: “Don’t Dip Into Apartheid”	234
Figure 31: Shepherd’s Field in Beit Sahour	242
Figure 32: Map of Separation Wall in Beit Sahour	244
Figure 33: Village oven or “ein taboun” in Palestine	263
Figure 34: Fares Odeh	285

VITA

2014 Ph.D, Sociology and Ethnic Studies, University of California, San Diego
2014 Instructor of Sociology, University of San Diego
2013 Instructor of Sociology, Cuyamaca Community College
2011-2013 Instructor of Sociology and Ethnic Studies, UC San Diego
2008 University of California, San Diego M.A. Sociology
2006 University of California, Berkeley B.A. Sociology, with Honors

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Savory Politics: Land, Memory, and the Ecological Occupation of Palestine

by

Lila Sharif

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology and Ethnic Studies

University of California, San Diego, 2014

Professor Yen Espiritu, Co-Chair
Professor Ivan Evans, Co-Chair

Using the olive as an optic, I conduct multi-sited, interdisciplinary research to explore the complex manifestations of settler-colonialism, using the Occupied Palestinian

Territories of the West Bank as my case study. Broadly, I argue that settler-colonialism relies on both material and cultural mechanisms of disappearing native peoples. I elucidate this dual nature of settler-colonialism by analyzing the neoliberal consumption of Palestinian olive oil and popular visual representations of Palestinian bodies against the ongoing material transformation of Palestinian landscapes—processes I collectively conceptualize as *vanishment*. The signification of the olive is not only symbolic; in fact, Palestinian livelihoods are contingent upon the thriving of the olive and its extractions for culinary, bodily, spiritual, and cultural reasons. As Palestinians continue to experience the decimation of their olive groves, the consumption of Palestinian olive oil has become increasingly popular through transnational fair trade circuits. I examine the racialized and gendered tropes of Palestinian indigeneity—thus bringing Food Studies into conversation with Cultural Studies, Critical Gender Studies, Ethnic Studies and Postcolonial Theory. I end with an alternative reading of the olive that sees it as a site where Palestinian women are able to recover and transmit memory to their children and enact a form of self-determination in the face of pending vanishment. Through performance ethnography including olive oil tasting, olive harvesting, and eating, as well as interviews with the olive producers, olive oil exporters, and living with farmers and their families, this dissertation project offers new theoretical questions about the ways in which settler colonialism, and the processes of vanishing native peoples and their subjectivities, co-resides with neoliberal, multicultural tropes of contingent humanity.

Introduction: Writing Alongside Decimated Trees¹

In December 1949, David Ben-Gurion, the first Israeli prime minister, addressed the citizens of the newly created Jewish state. Referring to the Palestinians who had been expelled from four-fifths of now Israel, he assured his people not to worry about Palestinians returning to their homeland, famously declaring: “The old will die and the young will forget.”

While the old may have died, the young have not forgotten and it is the active remembrance of Palestine that continues to unsettle the Zionist project of complete Palestinian annihilation. My own story ties in with the radical urgency of memory and living/surviving in the face of this pending disappearance. As a Palestinian woman born and raised in Los Angeles, California, my home has been a fraught site of uncertainty and danger. In 1987, my home was besieged by fifty members of the SWAT team, FBI, and Sheriff’s Department. They stormed into my parents’ home and threw everything in the air in the middle of the night. I do not remember my screams, but my mother tells me I was yelling in terror. They passed my room and pushed aside my bewildered father who held his U.S. passport up to them in a futile effort to defend his home. His plea was unheeded and he was violently shoved out of the way. The men then entered my 29-year-old uncle’s room as he slept. Surrounding my uncle’s bed, one jammed a shotgun into his cheek while the others stood with their guns fixed at his face. A helicopter buzzing in circles accompanied the chaos of shouts in my once safe home. In a transient moment, my uncle was taken from our home and sealed in solitary confinement at Terminal Island.

¹ Because each chapter contains within it an extensive literature review, I limit the literature review component of the Introduction except to position my work within the broader discourses on settler-colonialism and to illuminate my interventions within these discourses.

a maximum-security prison, for twenty-three days in a case that became known as the “LA-8”².

The raids and terror imposed upon Palestinians residing in the U.S. occurs alongside the material destruction of Palestinian lands and homes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). According to the Israeli Committee Against Housing Demolitions, since 1967, about 27,000 Palestinian homes and other structures (livestock pens and fencing for example) crucial for a family’s livelihood have been demolished in the OPT, including East Jerusalem³⁴. Their memory, like the thousands of Palestinian villages that were exterminated since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 is left outside of hegemonic history. Their memory only appears when we allow ourselves to be

² On January 26, 1987, when the Reagan Administration was embroiled in the Iran-Contra scandal, six Palestinian immigrants from Jordan, two of whom were permanent residents of the U.S., and the Kenyan born wife of one of them, were arrested in their Los Angeles homes. The raid involved 60 members of the FBI, INS and the LA police force. The following week a seventh Palestinian was arrested. All were charged under provisions of Section 241(a) (6) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This section of the act, known as the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, was adopted during the McCarthy era and allows for the deportation of alien residents who are affiliated with an "organization that causes to be written, circulated, distributed, published or displayed, written or printed matter advocating or teaching economic, international and governmental doctrines of world communism." The defendants were portrayed as "security threats" and were shackled during court appearances. Because bail was set exorbitantly high, the eight remained in maximum security facilities until February 17. The eight defendants were arrested due to their membership in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a faction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization that allegedly advocates the doctrines of world communism. Throughout the lengthy court history of the L.A. 8, the government has been unable to present such evidence. In February 1989 it was disclosed that the government had used electronic surveillance to eavesdrop on defense/client consultations. A lawsuit over this breach of privacy is still pending. One week following the initial 7 arrests, there was speculation that the L.A. 8 was a test case for the feasibility of a contingency plan that was leaked to the press. Called *Alien Terrorists and Undesirables: A Contingency Plan*, the 1986 document specifically targets "undesirables" from Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Morocco and Lebanon. (Iraq is noticeably absent from this list. At the time, the U.S. looked more favorably on Iraqis and their leader Saddam Hussein, whom the U.S. supported in his war against what was then a mutual enemy, Iran.) In other words, the U.S. military would be involved in operating "a site sized to house up to 5,000 aliens in temporary quarters."

³ <http://www.icahd.org/>

⁴ It is impossible to know how many homes exactly because the Israeli authorities only report on the demolition of “structures,” which may be homes or may be other structures. When a seven-story apartment building is demolished containing more than 20 housing units that is considered only one demolition.

haunted by their ghostly traces. These absence-presences impel me to echo the questions raised by refugee studies scholar Yen Le Espiritu: “how do we write about absences? How do we compel others to look for the things that are seemingly not there? How do we imagine beyond the limits of what is already stated to be understandable?” (2005: xx).

In my case, the whisperings emerging from these ghostly traces seemed to hover around the Palestinian olive tree; it carried the story of our identity in its branches, our attachment to the land in its roots, and our memories in its fruits. Olive oil—that full-flavored golden liquid drenching the most familiar stews, sautéing onions, moistening our breads, greasing pans, and perfecting eggs. It is what my mother warmed and massaged over my sour stomach and plugged into my ears when I had a throbbing earache as a child; it is what she rolled her dough in; a warm medicinal agent, a lotion, an eyebrow fixer, a makeup remover, an after-bath moisturizer, a lip balm, a condiment, an emollient, a solution for squeaky doors, and a cake of hard green soap from Nablus. Our foods and medicines revolve around the consumption of the olive and its extractions.

In this dissertation, I use the olive as an optic that reveals the points of convergence between land struggles, culture and representation, memory and identity, gender, and food consumption. I read the olive not as an ahistorical commodity but as a historically situated product that exposes how the cultural and the material intersect to form what I call settler-colonial “vanishment”—processes of disappearing, replacing, making invisible, and depoliticizing indigenous attachments to land. In developing “vanishment” in each chapter, as well as its various material and cultural manifestations, I illuminate the ways in which settler-colonialism functions to vanish the native in multiple, intersecting ways. I contribute to the discourses within settler-colonial studies

by linking ecological, cultural, and epistemological mechanisms and sites that enable the disappearance of native positionalities and experiences, using Palestine as my case study. Collectively, my chapters argue that vanishment occurs in the most insidious of ways—from the transformation and replacement of ecological landscapes that are characteristically Palestinian, to films and television programs claiming to humanize the indigenous ‘other’, to the construction of Palestinian foods as desirable and consumable, to neoliberal markets that have welcomed native foods in the last decade, and to epistemological erasures of native women’s memories—masking the intimate and mundane forms of violence that seep into everyday life for colonized peoples.

The conceptualization of “vanishment” enables an alternative reading of Palestinian history, one that destabilizes the assumed completion of Israeli settler-colonial replacement of Palestinian lands. In this dissertation, I draw primarily from the works of indigenous feminist scholars, Palestinian sociology, and cultural studies frameworks in order to contribute a multi-dimensional and multi-sensory analysis of settler-colonialism, one that links the palate, gendered memory, representation, and consumption. I also address the ways in which transnational cultural representations mask the ongoing vanishment of Palestinians, through limited “digestive” tropes that further distance Palestinians from the lands they claim as home.

This project uses a mixed methodological approach to illuminate the various manifestations of vanishment. During a cumulative nine months of ethnography conducted in Palestine, I interviewed the main figures in the global circulation of Palestinian olive oil, including olive producers and their families, laborers in the extraction trade, olive wood craftsmen, Palestinian *fellaheen* (peasants/agricultural

laborers) in the West Bank, olive oil importers in the U.S., and olive harvest tour guides in the OPT. I also reside with a Palestinian farming family in Burqin, where the Palestinian Fair Trade Association is headquartered. In addition, I conduct in-depth analyses of literary and visual productions that highlight various aspects of the ongoing vanishment of Palestine, including what is masked in these transnational cultural representations.

Admittedly, however, this dissertation was painful to write. On December 23, 2012, I returned to San Diego, CA from a 3-month visit to the West Bank—the third⁵ ethnographic research trip over the course of five years—in which I participated in the fall olive harvest and conducted the interviews I discuss in this dissertation. Upon my return, I found it difficult to revisit the narratives I had recorded. Israel’s eight-day assault on the Gaza Strip—called “Operation Pillar of Defense” by Israel and officially launched on November 14, 2012—had left 161 Palestinian men, women and children dead and 1,200 injured. The assault gave way to deadly protests⁶ across the West Bank, and for days, West Bank life was suspended in a choking pause. Walking through the narrow pathways in *al Khalil* (Hebron), children crouched to pick up Israeli tear gas bullet canisters made in the state of Pennsylvania, and strung them together to form a necklace. Sitting on the *stooḥ*⁷ al-Khalil, young women worried about the fate of their sons and brothers who were throwing stones with their sling shots or bare hands. Each time we

⁵ In total, my ethnographic research in the West Bank totaled 9-months divided into three trips since 2008.

⁶ Driving through the Palestinian city of Ramallah, a spontaneous protest erupted on November 18, 2012. My window was struck with a bullet from Israeli soldiers who were shooting at random to a swarm of Palestinian youth throwing rocks at their military vehicles and chanting in protest of Israel’s assault on Gaza. I was not harmed. The car was dented. Many around me were not as lucky.

⁷ Flat rooftop overlooking the surrounding areas where people smoke hookah, hang laundry, prepare and store food or watch the surrounding areas.

heard a shot, we crouched, dug our noses into a peeled onion, and choked through the carcinogenic gas. The tear gas canisters discharged by an Israeli tank half a mile away cut through shirts and limbs below us, dozens at a time. I recall one woman who had retrieved all of her perfume and splashed it on tissues to distribute to the young men on the ground to help cut up the smell of gas and break up the fumes in their chest. Despite the prevalent image of angry chants that are televised in depictions of Palestinians gathering in public space, there was a deafening quiet that accompanied this scene as well as an anxious uncertainty about tomorrow. Settler-colonialism in Palestine is violent and terrifying, but it is often uncannily quiet.

Returning to the U.S, a site long riddled with perturbing hauntings of its own settler-colonialisms, I contended with these narratives, which emerged within a particularly unsettling backdrop. According to Palestinian writer Raja Shehadeh (2007), “Palestine has been constantly reinvented, with devastating consequences to its original inhabitants. Whether it was the cartographers preparing maps or travelers describing the landscape in the extensive travel literature, what mattered was not the land and its inhabitants as they actually were, but the confirmation of the viewer’s or reader’s religious or political beliefs” (xiv).

Indeed, the Palestine I knew was off the map both literally and figuratively. The gaps between how Palestine was evoked with such ease and regularity and how Palestine was experienced by people who felt a deep connection to its land felt immeasurable. I let my thoughts carry the weight of these questions: How do I contend with the enormous gaps within academic knowledge about Palestine and the Palestinian people? How do I write against the dominant narratives that claim such intimacy and familiarity? As a

diasporic Palestinian subject, how do I write *alongside* intimate narratives of Palestinian land as it is being further decimated, penetrated, and fragmented? How do I write against the endless news stories and narratives of slingshots chucking the remains of destroyed villages crumbled to the ground, sounds of missiles and interceptors ripping the sky, without reproducing a narrative of chaos and dysfunction? In the words of Walter Benjamin, I ask, how do I write Palestinian history *against the grain* (1969: 256-257)?

Since 2005, Palestine appears in the United States in particularly complex ways: via boycott and divestment campaigns at American universities; as a seductive destination for alternative spring breaks, a political cause for global citizens, and a case-in-point in international diplomacy debates. At the American Studies Association meeting in Washington D.C. in November 2013, senior professors, graduate students, and undergraduate members of the association spoke at an open meeting called for by the National Executive Council to discuss a resolution to “endorse and honor” the Palestinian call for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. According to news reports, speaker after speaker rose to express strong support for the resolution, urging the council to vote in favor of the resolution⁸. Similarly, in March 2013, UC San Diego’s Associated Students organized a momentous Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign calling for disengagement from companies profiting from Israeli occupation⁹ which was passed by the student senate.

⁸ <http://electronicintifada.net/content/taboo-boycotting-israel-has-been-broken/12949>

⁹ On March 13, 2012, the Associated Students at the University of California, San Diego passed a resolution to divest from companies profiting from the settler-colonial occupation of Palestine with 20 votes in favor, 12 against, and 1 abstaining. Universities nation-wide are working to continue the Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions (BDS) campaign called for by Palestinian civil society.

Both compelled and troubled by these emergent encounters, I resorted to a sort of resistant quiet, not knowing how to write *against* and *with* this current. I finally felt summonsed to write after stumbling upon the novella *Home* (2012) by Toni Morrison. *Home* tells the story of an African-American Korean War veteran, Frank Money, who, at the end of time served in a desegregated army, returns to the Jim Crow South in search of his ill sister, Cee. The racial politics of the time period are woven into the narrative through lyrical references to hooded men, eugenics, and flamboyant zootsuiters. A brief subplot tells the story of Crawford, an elderly black man who refuses to leave his home even after a white supremacist group threatens to murder the entire town if the townspeople did not evacuate within twenty-four hours. Crawford sits on his porch chewing tobacco, refusing to leave a magnolia tree planted in his yard. The magnolia, a symbol of the South, is the oldest tree in the county and was planted by Crawford's great grandmother. The scene ends when the very mahogany tree that Crawford loves becomes the site of his death.

Crawford's love for his great grandmother's mahogany tree grips me. In reading this passage, I am returned to Sur Baher, a community of about 15,000 people on the southeastern outskirts of the racially segregated city of Jerusalem. Sur Baher straddles the armistice border¹⁰ drawn up after Israel's occupation of the West Bank in 1967. For a long time, Sur Baher has been a target in the West Jerusalem Municipality's home demolition campaign, designed to vanish the indigenous Palestinian population to make

¹⁰ Also referred to as the Green Line, a reference to the green ink used to establish the state of Israel and demarcate it from Palestinian Territories of the West Bank (namely the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula) in 1949. All of these territories mentioned parenthetically are occupied by Israel to date, and are referred to collectively as the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

room for Israeli settlers.¹¹ Today, Sur Baher is surrounded by the Israeli colonial settlements of Armon Henatsif, Har Homa, and Talpiot. The Israeli military authority has increasingly targeted Sur Baher to make way for the “eastern ring road,” a Jewish-only bypass connecting the Jewish settler-colonies in east Jerusalem. The new Israeli-only road will be built across 1,070 dunums of Palestinian land, extending from Beit Safafa in the south of Jerusalem, through Sur Baher to Umm Tuba, Wadi Nar and Abu Dis. Sur Baher has also been targeted under the guise of zoning, which indicates a ‘green area’—environmental or recreational property of the state of Israel—despite its location on Palestinian villages and communities. Marking the land for “zoning” is a technique by the state of Israel to prevent the land from being used by Palestinian owners, in order to continue developing technologies of surveillance and segregation between Israeli Jews and Palestinians (most notably, Israel’s “separation barrier”—or as many call it, the “wall of apartheid”), and to reserve the land for housing new Jewish settlers primarily from the United States and Europe.

In early December 2012, I visited Sur Baher to witness an intimate moment of vanishment. I had been informed by a West Bank-based human rights organization that a family had been ordered to demolish their own home. Accompanied by a journalist and a community organizer, I stepped into a clearing of broken rock along a hill. I was greeted by a young man named Sammy who several weeks earlier had spent his honeymoon bulldozing his childhood home to rubble. Sammy’s family had received a notice from the

¹¹ Residents of Sur Baher are considered Jerusalemites and pay Jerusalem municipal taxes; however, they have been subject to home demolition orders by the state of Israel since 1967. After the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel annexed seventy kilometers to the municipal boundaries of West Jerusalem and imposed Israeli law on this area. These annexed territories included not only the part of Jerusalem which had been under Jordanian rule (east Jerusalem, or the ‘Palestinian side’), but also an additional sixty-four square kilometers, most of which had belonged to 28 Palestinian villages in the West Bank.

state of Israel announcing that a street that connects several Jewish settlements to ‘greater Jerusalem’ was to be built in Sur Baher and, unfortunately, his home was in the way. Sammy and his seventeen extended family members who resided in the same home were to evacuate and demolish their home so that the city would be able to proceed with its plans. If Sammy’s family did not comply with these orders, he and his brother would be imprisoned, and forced to pay a fine. As a result, Sammy and his brother had to rent a bulldozer and demolish the home themselves. During our interview, Sammy told me, “There is nothing that can prepare you for watching your home fall like this. It is like you are dying” [Interview, December 2012].

Out of the corner of my eye, I spot an elderly Palestinian man sitting on a chair in the rain, the keffiyeh wrapped around his face soaking wet. He was Sammy’s grandfather, a man of ninety-six. He was sitting in the rain next to an old olive tree that was planted by his father over a hundred years before. He was yelling to the sky: “I am ninety-six years old [...] and my father lived over one hundred years. Who will remove this tree? I told them they could bulldoze the house but this olive tree remains. Even if the Israelis come for me, I will not let them cut this tree. I swear by the holy earth, with God as my witness, they can take my life but not this tree!”

Sammy’s grandfather’s refusal to let go of the ancient olive tree demonstrates that trees—the eternal symbols of earthly abundance and life—are also sites of trouble and transference. With this in mind, this dissertation is a weaving of arguments around the Palestinian olive tree, through the emergent themes of consumption, memory, and recuperation, within the context of vanishment—each an essential component of life and land in Palestine. In my analyses, I bring each theme back to the land, an intervention that

is both political and methodological. As such, writing, which is often a lonely and isolating experience, becomes a form of re-attachment to the lands of Palestine. Through this conceptualization of the olive, I am able show the ways in which the violence of penetration and settler colonial transformations of Palestinian lands are informed by the notion that the land and people of Palestine are inherently *violable* (Smith 2005). As a result, I argue, inquiry into the olive, its symbolic and material significance as a source of vital life, becomes particularly urgent and generative.

Indeed, in Palestine, olive trees have become central to the processes of vanishment. Each year, during the olive harvesting season in the fall, attacks against Palestinian trees, farmers, and harvesters spike across the West Bank – where more than 515,000 Israelis occupy over 125 settlements which are considered illegal under international law. In 2013 alone, 8,000 olive trees were destroyed by Israeli military and settlers, and more have been vandalized. A 2010 OXFAM report reveals that Israel is responsible for the destruction of 800,000 olive trees in the West Bank since it was occupied by Israel in 1967¹². Moreover, Israel’s infrastructure of apartheid has demanded the systemic leveling of Palestinian olive trees. By 2012, tens of thousands of olive trees have been uprooted to make way for the construction of the Israeli apartheid wall and 85 percent of the land used for the building of the wall lays in the West Bank.

¹²In 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip (known collectively as the occupied Palestinian Territories), as well as large sections of Syria and Egypt, as a result of the Six-day War. Before 1967, the West Bank was annexed and controlled by Jordan and the Gaza Strip was controlled by Egypt for approximately 20 years (since Israel conquered most of Historic Palestine in 1948 to form the modern state of Israel). Since 1967, Israel has transferred many of its citizens to Jewish “settlements,” (colonies, which are illegal according to the fourth Geneva Convention). Today 40% of the West Bank is off-limits to Palestinians, as they are not allowed to live in Israeli settlements, drive on Israeli-only roads connecting these settlements, or even live or travel through “security zones,” surrounding the settlements.

Olive trees and their fruit are deeply connected to Palestinian material and cultural livelihoods. Palestinian olive oil, reported to be among the best in the world¹³, has the potential to top the organic and fair trade olive oil markets worldwide¹⁴. According to the North American Olive Oil Association, 98% of the world's olive oil comes from the Mediterranean region, which has a history of olive tree cultivation that stretches back more than 6,000 years¹⁵. Situated in the Mediterranean Levantine region that also includes Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and parts of Iraq, Palestine is considered to be the first region where olives were harvested¹⁶. Olives are Palestine's most important crop, allowing a form of economic sustainability in an otherwise devastated economy. About half (48%) of agricultural land in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is planted with 10 million olive trees, the vast majority of which are in the West Bank.¹⁷ Currently, the olive oil industry makes up 15-20% of the agricultural income of the occupied Palestinian Territories, depending on the season, and supports the livelihoods of approximately 100,000 families.¹⁸ In 2006, 35,000 metric tons of olive oil were pressed from 157,733 metric tons of olives, and 11,400 metric tons were processed as pickled olives¹⁹.

As many of my interlocutors explain, the olive marks the landscape as characteristically Palestinian, which has subjected its trees to systemic decimation by the state of Israel and Jewish settlers. Sammy's grandfather's refusal to uproot his beloved tree can be read as a refusal to vanish Palestine, and desire to maintain a Palestinian

¹³ <http://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressrelease/2010-10-15/palestinian-olive-oil-profits-west-bank-could-double-if-israeli-re>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ <http://www.naooa.org/>

¹⁶ <http://dai.com/news-publications/multimedia/daskara-palestinian-olive-oil>

¹⁷ http://www.docstoc.com/docs/document-preview.aspx?doc_id=133368349

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ From the United Nations Fact Sheet titled "The Olive Harvest in the West Bank and Gaza", 2008.

presence in the soil both literally and symbolically. His exclamation that his father planted the tree also signifies the relationship between the olive and Palestinian rootedness. Indeed, the very landscape of Palestine has been formed to embrace the Palestinian olive with the creation of terraces to retain rainwater for its trees²⁰. Moreover, the olive is central to Palestinian cuisine as most Palestinian stews and dishes require olive oil. As my interlocutors inform me, all three meals are formed around and based on the presence of olive oil. As 38-year-old West Bank homemaker Nadeen tells me, “In the morning, we make tea and eat our bread with olive oil and *zaatar*²¹ and we make the children sandwiches with *lebna*²²...wouldn’t we need olive oil for that?” [Interview, October 2012].

It is not surprising, then, that the Palestinians narratives that have been transmitted to me by my family are, too, stories about the Palestinian olive tree and other fruits native to Palestine. Everything from the hand-planted fruit trees in my family’s yard to the jars of home-made pickles in our pantry were memories of my parents’ childhood in Palestine. Through their own gardening and cooking practices, they attempted to recreate Palestine in our Los Angeles home. Our yard was planted with sage, tomatoes, cucumbers, olive trees, oranges, figs, sweet cactus fruit, pomelo, and mint, and in her kitchen my mother taught me that being Palestinian means knowing what spices compliment what meats, how to wrap grapeleaves tightly so as to seal the meats, rice, and

²⁰ *Palestine and the Palestinians, A Guidebook: 2nd Edition*. Produced by the Alternative Information Group, September 2008.

²¹ Zaatar is a dish made from the crushed dried herbs, mixed with sesame and caraway seeds, sumac, salt, and other spices, resembling a coarse khaki-colored powder. Zaatar is consumed side-by-side with a bowl of olive oil. First, bread is dipped into the bowl of olive oil and after a good amount is absorbed, it is then dipped into the plate to gather enough zaatar on both sides.

²² Kefir cheese

fresh tomato, how to eyeball the perfect size falafel, and how to measure ingredients without a measuring cup. From my mother and father, I learned to pick mint in clusters so that it resembled a flower, rather than pluck its leaf by leaf or yank it from its roots. I knew that winter was the season for citrus, and we made orange breads to make use of the fresh juice. Above all, I knew the olive tree—how the branches spread like long, aged fingers forming a palm to hold up the mound of silvery leaves. Thick trunks and old olive trees were regarded with reverence and admiration, and I learned of their abundant goodness through conversations with my mother in our kitchens in LA as she pickled their fruit.

During my ethnographic work in Palestine in 2012, I was taught by many farmers and their families that a good olive is hard, dark green, and not too discolored. The amount of meat per olive is also important; the more meat on the olives the more filling it is, some say. Others suggest that the best olives are the small ones because they are bursting with the flavors of sours and herbs. The harvest time includes days of hard labor immediately following the first rainfall. Everyone is made to work as harvesting is a family affair. Those who are more nimble, climb trees and shake branches carefully. Some squat over bags and buckets of olives and remove leaves in preparation for the olives' cleaning. Some stand and pick from the branches they can reach. And some pick the olives from ground. Each olive is precious, even if it has fallen to the ground, has been discolored by the sun, is squashed by clumsy feet, or is skinny with little meat. Everyone's hands feel cramped, darkened by dust and moist from the olive's juice. Picking and pickling were always overseen by elders.

The ethnographic research described in this dissertation builds on the vast knowledge I have inherited from my family through their nostalgia for a Palestine that they were exiled from. I learned from my mother and father that the process of making good-tasting olives has been consistent year after year for generations, although each family would modify it to enhance desired flavors. My mother prefers a bit of bitterness, while my father likes his olives mild, “almost sweet,” he tells me during an interview. My mother recalls, “We didn’t use knives to take out the seeds. The best part was actually crushing the olives so that they would split open. We never removed the seeds; it was more to absorb the flavors when the olives were pickled.” The olives were then thoroughly cleaned with salt water, freed of any dust or dirt, and their stems plucked. My father recalls, “when it was time to crush the olives, brothers and sisters and cousins would compare the stones they had found in the fields: the flattest stone and the roundest stone always gathered due praise”. For many, crushing was a time for gossiping, telling jokes, and singing. It was also a time for the exchange of memory. The ‘remember when’ moments were sentimental, hilarious, and painful as every family was riddled with fragmentation. After sitting in salt water for days, the olives were tested to make sure the salt hadn’t sunk to the bottom of the barrels. This was done by using a hard-boiled egg: if the egg floats, the salt content was sufficient. Salt was used for flavor, to mitigate the bitterness, as well as for preservation. Families would pickle up to fifty pounds of olives, or enough to last until the next olive harvest the following autumn. The cleaned, salted olives were placed in jars with coarsely chopped peppers, lemon wedges and brine. The pickling process lasted about a month, with labor done every day. Fathers would give

their married sons and daughters jars of olives to hold them through the year, and people would offer them as payment for their debts.

Statement about Terminology and Theoretical Positioning

Though studies of Palestine have gained recent momentum, colonial studies have often been limited to how much Palestine can be absorbed into ‘classical’ models of settler-colonialism. Gershon Shafir’s oft cited book *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (1996) is a case in point. In his critique of French Marxist historian Maxime Rodinson, to whom Shafir charges an “orthodox pro-Palestinian theoretical perspective” for his use of the term settler-colonialism (211), Shafir encourages his reader to see Zionist settler-colonialism for its complexity through “the multifaceted character of the European overseas expansion drive” and to “distinguish between its contradictory impulses, and to address the ones specifically relevant to Zionism” (211-212). Here, the settlers’ narrative is allotted generous complexity, rendering the colonized a dormant population. In choosing to analyze Zionist complexity in isolation from the experiences of Palestinians, the Zionist settler is relegated the position of the acting subject, whereas Palestinian bodies and lands are simply *acted upon*. In response to the privileging of the decided “actor”, Edward Said’s chapter “Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims” states:

Very little is said about what Zionism entailed for non-Jews who happened to have encountered it; for that matter, nothing is said about where (outside Jewish history) it took place, and from what in the historical context of nineteenth-century Europe Zionism drew its force. To the Palestinian, for whom Zionism was somebody else's idea imported into Palestine and for which in a very concrete way he or she was made to pay and suffer, these forgotten things about Zionism are the very things that are centrally important. (1979:116)

At the same time, in Postcolonial Studies, where Palestine is frequently mentioned (indeed, the “father” of Postcolonial Studies is Palestinian literary theorist Edward Said) there is a temporal tension that impels me to resituate Palestine within colonial studies frameworks. In its most literal sense, “postcolonialism” defines a moment of transition from colonialism to self-determination, optimistically suggesting the transcendence of imperialisms, which are relegated to a moment that has passed (Darian-Smith: 292). In reality, however, the historical rupture suggested by the prefix “post-“ contradicts both the continuities and discontinuities of power that have shaped the formal colonial empires (McClintock 1995: 12). In Palestine, the realities of everyday life reveal that settler colonialism is far from “post”. In fact, settler colonialism manifests in every facet of life for Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip, in the state of Israel, in refugee camps in frontline nations, and in the diaspora. Scholars in Palestine Studies have detailed the different ways that settler colonialism manifests in each of these contexts. In his analysis of the transforming geography in Palestine, Gary Fields describes the ominous performance of power in the West Bank:

In the space where these [Ar Ram, Beit Hanina, and Qalandia] towns were once joined together stand several prison-like guard towers that now surround the checkpoint terminal. Here, under the gaze of mostly young military overseers, Palestinians are processed as they try to move from one geographical location to another. While this landscape is dramatic in the way it reconfigures land and controls the movements of people, it is not unique. Many other venues distributed throughout the West Bank host the same drama of power and space in which military authorities and Palestinian civilians engage in similarly scripted rituals of domination and submission, with the same stage set of coldly formidable architectural forms invariably hovering over the actors below. In the process, Palestinian territory is fragmenting into ex-communicated enclaves,

recasting the socioeconomic and material life of the landscape while remaking the character and identity of the land itself. (2010: 138).

Here, Fields describes the restriction, surveillance, and control that emerges in this theatre of settler colonial occupation. In particular, he points to the architectures on the ground that enable the reproduction of Israeli power. As his photo essay shows both visually and descriptively, the “scripted ritual of domination and submission” is not anomalous but embedded into the very landscape. This spectacle of settler-colonial occupation is particularly disconcerting considering the 160 checkpoints that chop up the West Bank today. Most checkpoints, in fact, do not divide Palestinian territories from Israel (Israel claims that checkpoints are for Israeli security), but instead divide up Palestinian communities from one another within the West Bank, often cutting Palestinian farmers from their farmlands on which they rely for subsistence. In this context, the institution of the checkpoint functions as the grotesque reminder of Israeli settler colonial occupation that Palestinians must encounter to go to work, school, go to the hospital, etc. It is the intimate site of conquest where imminent violence lives. Indeed, harassment, detention, shackling, blindfolding, and stripping are routine here causing a perpetual anxiety of uncertainty, intimidation, and fear, effectively stifling Palestinian life.

What Fields does not explicitly discuss, however, is the role of race in the modern settler-colonial structures of the West Bank. In her article “A Hole in the Wall; A Rose at a Checkpoint: The Spatiality of Colonial Encounters in Occupied Palestine,” Sherene Razack expands this analysis by showing how the transformation of Palestinian landscapes is part of a racial logic that produces Palestinianness as the antithesis to

modernity, a central justifying ideology of Israeli settler-colonialism. In other words, the racial logic of Palestinians as anti-modern subjects incapable of properly managing their landscapes colludes with the material conditions that include spatial arrangements to restrict movement that Fields describes, as well as Israeli state policies and procedures that make Palestinian men, women and children particular targets for racial violence. Sherene Razack reflects on the spatial arrangements that memorialize power on the bodies of the colonized in the Occupied Palestinian Territory:

[...] spaces express power arrangements that operate on the bodies of the colonized, turning them into small animals scrambling over rocks, or rats prodded and poked to make their way through a maze. The same spatial arrangements confirm colonizers as rightful owners of the land, convincing them who they are. The wall, the shouting at checkpoints, the power to arbitrarily stop and search, these must assist the 18 year old soldier wielding a gun to banish the ghosts on the landscape, the Arab faces, the outlines of buildings, the old Arabic names – anything that suggests that in truth, the land is Arab land. (2010: 90)

Like Fields, Razack argues that power and space intersect in the daily lives of Palestinians. However, Razack anchors race to her analysis of spatial manifestations of power particularly because “power must be inscribed on the bodies of the colonized” (94). The ability to organize Palestine as a “rat prodded and poked” or a “small animal scrambling over rocks” serves to construct Palestine as an anti-modern subject. These discursive formations mark Palestinians as unfit for sovereignty, and therefore, justifiably bound to Israeli settler colonial occupation. The ‘scrambling’ and ‘prodding’ work alongside the sounds of people shouting to produce the image of chaos and savagery. On the other hand, the Israeli is able to stand, walk, and sit, behaviors that fit the construct of the modern, universal European subject. These contrasting constructions produce racial

meanings that have been enabled by the discourse of the ‘war on terror’, a relationship I describe in the second chapter.

What Fields and Razack suggest is that settler colonial occupation cannot be fully understood without attention to the historical context in which its processes emerge. In a sense, my analysis remaps Palestine through narratives around the Palestinian olive. However, taking my cue from Fields and Razack, I pay attention to the particular manifestations of the settler colonial context that shape these narratives as well as the material conditions that enable their formations. However, due to the fact that settler-colonialism replaces indigenous lands and erects ‘modern’ structures in their place, this dissertation necessarily looks beyond what is observable, reconciling haunted memories and effaced histories by placing Palestinian subjectivities at the fore. Here, I am referencing the work of Avery Gordon’s *Ghostly Matters* (2008) in which she argues that abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life through haunting especially when they are said to be over or when they are denied (xvi). Haunting is defined as an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence disrupts our present moment (ibid). It is a way of knowing that exceeds acceptable sociological accounts obsessed with observability and visibility because those memories and narratives that haunt are often concealed within observable sites of knowledge production (xvi). As such, I use a necessarily interdisciplinary approach that combines cultural studies methodologies, literary analyses, and ethnography in order to articulate what cannot be seen due to the contexts of erasure and replacement.

Due the ubiquity of the term ‘settler-colonialism’ I find it useful to contextualize this definition in the context of Israel/Palestine. I extend Patrick Wolfe’s “logic of

elimination” to include those forms of epistemological, cultural, ecological, and identitarian forms of violence—all of which combine to create the process I refer to as “vanishment”. What is central in my understanding of settler-colonialism is the material erasure, transformation, and replacement of Palestinian landscapes. However, as the chapters will elucidate, this occurs alongside cultural, epistemological and other material forms of eliminating the native.

The term ‘settler’ has about it a deceptively benign ring which masks the violence of colonial encounter that produces and perpetrates its necessarily racist and genocidal regimes against indigenous peoples (Coombes, 2). The conquest and settlement of Palestine was initiated by Zionist Jews concentrated in eastern and central Europe in the latter part of the 19th century (during the crumbling Ottoman Empire), with increasing momentum and official legitimacy from European superpowers following World War I. Within the context of European anti-Semitism, Zionism emerged as one of the responses within the European Jewish community to the major crises of economic and political displacement and of growing anti-Semitism and persecutions in Eastern Europe, and of the emergence of biological anti-Semitism towards Jews in Western Europe, where processes of Jewish assimilation were halted after the arrival of masses of Jews escaping Eastern Europe (Bober 1972; Evron 1988; Yuval-Davis 1992; Abdo 1995). Because the Zionist movement viewed itself as the national liberation movement of Jews from all over the world, the formation of a Jewish state was considered a progressive move toward Jewish normalization in the context of anti-Semitism, and was modeled by its European founders. As such, Israel was formed with economic and political segregation defined by its own terms, refusing to integrate with the indigenous population. The

project of conquering and settling in Palestine, while unique in its structure, objectives and goals, developed as other settler-colonial projects have, through a process of depopulating indigenous communities, thus reflecting the assertion by Patrick Wolfe that “settler-colonialism destroys to replace” (Wolfe 2006: 388; Shafir 1996).

According to Lorenzo Veracini (2010), the term “colony” can have two main interrelated connotations, both of which are applicable to the West Bank where I concentrate my ethnographic research: “A colony is both a political body that is dominated by an exogenous agency, and an exogenous entity that reproduces itself in a given environment” (3). Israeli settler-colonialism is inherently characterized by both traits. Jewish settlers are made by dual processes of conquest and settlement that are ongoing and encouraged by the ideological formation of political Zionism.

I use the term “indigenous” to refer to the originary occupants of a land that is conquered by exogenous populations. As David Maybury-Lewis states in his book *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups, and the State* (1997), “Indigenous peoples claim their lands because they were there first or have occupied them since time immemorial. They are also groups that have been conquered by peoples racially, ethnically or culturally different from themselves. They have thus been subordinated by or incorporated in alien states which treat them as outsiders and, usually, as inferiors” (7-8). Drawing on this Maybury-Lewis’s definition, I see Palestinians as the native population that was conquered in 1948 by European Zionists. I use the terms “indigenous” and “native” interchangeably.

Finally, I want to address the use of the words “Jewish”, “Israeli”, and “Zionist.” Each word is situated in a particular context and should be understood within the

particular context in which it appears. In general, however, many of the people I interviewed referred to Israelis as “Jews.” While this conflation is problematic in many ways, there is a temporal issue that should be mentioned. Many of my interlocutors were born prior to 1948 and had witnessed Zionist conquest during its nascent stages when the state of Israel had not been officially established. In this context, the interviewees knew the conquerors simply as “Jews” from Europe. Moreover, because people of matrimonial Jewish descent as defined by the state of Israel are granted citizenship (although the ease of citizenship status is often conditioned by how close immigrants were to whiteness), there is a political delineation of “Jews” and Palestinians as outlined in law and spatial arrangement (Jewish-only roads, for example).

Theorizing Consumption

Consumption is a theme that emerges throughout the dissertation in complex ways. However, there is very little work within colonial studies and ethnic studies that theorize consumption. Moreover, sociological accounts of consumption are often limited to food access for communities based on economic disparities. In her groundbreaking book, *Racial Indigestion* (2012), Kyla Wazana Tompkins analyzes the ways in which, during the nineteenth century, “mouths became the focus of a disciplinary project within which the correct embodiment of the individual was understood to be of a deep importance to the burgeoning nation” (6). She states, “eating culture, tied as it was to economic and political matters of trade and expansion and thus commodity consumption, became one site of intimate political intensity, where “eating American,” that is, eating foodstuffs tied to the transplanted ecological history and foodways of the Euro-American

majority [...] was one way to produce a moral body” (6). Tompkins offers an historical account of the ways in which food became a way to consolidate whiteness and produce the moral national subject “unswayed by dangerous appetites for exotic and overstimulating, that is “foreign,” foods” (6). Extending this important work that reveals the point of convergence between consumption, race, gender, morality, and proper national subjectivity, I expand the study of food to include the fruits, trunks, and roots of the olive. I take ‘eating’ to include various forms of social, political, economic, and cultural consumption practices that define the ways in which Palestine is “encountered” by the U.S.-West.

Following Tompkins, I conceptualize consumption as a set of cultural and material practices that condition the ways in which Palestine is *feasted upon*. In this way, consumption is removed from its quotidian constitution a privatized acts based on individual taste, and anchored within a colonial studies framework. In this dissertation, ‘consumption’ is defined in three ways: 1. Literal consumption as in the tasting, ingesting, and salivating over food; 2. Visual consumption, as in “feasting one’s eyes” on a visual text; and 3. Consuming of *land* as part of the ongoing settler-colonial project of evacuating and replacing the native. Through these working definitions of consumption, I am able to illuminate the processes of vanishment and their complex manifestations in Palestine. Moreover, I present a paradox in which consumption dissolves the boundary of the self and other through the mastication of visual and gastronomic feasts embodied in subalterity, and also formulates a mechanism by which Palestinians are able to exercise a limited form of agency (by, for example, marketing olive products in the transnational

fair trade industry to Western consumers and transmitting Palestinian memory and identity through food).

Summary of Chapters

In order to anchor the cultural studies component of this project within the material transformation of Palestinian lands, the first chapter focuses on the environmental degradation and decimation of Palestine. Here, I theorize “vanishment” as a process of erasure and replacement of land, people and narratives that, in part, relies on the appropriation of the earth’s natural resources including land and water, the annihilation of indigenous ecosystems, and the removal of native landscapes. I bring together settler-colonial studies, cultural studies and environmental justice studies to illuminate the stakes in the vanishment of land, as well as the potential for epistemological recuperation in Palestinian literature, namely the novel *Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape* (2008) by Raja Shehadeh.

In chapter two, I examine the racialized and gendered tropes that condition what I call Palestinian *consumability* within popular visual culture, particularly in sites that proclaim to be “liberal” and “inclusive.” Following Melani McAlister (2005), I focus on ‘encounters’ that happen across wide geographic spaces “among people who will never meet except through the medium of culture” (McAlister 1) in order to understand the ways in which Palestine becomes digestible through limited visual tropes that obscure the material conditions of settler-colonialism, this contributing to Palestinian vanishment. I offer a critical reading of two visual encounters with Palestine: the successful 2005 Warner Independent Pictures (a subsidiary of Warner Brothers) film *Paradise Now* and

the premiere episode of the award winning show *Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown*, season two.

In chapter three, I turn to the site of food in order to further illuminate the ongoing processes of vanishment within the realm of cultural production. In this chapter, I investigate the ways in which Palestine's land is *chewed* for its savory and sensory qualities at the same moment that the mastication of Palestine's lands is occurring due to the ongoing Israeli settler-colonial occupation, as well as how this co-occurrence becomes absorbed within a globalized discourse of neoliberal multiculturalism. Using the fair trade circulation of Palestinian commodities as my site, I tend to the ways in which Palestinian products become marketable to Western consumers within a context of advanced capitalist mode of production, calling into question the possibility of "fair trade" particularly within a transnational nexus of colonial power relations that begin at the site of the palate. I argue that neoliberal multiculturalism relies on the obscuring trope of the servicing Palestinian farmer.

Finally, in chapter four, I highlight the ways in which consumption can be a site of agency. I argue that native sites of food preparation and consumption are part of everyday struggles against ongoing processes of vanishment. I explore the ways in which food and memory anchor native bodies back to land. Despite their position as "doubly effaced" subjects of colonialism and heteropatriarchy, I argue that Palestinian women exercise a form of agency by corroborating and transmitting Palestinian history in their kitchens. In this way, vanishment is never complete; memories continuously disrupt the myth of colonial completion.

In many ways, this dissertation is fraught by my own hauntings. Entering the doctoral program of sociology at UCSD, I was immediately disillusioned by the ways in which my work on the settler-colonial occupation of Palestine was constantly questioned, particularly by Middle-East specialists. I have been asked to justify Palestinian existence by male Jewish, Zionist classmates, subject to patronizing emails from male professors suggesting that Palestinian activists should ‘denounce terrorism first,’ and prevented by a male Israeli professor from participating on panels on the 2008 Gaza massacre. On the other extreme, I was assumed to be the department’s spokesperson for oppressed Muslim women, particularly in Afghanistan and Iran, and the token sociologist of the Middle East! In turn, I became obsessed with making Palestine visible to U.S. sociologists. In this way, my intellectual project has always been about stopping Palestine from vanishing.

It did not occur to me until many years later, through a series of haunting disturbances and disappointments,²³ that these violent experiences were the making of what Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa call “theory in the flesh.”²⁴ Through this sideways entry into the interdisciplinary field of Ethnic Studies, and the intuitive realization that there was something seriously missing in the way sociologists understood the experiences of colonized peoples, I became motivated to find a “method of knowledge production and a way of writing that could represent the damage and the haunting of sociological historical alternatives” and that could appropriately “conjure,

²³ As an example, a former mentor argued that “genocide” was not a term I could apply to Palestine, at the very same moment that my West Bank city of origin, al-Khalil, was becoming a “ghost town”, continuously evacuated in order to harbor Jewish-American settlers who were throwing their feces into my parents’ childhood stomping grounds.

²⁴ Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, 1983): 23.

describe, narrate, and explain” the personal and material losses brought about by vanishment (Gordon 2008: xvii). My co-chair, Dr. Yen Le Espiritu, whom I found years later, assured me that “ambiguity is full of possibilities. Your ghosts will enable you.” I took the challenge to listen to what was calling to me, for me. In this way, the design of this chapter reflects this process. I begin with what is hypervisible and move slowly to what has been vanished, finding in the end that I am not powerless against epistemological and material vanishments. My ghosts have something to say and it is through a narrative of beauty, loss, survival, and love—a Palestinian *sarha*—that they speak against vanishment.

Chapter One: Vanishing Palestine

On March 20, 2013, United States President Barack Obama boarded Air Force One with a magnolia tree by his side. He was bound for Israeli President Shimon Peres's presidential quarters in West Jerusalem, the capital of the state of Israel. Obama's high security mission was to plant the sapling, reportedly a "direct descendant" of an original magnolia tree from the White House's very own grounds²⁵. The tree was a symbolic and material signifier of the intimate relationship between the United States and the state of Israel. At the tree planting ceremony, Obama stated: "It's an incredible honor to be able to offer this tree to this beautiful garden with so much history with somebody who is a champion on behalf of the Israeli people and a champion on behalf of peace. And we're very good gardeners. I'm sure this tree is going to do great."²⁶

A photo from the tree planting ceremony features Israeli President Shimon Peres watching with pleasure as Obama sprinkles dirt onto the plant's base with a shovel in his perfectly tailored suit. The image of Obama captures him laboring pleasantly in the lush garden of Israel's capital. Encircled by yellow, purple and white pansies, Obama is jovial as he tends to the magnolia tree that will now be part of Beit Hanassi's²⁷ landscape. Peres stands erect, bowing his face slightly to gaze at Obama, his veiny hands tightly bound to his sides and his feet sealed together. He stands at a distance from the American president, ostensibly to allow the magnolia to be centered in the camera's frame for

²⁵<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/03/20/no-joke-israels-agriculture-ministry-digs-up-obamas-gift-tree-hours-after-he-plants-it/>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Beit Hanassi's is Israel's presidential complex. Located in West Jerusalem (Israel's capital is the western part of the segregated city; East Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine, although West Bank and Gaza residents are forbidden to enter East Jerusalem without a special permit from the state of Israel), it was inaugurated in 1971 by then Israeli president, Zalma Shazar.

photo-opportunity. Indeed, both men appear to be frozen in place, and their delightful expressions suggest that they are posing for an image meant to signify the cozy and loyal relationship between the allied nation-states. The sun illuminates Obama's cheerful face and the luscious green leaves that surround him. He grasps the shovel with both hands, indicating his determination and focus. The tree signifies a rootedness, one that literally connects U.S. soil to Israel through the symbolic transfer of the sapling. That Obama is "honored" to plant in Peres's "beautiful garden" indicates that the tree is a site of joy, honor, and friendship.



Figure 1: Obama plants a magnolia tree at the residence of Israeli President Shimon Peres's (right) in Jerusalem. Photo credit: YNet News.

he statements that both Obama and Peres are "very good gardeners" and that Peres's garden bears "so much history" capture the ongoing legacies of settler-colonialism in the Americas and Palestine. Settler-colonialism is a process of environmental transformation that is achieved through the displacement, replacement and disappearance of lands and bodies. In both contexts, the Europeanization of the landscape became an intrinsic part of settler-colonialism; Zionist and European colonizers interpreted the indigenous landscapes and bodies as physical manifestations of the abject

native that had to be disappeared. In the widely cited book *Ecological Imperialism*²⁸ (2004), Alfred Crosby argues that North America was transformed into a physical landscape of remarkable similarity to Europe through the introduction of European crops, weeds, livestock, commensal species, and diseases into the New World. Similarly, in his article, “Social and Physical Landscapes of Contact” Stephen W. Silliman argues that Indian country experienced material transformation ranging from “the expansion of European plants and animals into North American habitats to European over-harvesting of indigenous species, and from the deadly spread of pathogens and epidemics to the substantial impacts of colonialism on the health and diet of the indigenous population, issues involving the physical and biological landscape” (2005: 274).

In Palestine, the “good gardening” practices of the settler-colonial state of Israel have been part of the “eco-occupation” of Palestine’s lands and peoples. Through the planting of non-native plants and trees to resemble European landscapes and the appropriation of the natural habitat to expand colonial settlement, Israeli settler-colonialism is produced through an intricate, systematic process of environmental transformation, replacement and disappearance. The image of Obama and Peres as “good gardeners” invokes the origin story of a barren landscape that was made fertile by the productive external forces of European Zionists. However, there is no mention that the very site of the presidential complex Beit Henassi once housed a thriving Christian Palestinian community, where Edward Said—among others—resided. We thus need to dig beneath these “good gardening practices” in order to excavate the ghostly traces of what has vanished, what is disappearing, and what is beyond recovery—as well as what

²⁸ Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*. Cambridge University Press: 1993, 2nd edition 2004.

has remained stubbornly rooted. In this chapter, I contend that Palestinian land itself contains traces of what has been lost, and search for these traces in the generative site of Palestinian literature.

I turn to “vanishing” as a poetic and epistemologically generative concept that has particular resonance within this context of a *disappearing landscape*. In his work on “landscaping Palestine,” Gary Fields defines *landscape* as a social product that represents the outcome of power relations that mediate human interaction with material sites, which reorder the surface of land.²⁹ Fields states: “Landscape is more than a plot of ground. Landscape can also be understood as a verb. To “landscape” refers to a process in which human agency transforms what is occurring on land. Both product and process, landscapes are representations of the societies anchored to them and the relations of power that govern them” (2010: 64). Following Fields, I examine the Israeli settler-colonial replacement of Palestine, particularly as it relates to the vanishing of the Palestinian environmental landscapes and the appropriation of the earth’s natural resources. I theorize “vanishment” (noun) and “vanishing” (active verb) using an interdisciplinary approach that merges colonial studies frameworks, cultural studies methodologies, and environmental justice praxes. In doing so, I develop the term *eco-occupation* in order to link environmental degradation to settler-colonial structures of elimination. Here, “eco” refers to the social, political, ideological and material elements that fix Palestinian life to land; “occupation” refers to the settler-colonial presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian territory of the West Bank and Israel’s colonial and

²⁹ International Journal of Middle East Studies 42 (2010), 63–82.

militarized control over Palestinian air, land, and seaports in the Gaza Strip.³⁰ I look to Palestinian literary production to formulate new epistemologies, and narratives for environmental justice. I argue that in the context of settler-colonial occupation, in which Palestinian land and livelihood are in a constant state of “vanishing”, new sites of knowledge necessarily emerge from the realm of the imagination where disappearances reappear through affective sites. Specifically, I draw from the autoethnographic novel *Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape* by Palestinian lawyer and author Raja Shehadeh. In so doing, I contribute an affective dimension to the growing body of work in environmental justice studies, rooted primarily in sociology and environmental law, which tends to limit its data to observable instances of environmental degradation.

“Making the Desert Bloom”: Greenwashing, Trees, and Ecological Disappearances

Most studies on ecological violence in Palestine obscure the context of the ongoing Israeli settler-colonial occupation. This is how Kimberley Kelly and Thomas Homer-Dixon explain the environmental degradation in the Gaza Strip:

The interaction between severe supply, demand, and structural scarcities has constrained development and has contributed to the impoverishment of Gaza’s population. Deteriorating economic and social conditions have produced collective grievance and violence against Israel [...]. Solutions to water crises in Gaza will not in themselves resolve conflict. Nonetheless, steps toward conservation and rehabilitation of the aquifer and the more equitable apportionment of the water that is available will be essential elements to a stable peace. (1998: 99).

³⁰In order to be consistent with the subsequent chapters, I focus my analysis on the West Bank. However, the eco-occupation of Palestinian land and nonhuman life is not limited to the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as dictated by the 1967 borders (the so-called Green Line), but can be extended to Palestinian ecological and agricultural habitats within the bounds of ‘Israel proper’—what Palestinians refer to as ‘1948 Palestine’—or the regions depopulated of nearly 600 Palestinian villages in the Nakbah year of 1948.

Emphasizing political factionalism, the chokehold of the Palestinian Authority, and Israeli policies of discrimination, Kelly and Homer-Dixon bolster the rhetoric of subaltern failures, particularly Palestinians' inability to attain the progress enjoyed by their developed counterparts. Although the authors hint at the "structural scarcities" that intersect with unsustainable supply and demand, they never name Israeli settler-colonial occupation as the culprit for "environmental degradation." Instead, ecological ruin is represented as a result of "population growth, an agriculturally intensive economy, a fragile water ecosystem, and a highly inequitable distribution of resources" (73). Through an elaborate catalog of figures and charts, Kelly and Homer-Dixon imply that Palestine is committing ecological suicide—even quoting a Palestinian making such claims—through their destructive lifestyles and practices. Indeed, because of the rapid decline in both the quantity and quality of its water supply, Gaza has been the poster child for ecological crises: regular outbreaks of diseases resulting from contaminated water, increased alkalinity and salinity in the soil, and the absence of proper sewage facilities. However, while the case studies featured in the book (Gaza, Chiapas, South Africa, Pakistan, and Rwanda) are subsumed within the title "eco-violence," "violence" is undertheorized. Discriminatory acts committed by Israel are equated with those perpetrated by the Palestinian authoritarian regimes, suggesting that Israel and Palestine are equal players in the ecological devastation of Gaza. What is missing, then, is a serious analysis of the context of an ongoing settler-colonial occupation in Palestine.

Popular media reinforce the notion that Palestine's ecological disasters are a result of its own failures to modernize. As an example, in March 2007, when a river of raw sewage and debris overflowed in the Gazan village of Umm Naser from a collapsed earth

embankment into a refugee camp, “the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and the television media blamed [Gaza’s] shoddy infrastructure. *The Daily Alert* (the house organ of the Presidents of the Major American Jewish Organizations) blamed the Palestinians who they claimed were removing sand to sell to construction contractors thus undermining the earth embankment”³¹. However, sociologist James Petras argues that the “shoddy infrastructure” is, in actuality, a result of “Israel’s massive sustained bombing attack on Gaza in the summer of 2006: demolished roads, bridges, sewage treatment facilities, water purification and electrical power plants”.³² The publications on his website reveal the cross-generational effects of Israel’s mass killings on Palestinian bodies and land. While his reports counter the hegemonic representations of the self-destructive native, the culprit he names in this particular incident is Israel’s assault on Gaza in the summer of 2006.³³ In this way, he privileges a spectacular moment of death and elides the violence of the mundane forms of settler-colonialism. In short, most explanations of ecological degradation in Palestine take for granted Israeli settler-colonialism, its violent everyday practices of eco-occupation, and the genocidal structures of annihilation that occur in mundane forms.

Patrick Wolfe’s argument that settler-colonialism is premised on the ‘logic of elimination’ foregrounds the genocidal erasure of indigenous peoples. However, as Gary Fields and Rana Sharif have argued, in Palestine, these “structures” of elimination can

³¹ <http://www.counterpunch.org/2007/04/02/the-political-economy-of-a-disaster/>

³² <http://www.counterpunch.org/2007/04/02/the-political-economy-of-a-disaster/>

³³ On June 28, 2006, Israel conducted a two-month military operation in the Gaza Strip that exacted a heavy toll on the 1.4 million Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. Two hundred and two (202) Palestinians, including 44 children were killed when ‘Operation Summer Rains’ (the Israel Defense Forces name for the offensive) began; thousands of Palestinians were forced to flee their homes due to repeated ground incursions and intensive shelling by the IDF. Israel launched at least 267 air strikes attacks on the Gaza Strip. Only a limited amount of humanitarian aid reached the Gaza Strip during that time.

manifest in the most unspectacular forms—extending from racist legal measures to (in)access to healthcare, for example. Analyzing the deliberate placement of Israeli settlements in ways that contribute to Palestinian “enclosure”, Fields states:

Embedded in the seemingly ubiquitous buildings with red roofs is a process of land confiscation in which Palestinian land is transferred into a new status as Israeli land. At the same time the settlement, as a gated community, functions as impassible space, off limits to its former owners. In a similar vein, the wall, and its accompanying element, the guard tower, embodies land taken from Palestinian owners, but its primary function is to establish and reinforce a system of impassible partitions on the landscape (2010: 70).

In this way, Palestine’s landscape becomes the exclusive property of Israeli state bureaucracy and Jewish settlement. Through legal measures, genocide is embedded in the very architecture of Israeli settler-colonial occupation in ways that effectively rupture Palestinian claims to land—their source of life and cultural identity. The “off limits” status of Palestinian lands has also become embedded within architectures of surveillance and confinement that manifest in biopolitical forms of genocide. Reflecting on the work of Achille Mbembe, transnational feminist scholar Rana Sharif describes the ways in which Israel regulates immaterial capital, such as time, space and healthcare access through the imposition of racist permit regimes:

The difficulty of accessing care for sick bodies in Palestine is exacerbated by the material consequences of occupation. As Mbembe has suggested, the necropolitical state is invested in contouring not only the parameters of life (biopower1) but also, and perhaps more aptly for the actual life of Palestinians, of death. It is as though life is lived on threads. Buying time, navigating space, accessing units, filing forms, waiting in lines, waiting at checkpoints are all manifestations of the lived reality of Palestinian everyday life that are occluded when one considers only the “legal formalities” Israel has put in place, formalities which seem to allow for

access to certain spaces for sick bodies, but in fact hinder or deny every attempt to do so.”³⁴

The eco-occupation of Palestine thus extends beyond spectacular massacres to mundane forms of genocide vis-à-vis the regulation and monitoring of Palestinian life, movement, and health. As Rana Sharif highlights, as a result of these measures, “life is lived on threads,” indicating that in the context of a settler-colonial occupation, life is conditional, and death is always imminent—though obscured by the regimes of legality imposed by Israel. Fields and Sharif’s works thus intimate that “enclosures” became part of the ongoing genocidal structures contributing to Palestinian death.

The structures of elimination, then, call for an analysis of the “eco-occupation” of Palestinian life, in which landscapes become a contested site of settler-colonialism, particularly through the imposition of a European-style landscape in Palestine. These mechanisms of “wiping out” traces of Palestine have been differently analyzed by various scholars. Irus Braverman has argued that seemingly innocuous acts such as planting, cultivating, and uprooting trees become “acts of war” that bifurcate the natural landscapes of Israel-Palestine: the pine tree is associated with the Zionist project of afforesting the Promised Land, while the olive tree is a symbol of pride as well as a valuable source of livelihoods for Palestinians. While Braverman shows how landscapes discursively and materially propel nationalist agendas, her assumption that the two treescapes (pine and olive) carry comparable power obscures the presence of settler-colonialism, the violence it imposes daily, and the ways it has transformed Palestine’s landscape. Indeed, she uses terms such as “national struggles,” “conflict zone,” and

³⁴ <http://criticallegalthinking.com/2014/05/13/bodies-buses-permits-palestinians-navigating-care/>

“war,” rather than settler-colonial occupation, to describe the violent conditions in Palestine. As Sara Kershner, Mich Levy, and Jesse Benjamin state: “there cannot be ‘two sides’ to a ‘Palestinian-Israeli conflict’ that assumes each party is an aggressor actively violating the rights and safety of the other. Rather, we see what is obvious: Palestine is occupied and colonized.”³⁵

Historically, the tree is part of the mechanism by which Zionism mobilized ideological and political support for the conquest of Historic Palestine. Zionism has used gendered logics of barrenness and fertility to promote settler-colonial projects disguised as afforestation schemes implemented through the Jewish National Fund (JNF). Branded as an environmentally-friendly charity, the JNF has been a central agent in the expulsion and replacement of Palestinian ecologies since its establishment in 1901. The JNF’s primary objective was to “purchase land for a Jewish State in Ottoman-controlled Palestine.”³⁶ By the time of the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, approximately two-thirds of the Palestinian population had been expelled from modern-day Israel and the Palestinian Territories. During that time, the Israeli government “transferred” lands from 372 of the 522 depopulated Palestinian villages over to the JNF, achieving a Jewish majority in Historic Palestine and making impossible a Palestinian “return.” In her work on the Jewish National Fund Forestry, Joanna Long states that “afforestation schemes have been central to Zionist settlement in Palestine since the early twentieth century, with tree-planting promoted as central to “developing” the “barren and neglected landscape.”” Since the early 1900s, trees were planted in Palestine, and then in Israel to honor births of Jewish babies worldwide, as part of bar and bat mitzvahs, and offered in place of favors

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ <http://www.jnf.org/>

in marriages. The blue JNF collection boxes were distributed as early as 1904 and became one of the most familiar symbols of Zionism, “taken to be the symbol of world Jewry's support for Israel” (ibid).

The forestry initiatives naturalized the Zionist colonization of Palestine by literally obscuring the evidence of previous Palestinian existence on the same land (Long). Condemning the Jewish National Fund's ongoing campaign to “make the desert bloom,” Sara Kershner, Mich Levy, and Jesse Benjamin state: “Contrary to the deception propagated by the JNF, Israel and Zionist mythology, the trees are not planted in a barren desert empty of inhabitants that Jewish people have come to populate and make flourish. Lands were, and still are, obtained from their Palestinian inhabitants through exploitative land sales, forced removal or the State imposition of other apartheid policies.”³⁷ Moreover, “as the Palestinian refusal to succumb to colonial rule and expulsion perseveres, decade after decade, intifada after intifada, it sheds unavoidable light on the dark underbelly of ‘making a desert bloom’ in a place that is fully inhabited.”³⁸ The JNF projects were thus attempts to “greenwash” the ongoing history and legacies of colonial settlement in Palestine. According to Max Bluthenthal:

The pine trees themselves were instruments of concealment, strategically planted by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) on the sites of the hundreds of Palestinian villages the Zionist militias evacuated and destroyed in 1948. With forests sprouting up where towns once stood, those who had been expelled would have nothing to come back to. Meanwhile, to outsiders beholding the strangely Alpine landscape of northern Israel for the first time, it seemed as though the Palestinians had never existed. And that was exactly the impression the JNF intended to create. The practice that David

³⁷ Published by the International Jews Anti-Zionist Network, 15 May 2011. For access to the ebook, visit: <http://ijsn.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/JNF eBook Vol4.pdf>.

³⁸ Ibid.

Ben-Gurion and other prominent Zionists referred to as “redeeming the land” was in fact the ultimate form of greenwashing.³⁹



Figure 2: Anti-Greenwashing Campaign: “Green Wash: Guaranteed to cover up all your environmental cracks and make you look good.” Photo Credit: International Media Middle East Center at ww.imemc.org.

By burying Palestinian history within pine (and other European) trees, the JNF managed to turn the tree—the global symbol of virtue and abundance—into a weapon of vanishing. The Israeli paramilitary establishments appeared to have continued the Zionist assault on the native landscape. As an example, Jesse Benjamin linked the paramilitary’s greenwashing projects to the displacement and forced resettlement of the Bedouins:

[Palestinian] Bedouins of all ages were coming in with stories of tree uprootings, cereal crop destruction, and livestock confiscations at the hands of [Israel’s] paramilitary Green Patrol. As a branch of the JNF, itself a branch of the Israeli state, the Green Patrol operated under the fundamentally racial assumption that all Bedouin use of the land was primitive and therefore destructive, while all Jewish use was modern and therefore beneficial. [...] Somehow, this racist and evolutionist [il-]logic was enough to underwrite the activities of the Green Patrol, which helped justify the colonial proposition that Israel should be a Jewish-only land.”⁴⁰

³⁹ “The Carmel Wildfire is Burning all Illusions in Israel” by Max Blumenthal published by the International Jews Anti-Zionist Network’s ebook *Greenwashing Apartheid* 15 May 2011, p. 43-47.

⁴⁰ “Orwell’s ‘Green Patrol’ and the Relentless Racialized Illogic of Ethnic Cleansing in the Name of Environmentalism” by Jesse Benjamin published by the International Jews Anti-Zionist Network’s ebook *Greenwashing Apartheid* 15 May 2011, pp. 87-95.

In addition to pine, the eucalyptus tree, which is found all over the state of Israel became part of this eco-occupation scheme. According to “The Hebrew Podcasts”, which offers descriptive information about Israeli topography on its “Trees of Israel” page: “The Eucalyptus is an Australian tree. It was brought to Israel at the end of the nineteenth century to dry the swamps because it grows so quickly.”⁴¹ The same source describes the Cyprus tree as a gift by the Jewish National Fund to temper the billowing winds: “The Cypress was brought by the Jewish National Fund at the end of the nineteenth century. It was planted to break the wind around many orchards.”⁴² The notions of “swamps” that need to be dried and “billowing winds” that need to be broken are colonial ideologies that construct native lands as deficient and in need of foreign intervention. The use of the word “break” also furthers dominant logics of colonialism in which the white, masculine, European heteronormative subject penetrates the virgin landscape to civilize the feminized native subject.

In a groundbreaking essay on settler colonialism, Patrick Wolfe declares that “settler colonialism destroys to replace.”⁴³ Theodor Herzl, founding father of Zionism, appeared to agree with this sentiment when he observed: “If I wish to substitute a new building for an old one, I must demolish before I construct.”⁴⁴ Half a century later, the mayor of West Jerusalem Meron Benvenisti recalled, “As a member of a pioneering youth movement, I myself ‘made the desert bloom’ by uprooting the ancient olive trees of al-Bassa to clear the ground for a banana grove, as required by the ‘planned farming’

⁴¹ <https://www.hebrewpodcasts.com/treesofisrael.html>

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006), 8(4), December, 387–409.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Patrick Wolfe’s “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native” in the *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006), p. 388.

principles of my kibbutz, Rosh Haniqra.”⁴⁵ In his memoirs, David Ben Gurion, the first Israeli prime minister, stated ““When I look out my window today and see a tree standing there, that tree gives me a greater sense of beauty and personal delight than all the vast forests I have seen in Switzerland or Scandinavia. Because every tree here was planted by us.”⁴⁶ The process of settler-colonialism, then, is foregrounded by what Lorenzo Veracini describes as the indigenisation of settlers, which he says ‘is driven by the crucial need to transform a historical tie (“we came here”) into a natural one (“the land made us”).

Settler-Colonialism, Gender and Vanishment

Scholars often treat indigenous peoples’ relationships to the land as ecospiritual⁴⁷ alternatives to the commercialization and exploitation of advanced capitalism. Indigenous beliefs and practices have also been appropriated by the New Age movement, which promotes the idea that all people can “return” to the earth. While these ecospiritual projections are devised to “relieve unease over the ecological cost of industrialization and the problematic legacies of colonization and white paternalism,” (Zehle 335), they, in fact, continue a legacy of colonial epistemologies that corroborate colonial projects. For example, the use of American Indian symbols in popular American culture has served to bolster North American colonial projects (Churchill 1998). Indeed, as I will argue,

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Quoted in “The Carmel Wildfire is Burning all Illusions in Israel” by Max Blumenthal published by the International Jews Anti-Zionist Network’s ebook *Greenwashing Apartheid* 15 May 2011, p. 43-47.

⁴⁷ “Ecospirituality” is defined by practitioners as “recognition of our spiritual connection to nature” characterized by “knowing and honoring the sacredness of the earth and the life it supports; the deep sense of place, of belonging, that comes from understanding the ways we are part of an ecological web of interdependence; experiences of awe, wonder, and beauty evoked by the natural world and the interdependence of its parts; an ethical commitment to environmental activism to preserve and protect the earth and its creatures.” This definition is from “Earthkeepers” a program of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Gainesville, Florida, retrieved from their website at <http://www.ecospiritual-practice.org/>. This is only one of countless examples that advocate similar teachings and practices..

Palestinian producers are able to market their products around the world in part because they appropriate images of sustainability and ecospiritual integrity. Without proper attention to the complex experiences of subaltern communities within the context of advanced capital accumulation, environmental justice rhetoric risks oversimplifying the so-called “native experience” and sometimes “offers little more than uncritical affirmations of eco-mythological superiority” (Zehle 336).

A postcolonial lens emerges as a formidable framework for understanding the lived experiences of Palestinian disappearance—one that offers a critical departure from popular narratives about native attachments to land. Indeed, native landscapes are subject to contradictory representations: on the one hand, they are “virgin” landscapes wonton for the penetration of colonial presence to “save”, “develop”, “impregnate” (or, as Zionist discourse reveals “make bloom”); on the other hand, they are soiled, impure and unproductive playgrounds for lazy, chaotic and uncivilized savages. Palestinian landscapes have thus been represented as unwanted “swamps” in need of Jewish productivity *and* as signifiers of Palestinian savagery. As Chief Inspector of the Israel’s Civil Administration David Kishik opined, “Like children, [Palestinian] trees look so naive, as if they can’t harm anyone. But like [their] children, several years later they turn into a ticking bomb” (quoted in Braverman 2009). In this quote, Kishik equates the Palestinian landscape, primarily the olive tree (the “Palestinian tree”), to an explosive prepared to detonate Israel. In the post 9/11 context, Palestinian attachment to landscape

is thus represented to be dangerous, catastrophic, and terroristic.⁴⁸ As such, both Palestinian bodies and Palestinian landscapes must be vanished.

Gender is key in the implementation of the racist project of vanishment. Scott Lauria Morgensen has argued that gendered and sexual power relations are intrinsic to structures of elimination of native peoples and settler indigenization. Gender is considered an integral part of settler-colonial processes through the obstruction and replacement of familial ties, the biopolitical management and control over reproductive health, and the legal institutions that regulate normative practices of sex and romance. In her book, *Federal Fathers and Mothers* (2011), Cathleen Cahill shows how the United States Indian Service pursued a strategy of intimate colonialism in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, using employees as surrogate parents and model families in order to shift Native Americans' allegiances from tribal kinship networks to Euro-

⁴⁸ The political discourse that ensued after September 11, 2001 included such themes as “terrorism”, “security” and “fear” in order to legitimize military force in the Middle East and normalize the settler-colonial project of Zionism. The discourse of security and risk, as well as assumptions about the innate characteristics (violent, terroristic, radical, extremist) of Palestinians in particular, but also Arabs and Muslims in general, have become globally institutionalized through the War on Terror which has buffered Israeli settler-colonialism at this particular moment of U.S. empire. Here I am thinking of Eqbal Ahmad’s work. Tracing official documents in the U.S. that define ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorists,’ Ahmad finds that these definitions are deliberately elusive and fluctuating as a way to consolidate and enable global power relations. For example, Afghanistan’s mujahideen were once considered by President Ronald Reagan to be “freedom fighters” who had the moral equivalency of our founding fathers. The mujahideen were significantly financed and armed, and allegedly trained by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the administrations of Carter and Reagan. One of the CIA’s longest and most expensive covert operations was the supplying of billions of dollars in arms to them. Years later, Osama bin Laden, a mujahid who was among the recipients of U.S. arms, became the number one target of U.S. military force. Indeed, the U.S.’s “War on Terror” is a racial project because targets of “security” were constructed on the basis of essentialist generalizations of the “nature” of the Arab and Muslim people. In Palestine, the conglomerate cultural representations and material conditions continue to make Palestinian bodies inherently violable and colonizable. Israeli modernity is modeled by white supremacist colonial histories of Western Europe and propelled by hegemonic logics of the War on Terror that have become a global rule of thumb. As such, Palestine is suspended within this global racial order, which constitutes the Palestinian subject as an already knowable subject.

American familial structures and, ultimately, the U.S. government⁴⁹. This important work illustrates how indigenous elimination proceeds through settler regulation of sexual relations, gender identity, marriage, reproduction, and genealogy, and similar means for restricting resistant indigenous national difference. As an example, gender and settler-colonialism are not simply connected, but co-constituting through Israel's Citizenship Law (Morgensen). This law prohibits the extension of legal residency or citizenship to Palestinians from the Occupied Palestinian Territories who become spouses to Israeli citizens (Palestinian or otherwise) thereby consolidating and reproducing Israeli state borders, and denying Palestinian marital attachments. The gendering of Israeli settler-colonialism is also maintained through the efforts to produce Israel as a racially coherent state by denying Palestinians the right of return –a denial that “reclassifies refugee descendants as subjects of foreign governments, thereby pre-empting land claims that would be defensible only by invoking the integrity of Palestinian familial ties and descent” (Morgensen 2012: 11).

However a gendered analysis of settler-colonialism understands that settler-colonialism is not simply about the regulation of sexual identities, romance, reproduction, penises, vaginas, and copulation, but also the articulation and imposition of Euro-centric ideologies of heteronormative patriarchal relations. Reflecting on the settler-colonialism of the Americas, in “Native Feminisms and the Nation-State” Andrea Smith argues:

[W]hen colonists first came to [the Americas], they saw the necessity of instilling patriarchy in Native communities, because they realized that indigenous peoples would not accept colonial domination if their own indigenous societies were not structured on the basis of social hierarchy. Patriarchy in turn rests on a binary gender system; hence it is not a

⁴⁹ Cathleen Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869-1933* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

coincidence that colonizers also targeted indigenous peoples who did not fit within this binary model. In addition, gender violence is a primary tool of colonialism and white supremacy. Colonizers did not just kill off indigenous peoples in this land, but Native massacres were always accompanied by sexual mutilation and rape [...]. It is through sexual violence that a colonizing group attempts to render a colonized peoples as inherently rapable, their lands inherently invadable, and their resources inherently extractable. (2008: 312).

What Smith's quote depicts, then, is the notion that gender is not simply manifest in bodies, but is a social construct through which settler-colonialism is made to function. Extending Smith's analysis of the imposition of gendered relations for settler-colonial structures of elimination, and heeding the call by feminist scholars like Chandra Mohanty and Jacqui Alexander to produce "concrete analyses of collective and organizational practice within feminist communities that offer provisional strategies for dismantling the psychic and social constellations put in place by colonization", I see settler-colonialism as a gendered structure of power relations. While I understand that patriarchy in Palestine was not exclusively instilled by European Zionist settlers, the use of "penetration", "fertility", "barrenness", "breaking", "virginity" and "blooming" necessitate a gendered analysis that sees the logic of settler-colonialism as characteristically hyper-masculine and white supremacist. In other words, settler-colonialism is an inherently gendered process based on ideologies of barren ("virgin", "fertile") or abject landscapes that must be "made right" through the installment of the white European masculine subject⁵⁰.

Therefore, while the terms I use such as "penetrate" or "break" are inherently violent, I

⁵⁰ While not all Israelis are European whites, Israeli's self-defining for the "white man" casts aligns it with modern, European, and normative, and masculine subjectivity. For recent publications about this assertion by Israeli officials, please see: "Sudanese Face Expulsion; Minister declares Israel "belongs to white man"" by Jillian Kestler-D'Amours in the *The Electronic Intifada*, 12 June 2012 (<http://electronicintifada.net/content/sudanese-face-expulsion-minister-declares-israel-belongs-white-man/11394>), and "Israel Enacts Law Allowing Authorities to Detain Illegal Migrants For Up to 3 Years" By Dana Weiler-Polak in *Haaretz*, June 3, 2012 (<http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/israel-enacts-law-allowing-authorities-to-detain-illegal-migrants-for-up-to-3-years-1.434127>).

employ them critically in order to highlight the gendered structure of elimination that is settler-colonialism in Palestine. In this way, the vanishment of Palestinian ecologies is a function of settler-colonial replacement – a gendered process of invasion, penetration, and erection of trees against a racially subordinated landscape.

Contemporary Contexts of Palestinian Vanishment

Today, the state of environmental crises in Palestine continues at an exponential rate. Numerous publications report the vanishing and contamination of Palestinian ecosystems, particularly in relation to water. A recent report issued by the French Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee states: “Some 450,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank use more water than the 2.3 million Palestinians that live there. In times of drought, in contravention of international law, the settlers get priority for water.”⁵¹ According to B'Tselem, an Israeli non-governmental organization, Israelis consume up to 242 liters of water per person every day. Due to restrictions imposed by Israel, Palestinians consume just 73 liters per day on average (as little as 20 liters per day in some areas), dramatically less than the 100 liters the World Health Organization recommends as the minimum quantity for basic consumption.⁵² Moreover, Israeli settler communities use even more water than their counterparts in Israel proper, consuming over five times than Palestinians.⁵³ In the Jordan Valley, while the Israeli government provides settler farms with large quantities of water, only 37 percent of Palestinians receive sufficient water.⁵⁴

⁵¹ From “Water Apartheid and the French Report that Reveals it All” by Siham Nuseibeh published January 18, 2012 on www.muftah.org (direct link: <http://muftah.org/water-apartheid-the-french-report-that-reveals-it-all/#.U368Iyg9ToQ>).

⁵² <http://www.btselem.org/water>

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ http://www.btselem.org/jordan_valley#water

In the Jordan Valley, Israeli water companies have been charging Palestinians eleven times more for water than Jewish residents in adjacent Israeli settlements⁵⁵. The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) recently reported that Israeli settlers have turned dozens of springs in Palestinian territories—the single largest water source for irrigation and a substantial source for watering livestock for Palestinians—into tourist attractions and swimming pools. Most of these springs are situated on private Palestinian land where their owners are forbidden by the Israel government from drilling holes to access natural waterways⁵⁶.

Moreover, wastewater from Israeli settlements, as well as solid waste, continues to contaminate Palestinian communities. According to the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ), “Israeli colonies are sited on hill tops and they often allow the generated wastewater to run untreated into nearby valleys and Palestinian agricultural lands.”⁵⁷ Israel not only exploits Palestine's resources, it also pollutes and destroys them. According to a paper published by the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ) in the International Journal of Environmental Studies, Israeli settler colonies are situated on hilltops, often allowing their generated wastewater to run untreated into nearby wadis [valleys] and Palestinian agricultural lands.⁵⁸ Water in the Palestinian territories is largely unsuitable for drinking, and Palestinian farmers are unable to cultivate their crops due to water shortages. Furthermore, a number of polluting factories have been moved from Israel Proper into the West Bank: a pesticide factory in Kfar Saba [Israel] that produces dangerous pollutants has been moved to an area near Tulkarem in the northern part of the

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_jordan_valley_factSheet_february_2012_english.pdf

⁵⁷ <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/04/201242811593745665.html>

⁵⁸ Ibid.

West Bank; the Dixon Gas industrial factory, which was located in Netanya, Israel has also been moved to the Tulkarem area. The solid waste generated by the factory is burned in open air, engulfing the surrounding Palestinian communities in carcinogenic gasses. Reports estimate that 80% of the solid waste generated by Israeli settlers is dumped at dumping sites located within the West Bank⁵⁹. And yet, as an occupied people, Palestinians are denied any political recourse against the presence of industries that endanger their health. Sixty-two per cent of the West Bank is designated as Area C, meaning that it is under direct Israeli military control.

While ecosystems change naturally with time, in Palestine, these changes have emerged primarily as a result of social relations of power rooted in the structures and architectures of settler-colonialism (Hazineh and Bassous-Ghattas 2011: 5). Palestinians in the West Bank have increasingly limited or no access to natural resources and Israeli state measures of land confiscation and destruction of habitats have continued to cause a landscape of disappearances (ibid). In addition, the “security fence” (“apartheid wall” or “segregation wall” to Palestinians,) erected to connect Israeli settlement communities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank, has destroyed the Palestinian landscape and has caused the disappearance of Palestinian land. An example is the establishment of the Israeli settlement of Har Homa in the former mountainous region of Jabal Abu-Ghneim in the Bethlehem Governorate of the West Bank, Jabal Abu-Ghneim lies southeast of the city of Jerusalem and overlooks the cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Beit-Sahour and the villages of Um Tuba and Sur Baher. A forest perched atop a hill, or *jabal*, Jabal Abu-Ghneim was officially declared to be a “green area” by Israel,

⁵⁹ <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=427>

meaning any building or use of the mountains was prohibited. In 1991, Jabal Abu-Ghneim was confiscated by the Israeli state and turned into “state land”, which permitted the “lawful” construction of the exclusive Jewish settlement of Har Homa over the freshly deforested mountaintop. Within ten years, Jabal Abu-Ghneim became an expanding colony for Jewish inhabitants. In 2013, Har Homa had a population of 25,000 Jewish settlers, as well as twelve kindergartens, six day care centers, five elementary schools, three medical clinics, four youth movement centers, and three shopping centers. Segregated buslines connect the Jewish residents of Har Homa to downtown Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Central Bus Station. Beit Sahour residents watched as the trees they picnicked between during summertime were leveled to the ground to erect a sophisticated settlement, now manned with surveillance technologies and fully armed Israeli military personnel. Beit Sahour’s residents petitioned the Israeli Supreme Court to at least return the undeveloped land between Beit Sahour and Har Homa to the Palestinian municipality, and to “move” the apartheid wall to reflect Palestinian ownership of this land through landscape coherence, but the state of Israel has insisted on Jewish ownership of the mountaintops and surrounding regions (see Figure 4).

During the course of five years of fieldwork, I traveled to Palestine on three occasions, usually residing in the village of Beit Sahour as it is centrally located in the West Bank, and in proximity to the major checkpoint in Bethlehem, the *serveece* (minibus taxi) stations, and other logistical points of interest. I observed the apocalyptic absences around me, finding traces of where once was Palestinian life. The seething-presences that surrounded me as well as the ways in which these haunted spaces were referred to as *aadi* (or normal) by Palestinians, felt uncanny and tragic—as though the

irreversible damage brought by settler-colonialism could never be disrupted, thus enabling the momentum and inevitability of Palestinian necrosis. It seems that I was not alone in my haunted state. On May 22, 2008, the web blog *Brave New Alps*⁶⁰ posted a haunting piece about the ongoing and unsettling disappearances and systemic “legal” replacement of Palestinian landscapes through the strategic placement of hundreds of Israeli settler-colonies on hilltops all over the West Bank. These authors intimate that these settler-colonies “take as a model the fortified citadel (concentric rings of buildings with windows pointing toward the outside), [which] allow the settlers to control the surrounding landscape at 360 degrees.”⁶¹ These forms of penetrating, breaking and swelling effectively disintegrate the Palestinian landscape in a way that invokes a Foucaultian notion of modern power:

It is hard to find a Palestinian village from which a colony cannot be seen. Besides occupying the land physically, the colonies occupy the landscape visually and sonically, putting a constant psychological pressure on the Palestinians by giving the feeling of constant surveillance. In this sense the colonies are conceptually similar to Bentham’s Panopticon, an ideal prison, in which a single guardian controls all the inmates from a central tower, whereas the prisoners never know if they are being watched or not and thus limit themselves out of fear. Like this, the perceptually omnipresent colonies, whose expansion can be seen and felt day by day, are multifaceted «living entities» that have an enormous visual, acoustic and psychic impact on the Palestinians’ everyday life.

That Palestinian presence is perpetually monitored reinforces the notion that native landscapes are fated to disappear—the gaze exists to ensure this vanishment. Gary Fields (2010) also utilizes a Foucaultian frame to theorize these mechanisms of “enclosure.”

⁶⁰ The “Brave New Alps” post is a successful design project based in Germany that emphasizes social, political and environmental issues by combining research methods with radical pedagogy, conflict mediation techniques and DIY projects through photographs, videos, guided walks, urban interventions and other public events.

⁶¹ Ibid.

According to Fields, both law and architecture become instruments of power that enable Israel to “recast systems of land ownership, occupancy, and use and reconfigure routes of circulation and trespass on the landscape with the aim of forcing subaltern populations into ever smaller territorial spaces and of taking control of the landscape. The Palestinian landscape is part of this historically recurrent pattern of power and enclosure on the land.”⁶²

These “enclosures” resemble the Panopticon—the modern prison system developed by Jeremy Bentham that structurally functions to allow power to manifest horizontally, rather than vertically through the perpetual threat of surveillance. The blog post’s assertion that these mechanisms can be “seen and felt day by day” by Palestinian “prisoners” of settler-colonial expansion further suggests that Palestinian life is architecturally and psychologically subject to disappearance should the prisoner refuse her conditional life (imprisonment). While some sites of the West Bank are still populated with Palestinian life and landscapes, Har Homa’s establishment of an expansive settlement community points to the fact that much of Palestine has disappeared:

⁶² Fields, “Ex-Communicated: Historical Reflections on Enclosure Landscapes in Palestine” in the *Radical History Review*, Vol. 2010, No. 108. (21 September 2010), pp. 139-153



Figure 3: Abu Ghneim transformation in ten years. Photo credit: Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem.

In Figures 4 and 5 below, the reader can see the various mechanisms (or “architectures”) of erasure that continue to penetrate Palestinian landscapes such that the remaining Palestine is not a coherent landscape, but is in fragments:



Figures 4 and 5: Architectures of Disappearance , Abu Ghneim Settlement (“Har Homa”). Photo credit: Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem.

The “area of threatened houses” circled in yellow in Figure 4 is the neighborhood of Jabal Al Deik, which sits northwest of Beit Sahour on a hill adjacent to the Abu Ghneim

'Har Homa' settlement. The neighborhood has been severely impacted by the segregation wall which cuts very close to houses in the area. At least eighty Palestinian families live in Jabal Al Deik, of which 25 are threatened with the loss of their home by the "Israeli Civil Administration" (the branch of the Israeli military that determines and carries out home demolition orders). In Figure 6, we can see that both the surrounding Palestinian homes as well as the Palestinian natural landscapes are marked for disappearance. In May 2002, Israeli occupation authorities delivered demolition orders to Palestinian families residing on or by Jabal Al Deik under the pretext that the buildings did not have permits from the Israeli Civil Administration.⁶³ Not coincidentally, the demolition orders were submitted during the same period that planning for the Segregation Wall in the Bethlehem District began. Additional plans emerged that year to construct a new military road connecting Har Homa with "Road 60" to the west—a settlement "motorway" running from Jerusalem to Efrat and to other Israeli settlements in lands that can no longer be accessed by vehicle from the Bethlehem townships. To the east of Beit Sahour, the Wall linked up with the "Za'tara Bypass Road"—a militarily guarded "settlers-only road" between Jerusalem and Tequ'a which neither passes through nor allows access to or from Palestinian towns or villages. To the west, the Wall sliced through the residential and commercial areas of Bethlehem and Beit Jala, with its imposition of an evacuated security zone stretching from the Wall between fifty and one hundred meters into Palestinian territory, before butting up against Route 60.⁶⁴ All roads out of Bethlehem

⁶³ The Israeli Civil Administration restricts permits in Area C, Palestinian territory under Israeli control.

⁶⁴ <http://electronicintifada.net/content/about-wall/5141>

district to the south have been severed, often by simply bulldozing up the roadbed and turning it into a three-meter stockpile of rubble⁶⁵.

In September 2002, Israel has issued dozens of demolition orders to buildings that were deemed “too close” to the Segregation Wall. In May 2003, Israeli occupying forces returned to the area issuing new military orders to demolish olive trees on 300 dunums of land that would be confiscated in order to create an Israeli military zone. On October 4, 2004 occupation forces served demolition orders to an additional sixteen Palestinian families living in Jabal Al Deik near the Segregation Wall and the Har Homa settlement. Since 2002, through the legal document of the “demolition order,” Palestinians have been ordered to halt any construction projects and demolish buildings within seven days from the date of issuance. Israeli authorities claim that the houses are located in Area C (under Israeli control despite Palestinian inhabitants) and are being constructed without building licenses.

What these dates and figures attempt to detail is a lived experience embodied by the pending vanishment of Palestine through the social and material impact of an increasingly fragmented landscape. Indeed, as writer Lisa Leendertz reports in *The Guardian*:

The Palestinian environment is taking a battering. Sewage flows into streams and the underground aquifer that is the sole source of drinking water for the Palestinian population; solid waste is burned, creating air pollution and contaminating the soil, making it useless for crops. The farming economy, so successful in Israel, is being crushed through prevention of access to farms by the separation wall, checkpoints and the off-limit roads that lead to Israeli settlements. With all these obstacles farmers are leaving their land, leading to neglect of terraces and so to soil

⁶⁵ Ibid.

erosion, which leaves hillsides stripped of their soil and good for nothing.⁶⁶

Dominant Narratives of Environmentalism

Environmental justice is defined as a political movement concerned with public policy initiatives that address environmental racism as well as a cultural movement interested in issues of ideology and representation. As David Schlosberg (2004) has argued, environmental justice is not only a political practice that includes equity, recognition and participation: the broader argument is that the movement represents an integration of various claims into a broad call for justice (2004, 527). In this vein, according to Julie Sze, environmental justice challenges the mainstream definition of environment and nature by foregrounding race and labor, thereby placing racialized communities at the center, rather than on the periphery, of visions of justice. (Sze 2002: 163).

Since its earliest incarnations in the late 1970s, environmental justice research was concerned primarily with the placement of and exposure to toxic and hazardous waste in the First World, and their disproportionate impacts on low income communities and communities of color, expanding in the 1980s to include areas such as transportation, health, housing, land use, water, energy development, and militarization. These include studies of occupational exposures in the garment industry and in Silicon Valley factories staffed by Asian and Latino immigrant women workers, (Pellow and Park 2003) as well as Native American communities imperiled by military wastes and hazards (Hooks and Smith 2004).

⁶⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/gardening-blog/2009/mar/04/gardens1>

In *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South* (1999), Ramachandra Guha and Joan Martínez Alier argue that originally, studies of the environment have been heavily biased towards the North Atlantic worlds with the common assumption amongst historians and sociologists that concerns over such issues as conservation or biodiversity were the exclusive preserve of those who had the privilege to “be green”. The ‘Third World’ was presumably “too poor to be green” as its constituents had the more pressing business of survival to attend to. However, recent literature has broadened to include other national contexts, taking environmental justice global. For example, Pellow (2007) offers an insightful analysis of the ways in which transnational toxics trade, and the activism set against it, creates a critical dialogue between the literatures of social movements, globalization studies, international political economy, risk, and modernization. In this way, environmental justice scholars have become increasingly attentive and sympathetic to Third World environmental struggles and redefined environmental justice as “the equitable distribution of environmental amenities, the rectification and retribution of environmental abuse, the restoration of nature, and the fair exchange of resources [...]”⁶⁷

Recent works that link the structures of colonialism with environmental justice have offered generative and insightful critiques of the ways in which indigenous peoples’ experience of environmental injustices links land vanishment with cultural survival. According to Winona La Duke, a leading Native American activist and writer, native scholars understand environmental justice through “a genocidal analysis rooted in the Native American cultural identification, the experience of colonialism, and the imminent

⁶⁷ Obiora L. A. (1999) “Symbolic Episodes in the Quest for Environmental Justice” *Human Rights Quarterly*. p. 477

endangerment of their culture” (Krauss, 1994: 267). Similarly David Pena (1999) argues that to “the extent that we construct our identities in place, whenever the biophysical conditions of a place are threatened, undermined, or radically transformed, we also see these changes as attacks on our identity and personal integrity” (1999: 6). Indeed, as these authors suggest, land destruction and environmental degradation is part and parcel of settler colonialism. As Lance Hughes, director of Native Americans for a Clean Environment, asserts: “We are not an environmental organization, and this is not an environmental issue. This is about our survival.”⁶⁸

At the same time, the dominant discourse in the field of environmental justice tends to privilege a sociological analysis through its promulgation of statistical data, case studies, and empiricist methods of inquiry, thus obscuring other forms of knowledge such as cultural and textual analyses, produced by colonized authors. The foundational environmental justice texts are largely associated with the work of sociologist Robert Bullard, who is referred to as the “father of environmental justice” and served as an environmental correspondent for former U.S. President Bill Clinton. These methodological tools in sociological and community-based studies on environmental justice use demographic data and statistics “stemming from the movement’s political need to quantify, measure, and prove that environmental racism exists by public policy standards” (Sze 165). While these forms of knowledge production document the patterns of environmental injustice for subaltern communities, I follow Julie Sze’s cue to move “from environmental justice literature to the literature of environmental justice” (163). In other words, literary productions offer an “alternative strategy to analyzing the roots of

⁶⁸ Schlosberg 2003: 91.

environmental racism” (165). Palestinian literature offers a new way of conceiving environmental justice within the context of settler-colonial vanishment. As Sze suggests, this new way of looking references the “real” problems of communities struggling against environmental disappearance, and is simultaneously liberated from providing a strictly documentary account of the contemporary world and the ways in which colonized peoples experience the world (ibid).

Indeed, the costs of eco-occupation of Palestine cannot be encapsulated in numbers and figures. As the example of the Har Homa settlement atop Jabal Abu-Ghneim demonstrates, there are legacies of settler-colonial violence that have been buried into the very landscape of Palestine, that cannot be observed, patterned, or policed, particularly as the “legal” language of the Israeli state has been a primary technology of Palestinian vanishment. Moreover, the notion that we need to quantify Palestinian settler-colonial environmental injustices suggests that public policy is the primary site for addressing these injustices, and that settler-colonial violence can be rectified once the proper actors, agencies, politicians, or organizations are made aware of these power incongruities. The recurring fact here, as I have argued throughout this chapter, is that the very laws, architectures, and landscape have been central players in the process of Palestinian vanishment.

In her new introduction to the second addition of the brilliant book *Ghostly Matters: Hauntings in the Sociological Imagination*, Avery Gordon describes the notion of haunting:

Haunting is one way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with [the disappeared native, for example] or

when their oppressive nature is denied [as in dominant narratives of Palestine being successfully replaced by Israel]... What's distinctive about haunting is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely...Haunting raises spectres, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future. These specters or ghosts appear when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view. The ghost, as I understand it, is not the invisible or some ineffable excess.⁶⁹

Using “haunting” as a productive tool to illuminate that which cannot be seen and that which has been said to have vanished, I turn to the novel *Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape* by Palestinian author and lawyer Raja Shehadeh. Rather than reproducing the trends and patterns of disappeared Palestinian landscapes, which ontologically render Palestine as already nonexistent (and replaced by settlements), my excavation of this text suggests that Palestine has not ceded to the condition of disappearance, but is submerged within an ongoing process of vanishment—one that links ideological, political, material and imaginative forces of power and agency.

Palestinian Walks, Eco-Occupation and Narratives of Vanishment

Palestinian Walks (2007) is a first-person nonfictional novel written by Palestinian author and human rights lawyer, Raja Shehadeh who has resided in the city of Ramallah in the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank since his birth in 1951. The novel won Shehadeh the Orwell book prize—Britain’s most prestigious award for political writing—in 2008. His book was also recognized as the ‘Book of the Month’ through *National Geographic’s Traveler* magazine that same year. Raja Shehadeh’s

⁶⁹ Gordon, Avery “Introduction to the New Addition” in *Ghostly Matters* (2008 [1997])pp. xv-xx).

family moved to the Bank in 1948 when they were expelled from Jaffa (now part of Israel proper) during the creation of the Israeli state. As one of the five founding clans of Ramallah, the members of Shehadeh's family returned there only in hopes that their time in the West Bank would be temporary and that they would eventually return to their beloved Jaffa. However, the displaced urbanites never did return to Jaffa as it had officially become part of the newly established Jewish homeland. Many of Shehadeh's family members became exiles residing in the United States and Europe, hoping to escape the suffocating chokehold of the rapidly transforming Palestinian landscapes around them. Three years after their move from Jaffa to Ramallah, Raja Shehadeh was born, and has resided there ever since, with the exception of a brief move to London to pursue a degree in law. Raja's father, Aziz Shehadeh, was a successful lawyer who after the 1967 war was one of the few public advocates of a two-state solution. It was not a popular position among Palestinians or Israelis, and in 1985 Aziz Shehadeh was stabbed to death. The assailant was never found.

Shehadeh followed his father's footsteps and became a human rights lawyer, although he really wanted to write: "I suppose I had the romantic idea, which I still have, that writing should be about the stuff of life. You deal with things and then you make something out of them, but you must be able to touch them and feel them and experience them," he said in an interview with *The Guardian*.⁷⁰ In Ramallah, Shehadeh worked in the legal profession six days a week, fighting Jewish settlers' land claims to Palestinian land and advocating for Palestinians' right to their lands in the Israeli courthouses. He was intensely diligent, writing early in the mornings, at night and on Saturdays. While his

⁷⁰ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/aug/25/israel>

legal work is written mostly in Arabic, he wrote his memoirs in English, the language of his education. Shehadeh is the author of many other critically acclaimed memoirs, including *Stranger in the House* (2003), in which he attempts to find his father's killer, and *Occupation Diaries* (2012). Today Shehadeh, who has kept a private journal for forty years, is considered one of the most prominent diarists of modern Palestinian life. As such, for Shehadeh, writing became a part of his own survival amid the process of Palestinian vanishment surrounding him, and though he knew that time and space were quickly disappearing, he desired to capture the fragments and faces he found in the surrounding hills.

Ever since I learned of the plans to transform our hills being prepared by successive Israeli governments, which supported the policy of establishing settlements in the Occupied Territories [of the West Bank and Gaza Strip], I have felt like one who is told that he has contracted a terminal disease. Now when I walk in the hills I cannot but be conscious that the time when I will be able to do so is running out.

Tempered and meditative, Shehadeh's novel recounts his first-hand experience of the horrors of Israeli settler-colonial occupation—including the siege of Ramallah—where at one point he finds the remains of an unexploded missile during a trek through a freshly bombed part of the city with his nephew. For decades, Shehadeh sought comfort in walking through the shield of the olive groves, vineyards, stone buildings, rolling hills, *wadis* (valleys) and cliffs of Palestine. However, as his novel makes clear, the landscapes that once offered him comfort were quickly vanishing. The first words of the memoir encapsulate the daunting effect of pending Palestinian annihilation:

When I began hillwalking in Palestine a quarter of a century ago, I was not aware that I was traveling through a vanishing landscape.

As such, while Shehadeh invites us to roll through the hills around Ramallah, ascend through the wilderness of the wadis in Jerusalem and flirt with the gorgeous ravines by the Dead Sea, this is not a touristic novel. As we walk along with Shehadeh and his various companions—ranging from fervent politicians to young children—we witness the mundane violence of everyday life under occupation, including harassment by Israeli soldiers and settlers, as well as the bulldozers ripping up landscapes, and their psychological and emotional toll on his hopes for a better future for his Palestine. We hear his tone become increasingly more devastated, and his footsteps heavier and more calculated. The novel is both beautiful and tragic, encapsulating the stakes of environmental disappearance and settler colonialism—in these ways, it is a tale of eco-occupation.

As our Palestinian world shrinks, that of the Israelis expands, with more settlements being built, destroying forever the wadis and cliffs, flattening the hills, and transforming the precious land that many Palestinians will never know.

At the same time, Shehadeh’s memoir unsettles the Zionist origin story of a barren landscape in need of a “good gardener”—one that claims intimate and exclusive knowledge of the landscape through a patrimonial lineage dating back 3,000 years.

Palestinians built their villages to embrace the hills not to ride them. [This] gave them protection from strong winds.

In this quote, the relationship between Palestinians and the land is evident in their respect for the surrounding landscape. Unlike Israeli structures that are modeled after suburban U.S. and European landscapes, Palestinian dwellings “embrace” the hills. Their intimate knowledge of the land has allowed them to build in such a way that protects their dwellings from the wind, but without disrupting the coherence of the natural landscape.

Israel, as I noted above, planted various non-native trees brought from Australia and elsewhere to “break up” the landscape, fragmenting the natural ecologies in the name of modernity.

Moreover, Shehadeh’s narrative can also be read as writing against an Orientalist current that depicts Palestine as unbeautiful, unloved, and wretched. His is an alternative account of Palestine, one that departs from the commonplace observations of nineteenth-century Western travelers in search of the biblical “Holy Land.” He writes, “They came, saw and recorded their fantasy and their disappointment, and bound them together into a beautiful canon of half-truths and outright lies that first helped shape popular perception and finally were used to help justify the colonization of Palestine.” Instead, he repositions Palestinians as the original “gardeners” by detailing Palestinian attachment to the land: “In Palestine, every wadi, spring, hillock, escarpment and cliff has a name.” Moreover, Shehadeh’s narration of Palestine is one centered on love and appreciation of land—which included making love in the open spaces by the hills, knowing the edible herbs from the wild, naming every natural formation, accidental or natural, and cultivating the land with hands for days on end. Unlike the accounts of Orientalist travelers, Shehadeh’s hills are full of people, not only the ghosts of his ancestors but also the plaintiffs he represents in court who sought his help to protect their land from settler appropriation. His journeys through the hills highlight the love and pleasure in exploring the Palestinian landscape—a multisensory experience that sits awkwardly against the Orientalist depictions of a degenerate native. Shehadeh recalls William Thackeray’s vivid depiction of Palestine as “parched mountains, with a grey bleak olive tree trembling here and there; savage ravines and valleys paved with tombstones—a landscape unspeakably ghastly and

desolate ...” and Herman Melville’s description of “whitish mildew pervading whole tracts of landscape — bleached-leprosy-encrustations of curses-old cheese-bones of rocks — crunched, gnawed, and mumbled — mere refuse and rubbish of creation ... all Judea seems to have been accumulations of this rubbish.” Writing this current, Shehadeh states:

The accounts I have read do not describe a land familiar to me but rather a land of these travelers’ imaginations. Palestine has been constantly reinvented, with devastating consequences to its original inhabitants.

Rather than navigating a sea of statistics, Shehadeh’s “evidence” lays in the hills and valleys, which offer up memories of his great uncle and great aunt, whom he finds amid the silhouette of the hills, whispering an irrecoverable past of a simpler life of cultivating and building the land. *Palestinian Walks* shows how Shehadeh’s life and the fate of the disappearing landscape of Palestine are utterly intertwined. While he finds solace in the majestic hills that sit like a tiered cake in the West Bank, each tier with a unique color and texture, his narration laments the irreversible losses caused by the encroachment of Israeli settlements, the erection of the apartheid wall, the irrecoverable hills and pathways of his grandfather’s time, and the vanishing landscapes that impede the ancient Palestinian tradition of the *sarha*:

To go on a sarha was to roam freely—at will—without restraint... A man going on a sarha wanders aimlessly, not restricted by time and place, going where his spirit takes him to nourish his soul and rejuvenate himself. But not any excursion would qualify as a sarha. Going on a sarha implies letting go. It is a drug-free high, Palestinian-style.

Shehadeh describes the curtains formed of vineyards, the nurturing branches of olive groves and the succulent sustenance provided by fruit trees; he encounters gazelles, goats, cattle, mules, and birds that inhabit the ecological terrain of Palestine, and the layered rock formations amid the hills that used to shield his ancestors from rain and jackals. And

he narrates the continuous evanescence and ghostly traces—the vanishment and the irrecoverable loss brought by Israeli settler-colonial occupation. As one West Bank hilltop after another is claimed by Jewish Israeli settlers, all that remains is the Palestinian contours of the hills causing his sarha journeys to become increasingly suffocating. He walks and his tone becomes more desperate, attempting to relocate what has been vanished. By his sixth walk, Shehadah is no longer sulking in the mystery of the material landscapes around him, but is forlornly witnessing what has faded away—both a testimony of Palestine’s disintegration, but also his own feelings of failure in not being able to stall time, freeze Palestinian annihilation, or protect himself from the bleak embitterment that consumes him.

The biography of these hills is in many ways my own, the victories and failures of the struggle to save this land also mine.

Through his first-person autoethnographic account of six meditative walks—or sarhat (singular: *sarha*)—across different regions of Palestine over the span of twenty-six years, beginning in 1978 and ending in 2006, Shehadeh produces a poetics of vanishment that underscores the relationship between environmental injustice and eco-occupation in Palestine. His descriptions of these increasingly vanishing pathways offer an alternative historiography of the settler-colonial occupation of Palestine.

Shehadeh’s novel opens with him walking to the hilly countryside of the surrounding mountains of Ramallah attempting to locate the *qasr*—a stone structure that had once sheltered his great uncle Abu Ameen. The scenery in the surrounding hills is wild and freeing as though a cool zephyr is breathed into each reflective line:

Before visiting the qasr, I took a moment to look around. It was as though the earth was exploding with beauty and color and had thrown from its

bosom wonderful gifts without any human intervention. I wanted to cry out in celebration of its splendor. As I shouted "S-A-R-H-A!" I felt I was breaking the silence of the past, a silence that had enveloped this place for a long time. My cry of greeting echoed against one hill then another and another, returning to me fainter and fainter until I felt I had touched the entire landscape.

On his first sarha in 1978, Shehadeh finds his great uncle Abu Ameen's abandoned stone *qasr*: "It was as though in this *qasr* time was petrified into an eternal present, making it possible for me to reconnect with my dead ancestor through this architectural wonder." Abu Ameen rejected the family's city dwelling life and worked amid the stones as a builder. This memory plugs in the internal tensions that consumed Palestinian social relations as the Israeli occupation produced new notions of productivity that meant finding resources elsewhere through Western models of progress, modernity, and city life.

My family was judgmental, arrogant, and proud of their education and status. They looked down on Abu Ameen and his family. "What has he made of himself?" they would ask accusingly. "Nothing, nothing at all. He was but a stonemason who sat under a rough canopy day in and day out, pecking at stone."

And yet, Shehadeh is deeply nostalgic about the man who was "but a stonemason", constantly seeing his image caked in the landscape as he conducts his first walk—"the pale god of the mountains". Shehadeh recounts a story of Abu Ameen who on his honeymoon builds a *qasr*—stone shelter—with his new bride Zarifeh. The beautiful narration of Abu Ameen and his wife Zarifeh building shelter amid the mountains is one of love, labor and land. Abu Ameen, whose first name is Ayoub, was Shehadeh's maternal great uncle. As a child, Ayoub and his cousin Saleem attended Christian schools run by English missionaries. Unlike Saleem, who was the perfect student who even

challenged their teachers, Ayoub saw school as a prison and waited for any opportunity to work with his hands in the land. Ayoub found his cousin Saleem annoying, unable to understand why Saleem took his education so seriously. Neither men owned any land, and Ayoub's goal was to acquire a plot to build upon. After leaving school, Ayoub found satisfaction and endless work as a stonemason. He worked long days and saved his money. Saleem was disturbed by what he saw as his cousin's lack of ambition: "A stonemason? Is that all you aspire to make of yourself?" Saleem found his way to the United States where he studied law, and returned to Jaffa to work as a judge in the British courts (at the time, Palestine was a British mandate). In 1948, when the air strikes rained over Palestine, Saleem escaped to Ramallah but found the conditions too unbearable. He sought refuge in Beirut by the sea, a scene that replicates Jaffa, and died alone.

Ayoub, on the other hand, stayed in Ramallah. In between the First World War, the end of Ottoman rule, and the British takeover, he succeeded in buying land, though it was far from the city and covered in stones. But Abu Ameen knew how to clear the stones and cultivate the land. He soon married. Originally he had wanted to make a qasr on the land before he was married. Instead, he brought his new bride to the rough plot that would one day be their shelter and together they cleared the land, and built a shelter from the earth. Shehadeh recounts the narrative about Abu Ameen's honeymoon that had impressed him each time he heard it:

On the first day they thought they would return to Ramallah at dusk but they lost themselves in work and when they stopped the sun had already gone down. If they started back now they would have to walk in the dark and this was not safe because of the possibility of being attacked by jackals. So they decided to stay on their land and sleep overnight. Ayoub went and fetched water from the spring. In her zewadeh Zarifeh had brought bread, white goat cheese, onions, dried figs, and raisins.

[...] They worked like this for six consecutive days. It was only because Zariefeh knew what was edible in the wild that they were able to survive in the hills on the provisions they had brought with them [...]. They rationed the bread and found wild asparagus, watercress, and thyme. In the evenings she prepared chamomile tea from the fresh herbs she found growing in the side of the hill. They ate and drank what they could collect and managed to keep hunger away, working continuously, stopping to rest only for brief intervals. He was too shy a first to touch her in the open, it felt so exposed. But on the third day his desire was so strong it could not be contained.

The story of Abu Ameen and Zariefeh offers a beautiful narrative of Palestinian attachment to land. In this scene, Palestine becomes a site of love, food, and lovemaking embedded in the very landscape. Abu Ameen shields his wife from jackals by building a fire by where she slept. Though they were far from home, Zariefeh portioned the herbs, bread, and dried fruit to sustain them, and used her earthly knowledge to brew teas of herbs and water Abu Ameen fetched from a nearby spring. In this tale, Abu Ameen is a humble, hardworking and determined man, who finds paradise in the hills of Palestine with his love, Zariefeh. Zariefeh is described as a pretty woman who always wore a turban decorated with coins. On the sixth day, the young couple celebrates the completion of their new home. Zariefeh “removed her turban, pulled up her *thob* (traditional Palestinian embroidered dress), took her husband’s hand together they danced around their new home until they fell to the ground with exhaustion.” Through the story of Zariefeh and Abu Ameen, Palestine is momentarily suspended from tragic disappearance, and is redeemed through Shehadeh’s memory. The image of the young couple eating and drinking from the earth, and making love beneath the sky by Palestine’s hills is a counter-narrative of Palestine that is imagined to be loveless place.

However, as Shehadeh returns to the present of groaning bulldozers, pouring concrete, and infested hilltops, his tone is once again tragic and fragile. Reflecting on the slow erosion of these lands under settlement construction, Shehadeh wonders how his great-uncle Abu Ameen would react to the ruins of his qasr: “Would his spirit be brimming with anger at all of us for allowing it to be destroyed and usurped, or would he just be enjoying one extended *sarha* as his spirit roamed freely over the land, without borders as it had once been?”

The subsequent *sarhat* occur as two decades go by. During this time, Shehadeh witnesses the hills transform into a swarm of racially exclusive settlements with accompanying roads that are dangerous and illegal for Palestinians to traverse. In one scene, he and a colleague encounter two Palestinian youths along a path adjacent to a newly developed Jewish-only road that leads into the settlement of Talmon:

We soon realized that we had walked into the open sewers of the Jewish settlement of Talmon to the north. This settlement might have had a rubbish collection system but it did not have one for treating sewage, which was just disposed of down the valley into land owned by Palestinian farmers. We tried to step lightly so as not to drown our shoes in the settlers' shit. As we trudged through the soggy ground we met two boys who showed us the way out of the bog. We noticed they were taking us away from the paved road and told them that was where we were headed.

'It's too dangerous,' they said.

We asked them why.

'The settlers,' they said. 'If you're walking and they drive by they swerve and hit you. They ran over Mazen. And if an army jeep comes they shoot. No one uses the road.'

This scene conjures the environmental justice issue of dumping material waste on Palestinian lands. However, taking this environmental injustice a step further, the scene

also captures the mundane violences of everyday life that are central components of Israeli settler-colonialism—the image of two Palestinian men avoiding a sewer reflects the devaluation of native life in which Palestinian farmlands are equated with sites where human waste can be dumped without legal recourse. That Shehadeh “trudged through the soggy ground” is as symbolic as it is literal: Palestine life has become equated with the swamp that the Zionist origin story is based on. This “trudging” also symbolizes the ways in which native bodies are not only made to disappear through corporeal death, but to some extent, are already equated to human waste, suggesting that they have disappeared through their devaluation. Furthermore, the children’s insistence that violence is imminent through the almost passing statement that “they ran over Mazen” reinforces the precarious condition of Palestinian life—particularly through the notion that the settlers (bolstered by “the tanks”—the Israeli military) are prepared to kill Palestinians should they attempt to trespass exclusively Jewish property erected just years before. Elsewhere, Shehadeh recounts a time when, attempting to return home from work, Israel had imposed a curfew and he is confronted by an armed member of the Israeli military who refuses to let him go home.

I had to implore the Israeli soldier. I told him that I really did not know a curfew had been imposed on Ramallah. I was away all day and hadn't listened to the news. "I'm tired," I said, "please let me through." Oh the humiliation Why should I endure all these hardships? Why should I spend so much of my time thinking of the dismal future? Living as a hunted, haunted human with a terrible sense of doom pervading my life? ... But I knew why. If I and people like me were to leave rather than stay and resist the occupation, we would wake up in a few years with a new reality, our land taken from under our feet. We had no alternative but to struggle against our predicament.

Old dirt roads that once ran along the contours of the land where Palestinian communities resided are now paved highways that penetrate straight through, disfiguring the landscapes and fragmenting Palestinian communities. The open spaces where Palestinians once picnicked in the summertime, nurtured by the trees, are now cemented over with tanks of liquid concrete to accommodate the new inhabitants. Still, Shehadeh continues to pursue pilgrimages of solace and serenity in the wild hills. As the natural landscape changes, Palestinian-Israeli relations evolve as well, and Shehadeh records this evolution too. Initially an idealistic lawyer battling for Palestinian claims to land in Israeli courthouses, he becomes increasingly disenchanted, even bitter, as case after case is decided against the indigenous inhabitants. The law was set in motion for Palestinian disappearance, he realized very quickly.

Anxiously negotiating the rapidly transforming landscape—isolated Palestinian enclaves, obstructed roads, curfews and closures, Israeli checkpoints, an ever-expanding network of settler-only bypass roads, and the apartheid wall—Shehadeh describes the ways in which he felt as settlers began to swarm the hilltops: *The Palestine I knew, the land I thought of as mine, was quickly being transformed before my eyes.* Observing the shrinking environmental landscapes surrounding Ramallah, Shehadeh dwells on the “cruel paradox” in the Zionist image of “Judea and Samaria” (the Hebrew names for the West Bank) that at once rely on a landscape that is characteristically Palestinian, only to settle, colonize and disappear the very native inhabitants that crafted the terrain:

The very thing that renders the landscape 'biblical', its traditional habitation and cultivation in terraces, olive orchards, stone building and the presence of livestock, is produced by the Palestinians, whom the Jewish settlers came to replace. And yet the people who ... render the

landscape biblical are themselves excluded from the panorama. The Palestinians are there to produce the scenery and then disappear.

The eco-occupation of Palestine thus requires a contradictory production of the native, the subject of settler-colonialism, through which notions of authenticity become reinscribed into settler-colonial narratives of attachment. The very landscape developed by indigenous peoples becomes the site of identity of the settler-colonizer, yet the settler colony's existence becomes contingent on their disappearance.

Through each sarha, we walk with Shehadeh and witness the multifaceted processes of eco-occupation: the draining of the Dead Sea to irrigate settlement lands, the concrete “poured over these hills” to support Israel's expanding industrial zones, and to the wall that not only isolates Palestinian communities from one another but also destroys their land and livelihood. The memoir continuously navigates the interstices of life and death in Palestine's vanishment, taking us through a suffocating circular and contradictory journey. Where love and simplicity inspired his sarhas, the journeys become increasingly more desperate and obsessive—attempting to trace backward to a Palestine that is vanishing and to freeze in time that which remains. Over time, the hills become robbed of their simplicity and begin to contradict themselves, evoking both solace and grief, freedom and imprisonment, and sustenance and danger. Finally, we return to the hills that once provided Shehadeh with an escape from the choking grip of occupation. But, they, too, have vanished. The delicious hills, where lovers once feasted on bread, goat cheese and herbs and drank from spring water, have been transformed into the very landscape that Thackeray's and Melville's wretched descriptions had inspired. These hills that only several walks before had promised a counter-narrative of Palestine

as a place of love and pleasure—the hills whose silhouette had contained the contours of Abu Ameen’s face—had become a bleached, suburban settlement with dwellings situated like identical lego squares, red-roofed and beige.

It is the gentle and unpredictable tone that makes vanishment particularly unbearable. Of the most tragic consequences of vanishment is the inability to recover what is lost. Shehadeh’s eagerness for some sort of reparation finds itself to be an unfulfilled promise that only itches away at the invisible wound of disappearance. Indeed, Shehadeh’s memoir is also a story of the failure of law to contend with settler-colonial vanishment.

My first encounter with the language of the hills was at the law courts, when as a young man I used to accompany my father, who was a recognized expert in land law. He took on many cases of disputes between landowners who possessed kawasheen (certificates of ownership) for unregistered land where the boundaries of the plot were described in terms of the physical features, in the language of hill farmers. [...] In later years, when the Israeli occupation forces became interested in claiming Palestinian land for Jewish settlements and I appealed against land acquisition orders to Israel courts, the ambiguity in these documents was used against the farmers to dispute their ownership.

As the policies of registration made legible an Israeli statehood on Palestinian lands, Palestinians became subject to a new kind of erasure. The very notion of “rights” has become the hegemonic way by which subaltern groups are allowed to make their unlivable conditions legible. Since Palestine is not a sovereign state, Shehadeh and others must make appeals in Israeli courts of law for Palestine to not vanish, for Palestinians to maintain their lands and identity. However, as a settler-colonial power, Israel’s implementation of direct and indirect structures of genocide ranges from outlawing the word “nakbah” in historical textbooks and colloquial discourse, to

providing a Palestinian homeowner one week to demolish their own home or be imprisoned and fined, to eliminating any trace of Palestinian life in areas like Jabal Abu-Ghneim. For Shehadeh, Israeli “law” meant that members of his family legally did not exist:

Under Israeli law, Fareed and those members of my family who were not residing in the West Bank when Israel occupied it in June 1967 and carried out that first crucial consensus are considered absentees and their property outside the town has been taken from them. It was vested in the Israeli state for the exclusive use of Israeli Jews. I had read the law making this possible many times but its full import never struck me as it did now. A Palestinian only has the right to the property he resides in. Once he leaves it for whatever reason it ceases to be his, it “reverts back” to those whom the Israeli system considers the original, rightful owners of “Judea and Samaria,” the Jewish people, wherever they might be.

The story of vanishment, then, is one that cannot be encapsulated only by statistics and observations. In the context of ongoing settler-colonial vanishment, and the accompanying transformation (disappearance, replacement) of the Palestinian landscapes, we need to heed the ghostly traces-- the buried “social facts” that lay beneath the surface.

Sightings of Vanishment

I want to end this chapter with a haunting I experienced in my most recent visit to Palestine, where I conducted ethnographic work over the course of three months. The imposition and perhaps disjointed positioning of this final segment reflects my own process of contending with the ghosts I experienced all over Palestine, and in many ways, my inability to articulate in coherent words and style their haunting presence. This is a reflection of the pending vanishment of a small village in Palestine’s Jordan Valley, Aqaba.

Aqaba Village is located in the northeastern part of the West Bank's Jordan Valley. Located in 'Area C' of the West Bank, al Aqaba Village has seen the harshest movement restrictions, living conditions, and exposure to live ammunition from Israeli military training in the surrounding hills. The permit regime implemented by the state of Israel prevents Palestinian movement. Currently 97 percent of the Aqaba Village in the Jordan Valley faces demolition orders. The Israeli army forbids the entry of Palestinians to the Jordan Valley unless they are registered as residents according to the state of Israel. The division of the Palestinian Occupied Territories of the West Bank into Areas A, B and C does not reflect geographical continuity or organically formed Palestinian enclaves; rather, the division reflects an administrative policy of enclosure officiated by the Interim Agreement of the Oslo Accords. Originally, the division was part of a longer plan of facilitating re-acquisition of Palestinian lands confiscated by the state of Israel through incremental transfers of land to the Palestinian Authority – a transfer that has never occurred despite the Oslo Accord being over twenty years old.

Approximately 62 percent of Palestinian lands in the West Bank are classified as "Area C" and are under full and exclusive Israeli control. As home to an estimated 180,000 Palestinians, Area C includes major residential and development land reserves for the entire West Bank. Palestinians residing in Area C of the West Bank are prevented from expanding and developing their communities, face home demolitions and are cut off from infrastructure and livelihood necessities including electricity. In addition, Israel has taken over most of the water sources in Area C and has restricted Palestinian access to them. Aqaba's villagers are unable to obtain building permits to build their own lands and 97% of the village is under demolition orders. Not to be confused with "Al-Aqaba" in

Jordan- a touristic destination along the Dead Sea- Aqaba village in Palestine's Jordan Valley reveals a precarious life of ominous destruction. Nestled between a silhouette of overlapping tan mountains, Aqaba villagers regularly hear the sounds of live ammunition piercing through the sky from the two neighboring Israeli military bases and a series of checkpoints that form a 'virtual wall'. According to the village's mayor, Haj Sami Sadeq, "we hear them shooting in the distance even when the children are in school and playing outside."

As a direct result of the precariousness, since 1967, the population of the village has dropped from 2,000 people to 300 today—an 85% depopulation of the village. Despite the uncertainty of daily life, many villagers I spoke to expressed their desire to stay in Aqaba village. As one shepherd explained to me, "It is our home. Where else will be go?" Nonetheless, the Israeli Civil Administration (the Israeli state's governing body operating in the West Bank, and which is directly to the Israeli military—the "Israeli Defense Force") has issued 40 Demolition Orders against the houses and structures of Aqaba village, including the medical center, a vibrant kindergarten that serves Aqaba and surrounding Palestinian villages, the residences of the village dwellers, and the postmodern-looking mosque.

Aqaba Village is nestled within a silhouette of straw-colored mountains that make up the northern part of the Jordan Valley. Despite the regime of isolation and restrictions placed on Palestinians, a cursory glance at the small village of three hundred residents promises a quaint existence for the local villagers and shepherds. There is a mayor who is deeply admired and loved by his people, a guest house for international teachers and peacekeepers, a building containing a tea and herb factory, a lively kindergarten filled

with children from surrounding villages, a turquoise mosque, a sewing cooperative for the village's women and an entry street called Share3 al Salam, or the Street of Peace. The soundtrack of sheep bleating and cows gently groaning contribute to this postmodern village life. The surrounding mountains tuck the village in a secure embrace, forming a sort of awning. The stars feel infinitely closer than any other platform on earth.

However, village life is fraught due to the lurking threat of Israeli annihilation. In 1972, there were 1,000 Israeli settlers living in Area C, outside East Jerusalem. By 1993, their population had increased to 110,000. As of 2012 they number more than 300,000 compared with the 150,000 Palestinian residing in Area C.

At twilight, I trace the mountains with my eyes. The thud of our footsteps on the rocky makeshift steps leading to the rooftop or *stoo*h seems to echo into the night, interrupted only by the piercing sounds of shooting in the distance. The Israeli military is testing heavy machinery. The sheep and goats and cows in the barn are softly pleading with the militarized sky, their murmurs indicate confusion and disturbance. A dog barks from somewhere in the village, as though to protest the flashing lights piercing the air a couple kilometers ahead of us. The shots fired are steady like a persistent drum- faster than the alarmed tick of my heart. Bang. Bang. Bang. The shots and lights began at nightfall and persist through the dark morning hours. I converse with a village teenager, Mahmoud, who has been sent by the mayor to chaperone me:

Mahmoud: There you hear this? Here they are shooting. They always do this.

LS: That is frightening!

Mahmoud [laughs]: *Aadi*. The Americans were here last week training.

LS: Americans?

Mahmoud: Yes, right in front of the village right at the village's doorstep. [gestures to the village's main entrance maybe fifty feet away from where

we are standing]. They were there at the front of our village with their tanks- the Americans.

Recent news reports and testimonies from other villagers in Aqaba village confirm the U.S.'s military presence in Aqaba village. For three weeks, over 3,500 U.S. military personnel and 1,000 members of the Israeli army conducted a joint training exercise between Israel and the United States. This operation, called "Austere Challenge 2012", began on October 21, 2012 and was hailed as "the largest-ever ballistic missile defense exercise between our nations" by Pentagon spokesman Jack Miller. Austere Challenge 2012 is a bilateral air-defense exercise that the U.S. and Israel had been planning for more than two years as part of a long-standing agreement between U.S. European Command and the Israel Defense Force to hold bilateral training exercises on a regular basis.⁷¹ Austere Challenge was overseen by the American military chief, General Martin Dempsey, who directed multiple tests of Israeli and American air defense systems "against incoming missiles and rockets from places as far away as Iran."⁷² The U.S. cost for the air-defense network tests is \$30 million, according to the 'Fact Sheet' publicized by the United States European Command⁷³.

In my interview with the mayor Haj Sami, it is once again confirmed that the presence of the U.S. in Aqaba Village was a recent phenomenon:

LS: I have been hearing that the U.S. military has also been here training
 Haj Sami: True, as the Israeli military does. They were surrounding us.
 We would see the tanks.
 LS: Did you see them?
 Haj Sami: of course! They surround us!
 LS: Have they left?

⁷¹ <http://www.eucom.mil/key-activities/exercises-and-operations/austere-challenge-2012>

⁷² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/28/austere-challenge-2012-dempsey-israel_n_2035481.html

⁷³ www.eucom.mil

Haj Sami: They are gone I think, but tomorrow? They would train while the children were in school.

The U.S.'s militarization of the Jordan Valley's mountains leaves an uncanny footprint. I can almost sense the footprint as I trace the silhouette of the mounds surrounding the village. Haunted by the U.S.'s absent presence on this night, weapons of terror are catapulted into the air by planned hands. And yet, despite its intimidating presence tonight, Israel's military training does not shake the marvelous landscapes and I am transfixed.

Anxious to play with the mystery of these mountains and their sensational curves, my new friends and I set out to imprint our curious footsteps amid the mountains that seem to shield the village from imminent fire and looming annihilation. Ninety-seven percent of the village can become nothingness tomorrow, even tonight. At any moment, the Israeli state can claim this land where I plant my feet on this glorious winter evening, where I feel the breath of the mountains embracing one another, sharing secrets of traumas witness in Palestine since the inception of the Israeli state in 1948. My friend Amer, who is a Palestinian-American here to learn more about water issues in Palestine, and Don, the Estonian volunteer teacher, want to trek these shaded hills. With sweet mint tea piping hot in a plastic thermos we found, poked potatoes in a thick coating of olive oil and coarse salt and wrapped in foil, and enough matches to light a lasting fire, our quest is an impromptu picnic in the mountain's embrace. Amer uses his iPhone's flashlight application to guide our way through the darkness. There are no lights but the stars and Israel's weapons pelting the sky. We walk, careful of foxes, prickly bushes, rocky terrain,

and Israeli tanks. We dodge needles from cactus and warn each other of anything cumbersome that might poke, bite, or seep our boots.

We find a clearing where enough dead branches to kindle a fire. We pause because we are both enchanted by this world as we are terrified by the shots that sound too close. Our twigs and stems and sticks are blazing now. Suddenly, we see a tank. Our fire has caught the attention of someone and they are driving toward us. We freeze. Then we crouch behind a rock, a shadow, anything. But, the mountains cannot save us now. The tank drives toward us and pauses and then is gone. Relief restores our consciousness and we pour our tea over the flames to collapse them. Our hearts are pounding. We did not carry identification cards. Amer's passport is stamped with conditional entry into the West Bank. He is not allowed in Area C, and I had already been held for six hours in interrogations upon entering the West Bank. Our foolishness reaches Haj Sami who had been called about a fire in the mountains involving the "the American girl originally from Khalil and her university colleagues." Haj Sami and men from the village are standing at the edge of the village before it meets the mountains, waiting with great worry and exasperation that we had made a grave error—carelessly, we had brushed against disappearance.

Chapter Two: The Visual Consumption of Palestine in the 21st Century

Marketed as “crime fiction,” “drama,” “thriller,” and “war film,” *Paradise Now* is a fictional account of the psychological deliberations of two young Palestinian men preparing for a suicide bombing mission in Israel. Anthony Bourdain, a renowned American traveling food journalist, premieres the second season of his CNN hit-show, *Parts Unknown* with a trek to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Despite their differing genres and formats, *Paradise Now* and *Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown: West Bank and Gaza* are rich texts to investigate the digestibility of Palestine as both promised a “real taste” of Palestine, one that moved away from the commonplace representations of the region as one in a perpetual state of crisis⁷⁴. In daily broadcasts, Palestine appears as a site of violence and chaos and its people the usual suspects of degenerate and improperly managed miscreants. Mainstreamed reportage often reveals crowds of men chanting fervently holding up corpses draped in red-green-black-and-white flags. Women are frequently televised in self-flagellating grief over a dead child, brother, or husband decomposing in a makeshift coffin, swimming across the shoulders of a hysterical mob. These images have been analyzed by Jack Shaheen in *Reel Bad Arabs* (2006), a

⁷⁴ While I do not conduct an analysis of Israeli film here, I do wish to point out that various studies have been made concerning the role of Israeli film in U.S. popular culture and political imagination, which is also part of the illegibility of Palestine in the global market, particularly as the Israeli narrative of attachment to Historic Palestine is contingent on the epistemological annihilation from Palestinians in history. One pertinent example of such an analysis is Melani McAlister’s analysis of the film *Exodus* (1961) directed by Otto Preminger and starring Paul Newman as the young Israeli hero Ari Ben Canaan, which is based on Leon Uris best-selling novel of the same title about the founding of Israel. In Chapter 4: “The Good Fight” of her book *Epic Encounters* (2005), McAlister argues that the book-and-film phenomenon was a foreshadowing of what Israel was to come to mean to Americans particularly in the wake of defeat in the Vietnam War (159). McAlister notes that the film became one of the most popular movies in America and helped construct U.S. consciousness as unhesitatingly pro-Zionist, an alignment which has contributed enormously to the settler-colonial occupation in Palestine as well as U.S. – Middle East relations in general.

documentary film directed by Sut Jhally and produced by the Media Education Foundation in which Shaheen analyzes 900 films to argue that Hollywood movies routinely depict Palestinians as evil, ruthless, and violent. A pertinent example is *True Lies*, a popular 1994 film directed and co-written by James Cameron, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jamie Lee Curtis that has become “part of [U.S.] visual heritage” as it is shown on television nearly every week. The film follows the life of Harry Tasker (Schwarzenegger) a man who secretly works as a government agent, but whose family thinks is a computer salesman. Harry’s wife Helen is an attractive legal secretary bored with her suburban life and frustrated with an absent husband who is always away, purportedly at technology conventions. As the clock winds down, Tasker proves he is not only able to save the U.S from sinister Palestinian jihadists, but is capable of giving his wife the adventure she craves. Another film *Black Sunday*⁷⁵ (1977) depicts a Palestinian woman (played by Swiss actress Marthe Keller) who conspires with a suicidal man, Michael Lander (Bruce Dern), a pilot deranged by years of torture endured as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, to fly a Goodyear blimp into a Miami stadium to wipe-out 80,000 Americans at the Super Bowl.”⁷⁶ Dahlia is depicted as a cold and remorseless murderer. Through the collaboration of Israeli Mossad intelligence agents and the FBI, Dahlia’s bombs are intercepted and she and Michael are killed in the Goodyear blimp, their ammunition exploding in the ocean.

⁷⁵ The film is based on the novel *Black September* by author Thomas Harris, his first novel and only work not to involve the serial killer Hannibal Lecter.

⁷⁶ Transcript retrieved from the Media Education Foundation’s website at www.mediaed.org.



Figure 6: Marthe Keller as 'Dahlia Iyad' in "Black Sunday" (1977). Photo credit: www.imfdb.org.

Both *True Lies* and *Black Sunday* depict Palestinians as inherently pathological and beyond redemption. Their intent is always to destroy and their targets are always the U.S. Salim, the leader of the Palestinian jihadists is sinister, physically abusive toward a female collaborator, and expressing no compassion toward the fellow members of his brotherhood. Dahlia appears vacant, like a zombie, whose desire for death exceeds any worldly pleasures. The failures of Palestinian masculinity and femininity are plugged into these tropes of violence: Salim is balding, sadistic, his eyes bulging and his Islamist chants incomprehensible; Dahlia appears asexual and soulless. The failures of Palestinian masculinity and femininity, respectively, reproduce the idealized formulation of white heteronormativity. In contrast to the sinister and repulsive Salim, Tasker is hardworking, sacrificial, and heroic: muscular arms, square jaw, sun-kissed white skin, sharply dressed, and fluent in the martial art of Palestinian head-bashing. Once Harry discovers that Helen is seeing the car salesman, he kidnaps her in a phony “covert operation,” forcing her to conduct a seductive striptease in order to be set free, dictating commands through a voice synthesizer. Helen’s sexualized body and All-American beauty can contrast with Dahlia’s lifeless character: her posture is militant, robotic and unpalatable. Helen’s sexual

access allows for proper heteronormative sexual desires; whereas Dahlia's Palestinian loyalties designate her to a space of sexual inaccessibility. Impenetrable by a normative masculine gaze, Dahlia's body becomes improperly feminine. On the one hand, she is masculinized by her obsession with her contrived phallus, the ticking bomb that awaits its pending climax—the explosion over the face of the U.S; on the other hand, because her femininity is corrupted by its inaccessibility, she is an object of death and pathology.

Within these cinematic trends, Shaheen raises compelling questions about the feasibility of Palestinian humanity on the big screen:

We never see Palestinians who suffer under occupation, Palestinians in refugee camps, Palestinians who are victimized, who are killed - innocent Palestinians. These images are denied us. Why are they denied us? Is there an unwritten code in Hollywood saying we cannot and will not humanize Palestinians? And why can't we humanize Palestinians in the same manner in which we humanize Israelis? Is not the life of a Palestinian child, media-wise, Hollywood-wise, politically-wise as important, as humane, as valuable as the life of an Israeli child?⁷⁷

The film *Paradise Now* and the episode *Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown: Israel, the West Bank and Gaza* emerge as promises of an intimate look at Palestine, one that departs from the dominant representations of salty bloodbaths and improperly gendered miscreants detailed by Shaheen. In fact, both the film and episode were marketed as something much more delectable—an invitation to consume Palestinian humanity in all its complexity. Signaling a response to the cinematic superfluous archive of terrorism, *Paradise Now's* film director, a Dutch-Palestinian named Hani Abu-Assad, emphasized his intention to bring a “human face” to Palestinian suffering. In an

⁷⁷ Transcript retrieved from the Media Education Foundation's website at www.mediaed.org.

interview, Abu-Assad describes film's ability to transcend ideological, political and emotional boundaries:

The movie must take the viewers to places they are not familiar with. People are already familiar with images of violence. The film allows you to use what you already know and go from there to unknown places; I wanted to shed a light on the missing pieces of those pictures that we see everyday.⁷⁸

Similarly, the episode *Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown: Israel, the West Bank and Gaza* allows a glimpse into the “unknown places” of humanity—in people’s kitchens, street food stands, and restaurants frequented by locals. As the title “Parts Unknown” suggests, Bourdain is able to move beyond the known, the hegemonic, and the commonplace, and submerge himself and the viewer into those intimate sites of obscurity. Max Fisher, blogger for *The Washington Post*, praises Bourdain’s ability to bring to the fore the missing pieces of Palestinian humanity: “Food humanizes. It's a ritual we all know and that's meant to bring people together. And we can all agree that ... Palestinian food is delicious.”⁷⁹

While these cultural texts are distinctive in their form and style⁸⁰, they each offer profound articulations of the ways in which Palestine and Palestinians are consumable in popular visual culture. Both visual encounters emerge as tropes that disrupt this broader trend of Palestinian limited visibility and consumability. As such, I read these texts as

⁷⁸ <http://www.adc.org/index.php?id=2637>

⁷⁹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/09/18/anthony-bourdain-explains-the-israel-palestine-conflict-through-food/>

⁸⁰ While I read these encounters alongside one another, it is important to note their basic differences. *Paradise Now* is a 90-minute film whereas *Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown* is a 60-minute television series. *Paradise Now* is advertised as a psychological thriller/war drama/crime film; *Parts Unknown* is advertised as a traveling culinary show. *Paradise Now* is a fictional account whereas *Parts Unknown* uses a documentary-style format. As a film, *Paradise Now* uses actors whereas *Parts Unknown* depicts local peoples in Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. *Paradise Now* was released as an independent film on a limited budget whereas Anthony Bourdain’s show was released on primetime CNN, a popular U.S. network.

“epic”⁸¹ markers that require a close analysis of their cultural and political content, and the encounters with Palestine that they allow (or disallow). In my analysis of these cultural texts, I argue that culture and politics cannot be disentangled; culture is a site of possibility, but can also obscure, normalize and/or reproduce relations of power. In line with many works in transnational feminism/s and postcolonial studies, I employ the term “encounter” to encapsulate the interaction between art, politics, and power. I ask: What are the ways in which Palestine is presented as not vanished? How is Palestine palatable in the international community, particularly to the Western audiences that these visual products are marketed to and for? What is included and absented in the visual encounter of Palestine in each of these cases? How are Palestine’s lands, culture, and peoples consumable in the 21st century?

These texts offer distinct responses to this set of questions. On the one hand, *Paradise Now* engages the Palestinian-as-suicide-bomber trope in a way that confronts in order to transcend these familiar depictions. Anthony Bourdain’s episode of *Parts Unknown* does not center these familiar depictions; while a discussion of terrorism does come up in his interview with a Palestinian theatre director at the Aida refugee camp, Bourdain’s network explicitly advertises his culinary exploits as emphasizing the rich cultures and history of the land and its inhabitants. Of course, this notion that culture can be removed from politics is immediately challenged at his first food-stand when he contemplates the origins of Palestinian foods appropriated by Israel, as green falafel dough is deep fried before him. As such, while these cultural texts can be read as

⁸¹ Here, I am conjuring the title of Melani McAlister’s book *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945* (2005) in which she argues that culture is the central site of encounter between Americans and the Middle East, and that these encounters are often fraught with tension and ripe transformative possibility.

conceptually and substantively dissimilar, in the end they offer a complicated representation of Palestinian humanity in an effort to offer a new taste of Palestine, engaging the very narratives they speak against. The question emerges, then, about what aspects of Palestinian humanity are digestible, and how the enabling and limited ways Palestine is represented in visual culture.

Of course, these questions have particular weight within the broader context of the globalized War on Terror. In her article “The War to Be Human / Becoming Human in a Time of War,” Neferti Tadiar tells the story of a young Palestinian man who is detained by the United States government for overstaying his visa. The reader may recall that shortly after the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. government suspended habeas corpus for foreigners and implemented racial profiling procedures that mainly targeted, and continue to target, Arabs and Muslims.⁸² When the Palestinian man asked the officers why they had detained him, he was told: “You did nothing; your people did” (Tadiar 95). The Palestinians-are-terrorists trope is part of the globalized logics that makes the settler-colonialism of Palestine particularly indigestible. The relationship between power and racial logics has been illuminated by the French Sociologist Michel Foucault through his theory of the power/knowledge (1980). Foucault argued that knowledge is always

⁸² In addition to roundups, racial profiling and the obstruction of civil liberties, Congress implemented of the “Patriot Act,” which was signed into law on October 26, 2001. In section 503, the Patriot Act stipulates that deportation without evidence of a crime or criminal intent was permissible even for lawful permanent residents and any others the attorney general claims is a threat to national security (Hagopian 51). The other stipulation, section 501, provided the attorney general with the power to strip individuals of their citizenship so long as there is any evidence for contribution to or involvement in the activities of any group deemed as “terrorist” (ibid). Included in this act are sweeping powers of detention and surveillance to the executive branch and law enforcement agencies, as well as the government’s ability to freeze all assets of an organization and to defend this action on the basis of secret evidence (Hagopian 53). Under the Patriot Act, the definition of “terrorist activity” is quite arbitrary but the consequences are clear: potential lifetime sentencing, inability to challenge the designation of “terrorist,” and the inability to request a trial. In fact, the Patriot Act stipulates the individuals can even be held without any official charges (ibid).

inextricably enmeshed in relations of power. Drawing on Foucault's works, Edward Said coined the term "colonial discourse" to describe the complex set of images, practices, and 'knowledges' that reflect, reinforce, and create power relations. Through these 'knowledges,' racialized subjects become expendable and the violence afflicted upon them, merely collateral.

According to Stuart Hall, "we give things meaning by how we represent them – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, [and] the values we place on them."⁸³ Historically, for Palestinians, these associative meanings are cased within a larger history of Orientalism in which representations of an exotic and depraved Orient construct binary, homogenous categories "East" and "West" that pit civilized Americans versus a belittled, demeaned, and sexualized Orient.⁸⁴ Here, Palestine becomes a constituted entity, defined in opposition to its imperial and colonial powers, ascribing Palestinian lands and people an essentialist alienism (Said 1978: 322).

Through my analysis of these visual representations as spaces of consumption, I employ a transnational feminist framework which sees consumption as embodied in notions of gendered fantasy and colonial myth. The set of questions I raise above rest on a particular re-conceptualization of the notion of consumption. Of course, in its quotidian sense, consumption refers to eating. Foods, mouths, stomachs. However, situating consumption within the complex nexus of transnational power relations, in which the intimacies of U.S. and Israeli geopolitical relations (after all, the Israeli state is modeled

⁸³ Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices

⁸⁴ Nadine Naber, *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11*

after and financed by the United States) shape the everyday livelihoods of Palestinians, as well as the racialized and gendered logics that enable their reproduction, I employ a more complex conceptualization of consumption, one that encapsulates the unsavory cultural politics that mark Palestine within the global racial order. Here, consuming is a practice in which Palestine becomes commodified vis a vis a set of tropes for the imagined Western consumer. This visual commodity, as we will see, is advertised as a delicious reform of popular mis/conceptions of Palestine through a call for humanity, a liberal discursive formation that allows Palestine to be stomached in a figurative sense, while obscuring the conditions of settler-colonial occupation.

In the first part of this chapter, I look at the ways in which *Paradise Now* reproduces the trope of terrorism but through a seductive, psychological encounter with emasculated Palestinian bodies, one that further distances the imagined consumer-spectator from the reality of settler-colonial occupation, contributing to the cultural vanishment of Palestine. Here, I interrogate the trope of terrorism, the way it is reproduced, as well as what the film silences. In the second part of the chapter, I contrast these representations in *Paradise Now* with *Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown: Israel, the West Bank and Gaza*, an episode that promises an intimate encounter with Palestinian life through the metaphoric as well as literal consumption of Palestinian cuisine. I argue that through its emphasis on Palestinian culture and food, the episode transforms Palestine into a tamable site, one that Bourdain is able to consume with delight and wonder, affective reproductions that seem to depart from the familiar trope of terror and violence. I analyze the ways in which this liberal project of consuming Palestine further mutes the settler-colonial occupation by moving away from the representations of

Palestine as a site of danger, abjections and violence. I analyze what it means that Palestine can be tamed by the Western tongue. I detail the ways in which Palestine is tamed by Bourdain, whose own image as a “culinary bad boy” makes him the prime candidate to ingest Palestine.

Intimate Moments with Body Bombs: *Paradise Now* (2005) and the Fetid Flavor of Palestinian Pathology

The 2005 film *Paradise Now* depicts the psychic and emotional deliberations of two childhood friends after they are recruited for a suicide bombing mission in Israel by an unnamed Islamist fraternity. Said (Kais Nashef) and Khaled (Ali Suliman) are two lowly mechanics living in the northern city of Nablus in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) of the West Bank. The film follows the young men’s final forty-eight hours together before their scheduled deliverance. Unable to disclose the mission to their families, Khaled and Said are forced to mull over their secret “operation”, only to be discovered by Suha (Lubna Azabel), Said’s nonviolence-touting love interest. The film was directed by Netherlands-based Palestinian, Hani Abu-Assad, who also co-wrote the screenplay with Beyer (Netherlands) and Pierre Hodgson (France), and produced by Israeli, German, Dutch, and French funds. Initially released at film festivals and art houses, *Paradise Now* was soon picked up by Warner Independent Pictures and distributed around the world. The Israeli Film Fund underwrote the film’s distribution in Israel, support typically reserved for Israeli-produced cinema.

Hani Abu-Assad and Dutch co-writer Bero Beyer started working on the script in 1999; however, it took them five years to begin the filming process due in part to rockets and explosions during production. In order to write the screenplay, Abu-Assad read

transcripts from Israeli army indictments of suspected suicide bombers, and met with “friends and families and mothers”⁸⁵ of individuals who had carried out suicide bombings: “I learned no story is the same as the other” Abu-Assad told *The Guardian*⁸⁶. *Paradise Now* was filmed on-site in Nablus, the West Bank city with the highest number of killings by Israeli military, the most severe damage to property and the most intensive restrictions on movement such as curfews, roadblocks, and roundups, during that year. The film was produced during the second Palestinian *intifada*, or grassroots uprising, in which 3,000 Palestinians were brutally killed. A land mine detonated 300 feet from the filming site, causing actress Lubna Azabel to faint. The location manager was kidnapped by a Palestinian faction, only to be released when the office of then Palestinian Prime Minister Yasser Arafat intervened. Helicopter gunships launched a missile attack near the set causing six crew members to abandon the film’s production. In an interview with the *Telegraph*, Abu-Assad said, “If I could go back in time, I wouldn’t do it again.”⁸⁷

A film humanizing Palestinian suicide bombers, a European co-production, written and directed by a Palestinian, with support from an Israeli producer—*Paradise Now* was met with angst during its reception. In art house and festival spaces, the film was celebrated as a historic encounter with Palestinian humanity. However, when it was nominated in 2006 for an Academy Award, a number of online petitions demanded the film be rescinded. Of the 32,000 signatories, many argued that the film glorified Palestinian terrorists, and that its inclusion at the Academy Awards would allow continued hate against the state of Israel. Many detractors argued that the emphasis on the

⁸⁵ <http://www.workers.org/2006/world/paradise-now-0202/>

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Telegraph.co.uk retrieved April 10, 2013.

humanity of suicide bombers allowed for global complacency with terrorism, a critique with particular resonance given that the war on terror was in full swing. In the words of Nouri Gana, any major film that deals with suicide bombing approves only of “one streetcar named condemnation.” Responding to these allegations, Dutch-Palestinian director and screen writer for *Paradise Now*, Hani Abu-Assad, insisted that the “the real terror” is Israel stealing Palestinian land.⁸⁸ Abu-Assad contended that the film be read as a “counter-terrorist” statement against the occupation. Of course, this incited even more fury among the throng of Zionist protestors. Israeli publicist Irit Lenor called *Paradise Now* “a quality Nazi film.”⁸⁹ The film was petitioned and lobbied against at the Academy Awards. At a ceremony where it was named “Best European Film”, a throng of protestors picketed outside.

For the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), which oversees the Academy Awards, the primary issue was that *Paradise Now* was illegible as a product from ‘Palestine’ because the occupied Palestinian territories do not constitute an officially recognized state. This was not the first time a film from ‘Palestine’ would be a subject of controversy at the Academy Awards. In 2003, the film *Divine Intervention* by the Palestinian director Elia Suleiman was excluded on the same grounds⁹⁰. *Paradise Now* was admitted as a film from “Palestine” on the Academy Awards’ official website, but due to concerted efforts by Israeli officials, including Consul General Ehud Danoch and Consul for Media and Public Affairs Gilad Millo, the film was changed by AMPAS

⁸⁸ <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3223216,00.html>

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ However, since entities such as Puerto Rico, Hong Kong, and Taiwan had successfully submitted entries to the Academy, many media outlets such as the Electronic Intifada vocalized the anti-Palestinian double standard, and the film was reconsideration for nomination as a product of “the Palestinian Territories” the following year, but did not make the final list of nominees.

into a film from “the Palestinian Authority,” a move Abu-Assad called “a slap in the face for the Palestinian people and their national identity.” Finally, the film was referred to as a film from “the Palestinian Territories.”⁹¹ Both the Palestinian and Israeli members of the production team were condemned for working with “the enemy.” Omar Al-Qattan, a London-based Palestinian producer stated: “I would have no problem working with an Israeli producer... But I would never take money from a state that I believe is racist and discriminatory. It is a matter of principle. When you take money from a government that doesn't recognize that you exist, you are automatically compromising yourself.”⁹² Responding to accusations from the Zionist community, *Paradise Now*'s Israeli-Jewish producer Amir Harel stated, “I totally reject the accusation that I am collaborating with the enemy [...]. We live here together and we have to learn to share this place. Many of us have found a way to work together and be at peace.”⁹³

Despite its controversial reception in the Academy, *Paradise Now* enjoyed a wide release, including in the United States and Israel. The War on Terror brought about a public fascination with the psyche of the suicide murderer, and, as such, the film was met with widespread success and accolades from critics, and was distributed to forty-five countries worldwide. The film gained an 89% rating on the review compendium website Rotten Tomatoes. *Paradise Now* was the first film from the occupied Palestinian territories to be nominated for the Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film, which it won, as well as an Oscar-nomination in the same category. No one was as surprised as

⁹¹ <http://www.oscars.org/filmarchive/>

⁹² <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/apr/12/israelandthepalestinians>

⁹³ Ibid.

director Hany Abu Assad. In an interview with Dan Glaister of *The Guardian*, Abu-Assad states:

I didn't expect it...You come with a \$2 million movie, it's a subject that nobody wants to hear about. It was a joke. It was a joke that I was even nominated. Suddenly you hear your name. I stood there like I didn't know exactly what to say. But when they called Palestine, it was like, wow. Palestine is not even a state yet, it's a proposal. And here I am standing in front of the glamorous part of Hollywood representing a proposal.⁹⁴

New York Times writer Stephan Holden applauded Abu-Assad's risky humanization of Palestinian suicide bombers, stating "it is easier to see a suicide bomber as a 21st-century Manchurian Candidate - a soulless, robotic shell of a person programmed to wreak destruction - than it is to picture a flesh-and-blood human being doing the damage."⁹⁵ The film's Israeli-Jewish producer, Amir Harel, insisted that *Paradise Now* should be considered a film from Palestine: "I hope that one day we can attach *Paradise Now* to a tangible piece of land [...]. Until then, you have to go with the self-definition of the director; it is what is in his heart that counts. If the director defines himself as Palestinian, then the film is Palestinian too"⁹⁶. Harel, whose cinematic repertoire includes the romantic drama *Yossi and Jagger*, a 2002 tragic love story between two gay Israeli soldiers stationed along the war-stricken Israeli-Lebanese border, explains that the film was enabled both by art's liberal leanings, as well as the team's secularity:

I think we [in the film industry] are perhaps more naturally liberal and progressive than some other sections of society... [T]he crucial thing in this case is that none of us are religious. The specter of religion, on both sides, is very dangerous, particularly when it plays a part in politics. The

⁹⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/jan/20/israelandthepalestinians.comment>

⁹⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/28/movies/28para.html>

⁹⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/apr/12/israelandthepalestinians>

fact everyone working on *Paradise Now* was secular contributed to a sense of understanding and tolerance.⁹⁷

Similarly, in many interviews, Abu-Assad described his desire to transcend the reductive binaries of good/evil and black/white, arguing that the role of art is to color the spaces in-between. In the same interview with Dan Glaister, he explains:

It's not just what some politicians want us to believe - that it's evil, that it comes from God. Bullshit. It's a human reaction to a very complex situation. The film tries to let you experience this situation in a different way, from different points of view. This is why we make films, I think.⁹⁸

In addition to its diverse reception from film critics and journalists, *Paradise Now* was the subject of passionate critiques and analyses from U.S. scholars in Middle East Studies, Cultural Studies, and Literature. Nick Davis, Associate Professor of English and Gender and Sexuality Studies at Northwestern University, and blogger for “Nick’s Flick Picks” (www.nicksflickpicks.com) states in his film review that, along with *Syriana*, *Paradise Now* was “deeply enervating” and at times “unwatchable”. His biting criticism centers on the ways in which the film cajoles its imagined Western spectator with overbearing affect:

That the filming style is so Hollywood-derived [...]only exacerbates our sense that *Paradise Now* is not only prevaricating about its own destiny, but that it is trying to "humanize" these would-be bombers in a way that feels distinctly pandering to Western sympathies.⁹⁹

It seems the film was doomed to Western “pandering” from the get-go. The film was distributed by U.S.-based Warner Independent Pictures (now merged with Warner Brothers Studios) and was given an English-language title at its inception. However, as many scholars point out, the “new wave” of Palestinian cinema reflects the ongoing exilic

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/jan/20/israelandthepalestinians.comment>

⁹⁹ <http://www.nicksflickpicks.com/parasyr.html>

conditions of most Palestinians, particularly in a post-2000 period, which positions Palestinian cinema's production, circulation and consumption in direct contact with Western spectatorship. During the first intifada in 1987, Israel shut down all entertainment facilities, including cinemas, and banned any public displays of Palestinians culture. As such, the "pandering to Western sympathies" Davis describes is part of a larger geo-political context in which Palestine has only become consumable by and through the West in both the literal and figurative sense: on the one hand, Palestinian cinema cannot help but be projected in spaces outside of the occupied territory (through, for example, the International Berlin Film Festival where *Paradise Now* was first released), and on the other hand, in order to be seen, the Palestinian narrative must be made digestible to the Western gaze. A more apt critique, then, is not if Palestinian film relies on the Western visual consumer, but *how* it becomes digestible as a commodity for the West.

For Lori Allen, anthropologist at the University of Cambridge, Palestine becomes digestible through *Paradise Now*'s strategic use of understatement—filmic conventions such as time lapse and monotone—which expose the harsh realities of life within a settler-colonial occupation. In her blog post for the Middle East Research and Information Project's online report *Interventions*, Allen states:

[I]t is nearly impossible to make unremitting frustration, repetition and boredom interesting to watch. It is difficult to depict violence as normal to audiences in the U.S. who are used to seeing it as spectacle and drama. Perhaps only a film that cycled in an endless loop of images of checkpoints, dusty scrambles up detours that are more rock than walking path, unemployed workers sitting in listless conversation and slow

marches in funeral processions could convey the reasons people get so fed up that some of them become willing to kill themselves and others.¹⁰⁰

The opening scene of *Paradise Now* elucidates the “unremitting frustration, repetition and boredom” that Lori Allan describes. Suha, a beautiful and chicly dressed young woman who has returned to Nablus following the murder of her father, a popular Palestinian nationalist leader, crosses into the West Bank through a checkpoint and encounters an armed member of the Israeli military. In Palestine, this encounter happens multiple times a day. During this encounter, Israelis monitor the entry of Palestinians into and within the West Bank, peruse personal belongings and check identification card,¹⁰¹ which Palestinians are required to carry at all times. The scene has no soundtrack except for the revving of an Israeli military tank in the distance followed by Suha’s footsteps on the unpaved road leading to her encounter with the ‘Israeli Defense Forces’ (IDF). And yet, the scene is grossly violent. Almost automatically, Suha places her single bag on the counter for the IDF soldier to search her, and, without him barking the commands as is usual at these sites, Suha hands him her identification card. The visual depiction of these normalized rituals of Israeli settler-colonialism conjures the 160 checkpoints that chop up the West Bank today without uttering the words “occupation,” “surveillance,” “apartheid” or “curfew.” The checkpoint, the IDF soldier, the tank in the distance, and Suha’s long uneasy gaze of discontent allows the viewer to encounter the settler-colonial

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.merip.org/mero/interventions/paradise-nows-understated-power>

¹⁰¹ Palestinians living in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) carry ID cards with orange covers (issued by the Israeli authorities) or green covers (issued by the Palestinian Authority). The cards issued by the PA are nearly identical to the Israeli card (they are written in Hebrew), except for a Palestinian Authority seal on top. The ID number on the PA cards allows the Israeli state to monitor and regulate Palestinian populations, and is linked with the Israeli computer system. A West Bank ID holder requires a permit to pass through military checkpoints along the Green Line into Israel and Jerusalem. Palestinians above the age of 16 require a permit to travel from one Palestinian city to another within the West Bank. Each ID card states whether the cardholder is Muslim or Christian. The bottom half of the ID card lists the marital status and names of other family members.

occupation that Palestinians live within. While many might critique the absence of the usual encounter of harassment, detention, shackling, blindfolding, and stripping that occurs at these sites, the film conjures the imminent threat of violence through what is absent as well as what is present.

Stylistically then, the film captured the mundane forms of terror in everyday life for Palestinians living within a settler-colonial occupation through its cinematic style and tone. Such techniques include the use of long pauses, direct gazes into the camera, minimal soundtrack except for the contrived sounds of occupation: chaos at checkpoints, the clinking of cars in a junkyard, footsteps hobbling over rocky hills, running through unpaved roads during Israeli-enforced curfew hours, the hum of Israeli military tanks, and crowds bustling in the Nablus marketplace. Khaled and Said work are introduced laboring at Abu Salim's mechanic shop in Nablus. Arabic pop music is bursting from a dusty recorder as a long line of dirty car parts, and damaged vehicles are heaped in no particular order. A customer is complaining to Said that the bumper they proclaim to have repaired is crooked. Said is immediately characterized by his deep, jaded voice, minimal speaking, striking green eyes, unkempt beard and long tousled curls against his olive-toned skin. Khaled joins the conversation to defend Said. He is tall and lanky, his beard also disheveled beard, and his voice higher-pitched and earnest. His movements are quick and careless in comparison to Said's measured pace and he appears naïve and childlike. After the customer offends the mechanics ("the bumper is crooked just like your father!¹⁰²"), Khaled grabs the level from Said's hands, drives the right side of the

¹⁰² The charge that Said's father is "crooked" is a multiple entendre. First, it could suggest that Said's father is a queer in a derogatory way. Second, it could allude to the fact that Said's father collaborated with Israel against Palestinians until he was discovered and executed by members of his community. Third, it could

bumper to the ground and retorts, “By God, you’re right! It is indeed crooked!” Khaled’s impulsiveness leads to him to be fired on the spot by Abu Salim. Through this scene, Said and Khaled are relatable and likeable and without any mention of settler-colonialism, Israel, occupation, violence, or poverty, the viewer is invited to get a taste of this bitter existence. These young men’s life is boring, purposeless, tedious, and impoverished. Khaled and Said are handsome but unkempt. Their appearance suggests the wasteful life that consumes them as a result of a stagnant economy, movement restrictions, social corruption, and long spans of time filled with nothingness- in short a suffocating existence that resembles the confinement of incarceration (a parallel that is made throughout the film).

Like Lori Allan, literary scholar Nouri Gana commends *Paradise Now*’s ability to transcend the contrived tropes of terrorism by imbuing the tropes with new political meanings. In his article “Reel Violence: *Paradise Now* and the Collapse of the Spectacle,” Gana argues that the film makes use of the cinematic in order to undo the spectacle of terrorism and to articulate a more nuanced and challenging narrative of Palestinian nationhood, “a narrative that has been so far both impermissible and/or readily discreditable by the hegemonic system of Israeli occupation” (Gana 20). Gana sees the spectacular depiction of contrived suicide bombing rituals and emotional deliberations as effectively transcending the confines of dominant tropes “through the ways in which film can surpass itself in the process of becoming itself”; in the process, *Paradise Now* “becomes otherwise than spectacle in the very route to becoming a

suggest that his father is a swindler, as in Palestinian culture, offspring are often said to acquire the characteristics of their father (suggesting that this would be an off-hand attack at Said as a swindler). Finally, the comment suggests that Said’s father had “crooked” or tainted genetics, again insulting Said as adulterated, impure, etc.

spectacle” (Gana, *ibid.*). In other words, as the film engages the caricatured image of Palestinians (as terrorists) it is able to imbue this hegemonic trope with new political and affective meanings, thus submerging the film into a counter-hegemonic space of humanistic signification.

A scene that best illustrates the image of the Palestinian suicide bomber “surpass[ing] itself in the process of becoming itself” is the somber yet surprisingly hilarious scene in which Khaled and Said are prepared by the militant Brotherhood for their calculated detonation. Said and Khaled film their bid-farewell speech for a martyr video that will be sold at local video shops. While the Brotherhood watches, seemingly uninterested, Khaled delivers a passionate speech and bids farewell to his family. Cloaked in a Palestinian keffiyeh (the black-and-white Palestinian scarf associated with Palestinian national identity and resistance), and carrying a semiautomatic weapon indicating his militant drive for freedom, Khaled reads off a piece of cardboard:

I have decided to carry out this martyr operation. [...] We are to accept life under occupation or disappear. We’ve tried all means to ending this occupation through political and diplomatic ways. Despite this all, Israel continues to build settlements, confiscate our land and water, Judaicize our Jerusalem, and carry out ethnic cleansing. They use their war machines and political and economic power to force us to except their proposition: either we are to accept inferiority or we will be killed. I declare as a martyr that I am not afraid of death. This is how I will overcome and be victorious against their political force and military might. I welcome my martyrdom.

[Pause]

My dear mother and my dear father, I apologize for saying goodbye to you in this way. But soon, soon we will all unite with God’s will. I bid you farewell.

As Khaled performs his speech, Said watches intently, while the cameraman, Jamal (their recruiter), and other faction members watch him expressionless. Once his speech is completed, the cameraman announces that the camera had not been recording the whole time; Khaled would have to repeat his speech. A second time, Khaled began his speech only to be interrupted once again by technical difficulties. As he begins recording a third time, a now frustrated Khaled is perturbed by the image of all but Said chewing on pita sandwiches apparently unmoved by his emotional speech. As he begins to recite his script a final time, his expression moves from annoyance to thoughtfulness. Staring directly into the camera, he says:

Ma, before I forget, I saw some good water filters over at al-Makhtar's shop, better and cheaper than Kanaze's. Buy from there next time.

In this scene, Khaled's naïveté is juxtaposed with his performance as a militant freedom fighter. The momentary ruptures by the technical difficulties, the hardly subtle chewing on pita sandwiches, and the random recollection of the water filters at Al-Mukhtar ease the tension of the scene while also un-suturing the consumer from the visual representations. To this end, as spectators, we are reminded of the world outside the frame and the construction and performativity of this contrived ritual of martyrdom. These disruptions seem outlandish, even comical, particularly given the common representations of the perfectly calculating and elusive figure of the terrorist. That Khaled is person who feels for his country, will miss his parents, and wants his mom to get the best deal on water filters bring his humaneness to the fore in such a way that feels uncanny given the repertoire of imagery of chaotic, violent miscreants. We typically cannot imagine suicide bombers as those who love their mommies, for example. These

juxtapositions and the eerily unspectacular timbre that accompany them are the stylistic techniques that allow what is immediately dismissed as soulless terrorists, to become somehow consumable on the big screen, while retaining a level of humanity, even reliability.

Khaled and Said's bodies enter the ritual, dirty, unshaven, disheveled, and then proceed through physical and quasi-spiritual ablution. They are scrubbed clean, their hair is cut and combed, and they are draped in white sheets. Their shabby clothes are replaced with black suits and they are given a feast at a long table underground, at the Brotherhood's headquarters. The meal is observably a scenic reference and visual reproduction of Leonardo DaVinci's painting "The Last Supper", with Said and Khaled sitting in the position of Jesus Christ and one of his disciples. In her article, "Man-Made Martyrs in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Disturbing Manufactured Martyrdom in *Paradise Now*" Phoebe Bronstein states, "by the time we arrive at this scene, the men have been utterly transformed and they, like Christ, are ready to be packaged, sold, and traded on the international market of martyrdom."¹⁰³



Figure 7: Khaled and Said are draped in white sheets in preparation for the 'special operation.' Photo credit: Warner Independent Films (Warner Brothers Studios), 2005.

¹⁰³ <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc52.2010/bronsteinParadiseNow/text.html>



Figure 8: The men receive their “Last Supper” at the Brotherhood’s underground facility prior to being dressed for their planned operation in Tel Aviv. Photo credit: Warner Independent Films (Warner Brothers Studios), 2005.

While *Paradise Now* allows the figure of the suicide bomber to be digestible within visual culture through its indirect revelation of Palestinian humanity, it still reproduces some of the familiar tropes that make Palestinian humanity conditionally consumable. First, the film presents Palestine through the familiar trope of failed masculinity through the central characters of Khaled and Said. Second, Palestinian humanity in the film relies upon Western moral tropes that decontextualize the conditions of Israeli settler-colonial occupation. In doing so, the film employs liberal logics that see suicide bombing as an individual decision made by individual circumstances. Finally, the individual who does pursue the act is submerged within a state of pathology, once against decontextualizing the violence of everyday life under colonial occupation.

In *Paradise Now*, the lurking motif of a failed masculinity is makes Palestinian humanity digestible through the trope of pity. Khaled and Said are represented as the product of the metaphoric and actual caging of Palestine’s men. Indeed, this gendered narrative sees Palestinian masculinity as violently robbed from the central characters, Khaled and Said. This is certainly insinuated by the lack of productive capacity for

Khaled and Said and their situation as junkyard mechanics. But it is also manifest in multiple revelations in the different narratives where the men describe their father as weak and impotent in the face of an occupation. For example, in one scene, Khaled's friend, who is forced to spend the night because Israel has closed Palestinians roads connecting to his village, asks Khaled "why does your father limp?" to which Khaled replies, "During the first intifada, Israeli soldiers invaded our home and confronted my father asking him, which leg would you prefer to keep, your left or your right? To which my father said, the left. If I were in his place, I would have let them break both of my legs rather than submit to them and be so humiliated." In fact, both Khaled and Said share this desire to resurrect their masculinity by redeeming the failures of their fathers. In a later scene, Said tells his love interest Suha, the liberal humanitarian activist who received a worldly education and returns to the West Bank to work on Palestinian rights issues, that his father was a collaborator and was executed when he was ten years old. This failed masculinity is one that the characters negotiate only to find themselves entrapped by the mundane existence that robs not only their masculinity but personhood and makes the notion of 'paradise now' (a departure from their hellish existence) all the more enticing. The failure of Palestinian masculinity, then, makes Khaled and Said determined to retrieve the phallus through the bomb, however "strapped on" their masculinity becomes.

The film makes use of familiar gendered tropes in order to position Palestine as more digestible in the global cafeteria of visibility. Said is a fallen hero, a man who needs Suha's love to break his walls, the strong-yet-silent type, the depressive brooder, the man who's lost his innocence, and the man who wants to regain his family honor. While this is effective in presenting Palestinian humanity on the big screen it further subjugates

Palestine into a space of alterity due to the failure of Palestinian masculinity. After the ritual in which they are strapped with bombs, groomed, and adorned with suits to “pass” for the modern-looking Israeli, the men are caught as they attempt to cross into Israel by an IDF soldier. Their mission terminated, the men are separated. Khaled returns with Jamal to the underground facility where the Brotherhood is convinced that Said was a traitor. Meanwhile, Said has been shot and wounded, and is in a state of crisis with the bomb still strapped to his stomach. He wanders into an Israeli settlement where he considers detonating at a bus stop, but decides against it when he sees a cheerful Israeli child in a bonnet. Said runs to his father’s burial site, his face covered in sweat, he lays in a state of panic and begins to yank the string before being intercepted by Khaled and Suha.

What is significant about this scene is that Said becomes trapped in a state of psychic turbulence. He is lost and traumatized. Before retreating to his father’s gravesite, he visit his mother, whose maternal instinct calls out of her window, “who’s there?” Said is beyond his mother’s saving and her honor is in his hands. He is now trapped; the decision to commit murder-suicide is trapping him and burdening him. Where once he raised a gun and stated his intent to kill in the name of resistance with such conviction, he is now sweating profusely on a dead man’s grave, the weight of his decision troubling his soul. He shudders at any sound in the pitch darkness that consumes him.

In this scene, Said’s retreat into a state of psychological trauma points to the pathologized and individualized representation of Palestinian suffering in the film. The psychological display that Said displays is cased within a decontextualized logic which affords a palatable condiment for the western palette. Said’s retreat into a pathological

deliberation in which he considers ending his own life by pulling the bomb's chord encapsulates this. When Said is finally discovered by the Brotherhood, he is confronted by a leader in the chain of command, to which Said reveals his innermost psychic disturbance:

I was born in a refugee camp. I was allowed to leave the West Bank only once. I was six and needed a surgery. Just that one time. Life here is imprisonment. The crimes of the occupation are countless. The worst crime of all is exploiting people's weakness and turn them into collaborators. [...] When my father was executed I was ten years old. He was a good person. But he grew weak. For that I hold the occupation responsible. [...] A life without dignity is worthless. Especially when it reminds you day after day of humiliation and weakness. And the world watches cowardly, indifferently. All alone faced with this oppression, you have to find a way to stop the injustice. They must understand that if there's no security for us, there'll be none for them either. It's not about power, their power doesn't help them. I tried to deliver this message to them but I have found no other way. Even worse, they've convinced the world and themselves, that they are the victims! How can that be? How can the occupier become the victim? If they take on the role of oppressor and victim, then I have no choice but to also be a victim and a murderer as well. I don't know how you'll decide, but I will not return to the refugee camp.

Said's decision to pursue suicide bombing is presented as an individualized decision resulting from his personal traumas. His explicit goal is to avenge the failed masculinity of his father who "grew weak" but to also free himself from a life of humiliation. In order for Palestinian suicide-bombers to become legible, they must exist at the margins of their own society: Because Said's father collaborated with the state of Israel, Said chooses to enlist as a volunteer suicide bomber. It is not settler-colonialism, but his psyche that generates his decision to become a suicide-bomber. The portrayal of suicide bombing as an individualized and impulsive unstructured whim of a perturbed psyche manifests through the use of long shots that center Said's eyes in the frame. His gaze is always long

and somber. The privileging of Said's gaze creates the feeling that we are spectators of his mind, consuming his deliberations and emotional turbulence through the striking fixation on his eyes.

In addition to the tropes of failed masculinity, the individualization and pathologization of the suicide bomber, and the affective pity it induces, Palestine is made consumable through the characters' deliberations of morality through Western models of good and evil, represented by the modern, chic, and worldly character of Suha. After the first attempt at the suicide mission ends with failure, the men are separated, and Khaled and Suha drive to Said's father's gravesite to find him. As though speaking through the script of a United Nations development programme, Suha denounces the act of suicide bombing as ineffective and vindictive, pointing out that in order for Palestinians to maintain their status as the true victims, they must adhere to nonviolent means:

Suha: Why are you doing this?!

Khaled: If can't live as equals, at least we can die as equals.

Suha: If you can kill and die for equality, you should be able to find a way to be equal in life!

Khaled: How?! Through your human rights group?!

Suha: For example! Then at least the Israelis don't have an excuse to keep killing us.

Khaled: Don't be so naïve. There can be no freedom without struggle. As long as there is injustice, there must be sacrifice.

Suha: That's not sacrifice, that's revenge! If you kill, there's no difference between victim and occupier

Khaled: If we had ammunition, we wouldn't need martyrs. That's the difference.

Suha: The difference is that the Israeli military is still stronger, and you are not as strong as they are.

Khaled: Then let us be equal in death. We still have paradise.

Suha: There is no paradise. It only exists in your head! [hits Said]

Khaled: May God forgive you! I'd rather have paradise in my head than live in this hell. In this life, we are dead anyway.

Suha: And what about us? The ones who remain? Will we win that way? Don't you see that what you are doing is destroying us? And giving Israel an alibi to carry on?

Khaled: So with no alibi, Israel will stop?

Suha: Perhaps. We have to turn it into a moral war.

Suha, the beautiful pacifist, was raised in Europe all her life and received a French education, before returning to Palestine to pursue human rights work. When the film was advertised, Suha's voice was privileged: Consider the poster for the film:

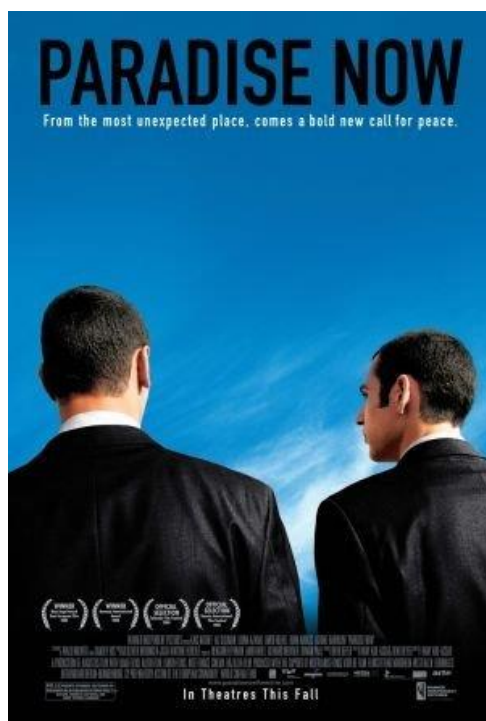


Figure 9: *Paradise Now*, Film Poster. Photo credit: Warner Independent Films (Warner Brothers Studios), 2005.

Above the image of the men dressed in dark suits, the tagline reads, “From the most unexpected place comes a bold new call for peace.” This tagline is a direct reference to Suha. In fact, Suha serves as the audience’s stand-in character. The daughter of a respected Palestinian nationalist leader, Suha’s is the voice of peaceful coexistence counteracting Said’s fatalism. Her dialogues with Said and Khaled hinge around a dichotomous rendering of violence and non-violence as a product of individual choice.

For example, the night Said learns he has been selected for the suicide mission, he cannot sleep. Despite the curfew imposed on Nablus, he runs all the way to Suha's house arriving there at four o'clock in the morning. Suha, who lives alone (an atypical living arrangement for an unmarried woman in Palestine) is awakened by Said attempting to slip Suha's car keys beneath her door (the car he had been repairing at the mechanic). Suha insists that he stay for tea and begins to ask him questions about the cafes he frequents, his favorite movies, sports, reading, and other leisurely activities he enjoys. Said, who is carrying the weight of his secret operation on his shoulders, responds, jaded:

Suha: Have you ever gone to a cinema or been inside a cinema?

Said: Yes once, ten years ago. We burned down Rivoly cinema.

Suha: You burned down a cinema?

Said: Not by myself, there were lots of us.

Suha: Why? What did the cinema ever do to you?

Said: Not the cinema... Israel. At the time, Israel decided it didn't want to allow any laborers from the West Bank. We took to the streets, protests... and... in the end we were at the cinema and we set it on fire.

Suha: Why the cinema though?

Said: Why us?

Suha: I don't know.

This scene sets up the character of Suha as the symbolic presence of Western moral tropes. In this scene, Suha presses Said to see that his actions were irrational. Her question "what did the cinema ever do to you?" reveals her surprise, particularly as someone who is culturally literate and enjoys leisure activities. She, like many spectators of the film, sees the cinema as a site of joy, not as a site of demonstration or attack. In this way, this scene presents the violence/nonviolence debate as though it is something that can be overcome through getting the individuals inclined to violence (racially marked and male) "right" in their head and making better choices.

At this same time, the scene speaks to the privileges associated with those who have the right to consider, choose, and act in ways that are consistent with Western tropes of morality. This scene speaks to their distinct backgrounds. Said, who is an impoverished mechanic residing in a refugee camp in the West Bank, saw Israel's ban on West Bank workers as part of Israel's collective punishment against Palestinians and as a means to maintain Palestine's subordinate economic position. Not only is he as a Palestinian man within desperate circumstance of occupation, but the condition of occupation has made him reliant on his colonizer. Suha, on the other hand, emphasizes individual actions. Simultaneously, as a product of the West, she has had the ability to move about the world in a way that Said never will. This illustrates once again the experience of emasculation associated with the occupation: Palestinians have become increasingly impoverished as a result of Israeli control, movement restrictions, and fragmentation of Palestinian lands, and on the other hand, Israel has barred Palestinian men as laborers, even as exploited labor, which Palestinian communities in the West Bank have become increasingly dependent on as a result of the stagnation of a Palestinian economy.

Suha's inability to see Said's acts of frustration reveals her position of privilege as well as her staunchly nonviolent position in relation to resistance. Her logics of violent/nonviolent as well as the proper forms of resistance are illustrated in the following dialogue when she attempts to converse with Said about cinema:

Said: You can watch movies on video too you know?

Suha: Meaning you do watch movies!

Said: Sometimes.

Suha: What genre do you love most?

Said [mocking her French accent]: "What genre do you love most?"

Suha: Don't make fun of me! Gen-rrr-e! Like types, you know. There are funny ones, action, scientific, documentary, ones that make you cry, too...

Said: Is there a boring genre?

Suha: [Laughs] Boring? What do you mean?

Said: Like life.

Said and Suha continue to play a game of roulette until Suha teasingly suggests that perhaps he would find Japanese minimalist films to his liking. At this point, they lean in as though to kiss before Said abruptly interrupts to ask her about her father, Abu Azzam:

Said: Is it true that you are the daughter of Abu Azzam? They say he was a hero. You must be very proud of him.

Suha: I'd rather he was still alive than to sit in his absence and be proud of him.

Said: But thanks to him and his fight, our cause is still alive today.

Suha: There are many ways for us to stay alive.

Said: We cannot decide that. The occupation defines the resistance.

Suha: Resistance can take many forms. We have to accept that we have no military might in order to find alternatives.

Said: And pay the price of our grandparents' defeat? Accept the injustice?

Suha: Looks like this talk is going nowhere.

Here, Suha once again retreats into the familiar trope of violence versus nonviolence. Her insistence that resistance can take on many forms and that Palestinians should continue to gain legibility as victims also insists on the digestible tropes of the imagined Western consumer. Suha as a woman who can be appreciated on Western terms (Western dress, French and English literacy, sophisticated topics of conversation, etc.) exists to service these familiar tropes and insert them within a Palestinian context. Her heteronormative femininity as well as her ability to "pass" as a product of the West allows her to do so. In addition, she presses Said to accept his emasculation through the notion that Palestinians have no military might, and as a result, to reconsider resistance through other means. Said's insistence that Suha's father, a leader of Palestinian resistance who was murdered as result of his militant efforts, is a hero demonstrates his desire to regain his own

masculinity through militant forms of resistance, at any cost. In this way, the film submerges within a debate with the West, with Suha as the West's public relations officer.

While Palestinian masculinity can be theorized endlessly in the film, there is little opportunity to do the same for Palestinian femininity. The militant freedom fighter is always produced as a male body exploding on and off screen to the retch or displeasure of Western spectators. The question of the subaltern, then, points to the relative absent voice of Palestinian women both within the film and within the master-narrative of the war on terror. Though she is implicated in the U.S.'s discourses of benevolent liberation for Afghani women, for example, she is spoken for by her husbands, fathers, and sons. In the case of Suha, though she is highlighted in the film as a force to be contended with, her voice echoes many U.S. peace talks brokered by U.S. men. Said's mother emerges in the film as the intuitive matriarch preparing dinner, smoking a cigarette, brooding, eyes cast downward, humble and unsmiling. In the final clip, we return to her briefly, tearlessly, the poster of her now dead son on the table. Beyond her silent grief, and her seeming loneliness and dejection, she does not speak. She is an absent-presence in the film, one that is produced through her lack of dialogue, dimension and complexity. One is left to wonder, *what is her story? What else does she have besides the performance of silent grief?*

Through the pathologization/individualization of Palestinian resistance, the representation of a perpetually failed Palestinian masculinity, and the film's retreat into Western liberal debate of violence/nonviolence, the film *Paradise Now* decontextualizes the occupation of Palestinian lands by focusing stylistically on the faces and minds of the

characters. Said and Khaled's deliberations over the ethics and productive value of the suicide mission extracts them from the context of settler-colonial occupation and launches them within a western logic of good versus evil. The trailer closes with the on-screen text: "sometimes the most courageous act is what you didn't do" (Warner Independent Pictures trailer). Through the lingering trope of pity, Said and Khaled retreat into the familiar Hollywood story of the "hero who is also a victim" which is climaxed only when the imagined Western spectator sees the character's moral value. The settler-colonial context remains a forgotten character in a screenplay of digestible Palestinian humanity.

The film *Paradise Now* offers a delectable and consumable spectacle of Palestinian deliberations that are based on a Western gaze that positions Palestine, its land and people, as perpetually pathological. The decision to pursue suicide bombing is digestible only insofar as it follows the international development-style debates about the efficacy of violence. What's more, in order to be digestible on the big screen, settler colonial subjects are perpetually emasculated. Effectively, while allotting Palestine a conditional consumability, the story of settler-colonial occupation is decontextualized, existing only within the minds of the would-terrorists. In what follows, I turn to a new site of consumptions, an episode of *Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown* in which he traverses to Palestine and literally consumes the fruits and meals of Palestine narrated by testimonies of the locals. I read this episode against the pathological Palestinian depicted in *Paradise Now* as a way to ask what might the consumption of Palestine look like when one actually enters the site marked as violent and pathological? What is disrupted and what is reified in this adventure and what maintains outside of normative knowledge? I

next turn to the premiering episode of *Anthony Bourdain's Parts Unknown*, season two, in which he literally consumed Palestinian cuisine in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Reading this episode against *Paradise Now*, I think through the ways in which Palestine is made consumable beyond the pathological trope of suicide bombing.

Anthony Bourdain and the Consumption of Palestinian

Fifty-six-year old New York-born chef turned journalist and television host, Anthony Bourdain is known for his brassy character, bold food sampling, and globe-trotting exploits. Through candid narration of his traveling culinary adventures, Bourdain's audience is invited to consume the exotic local specialty dishes, ranging from sheep testicles in Morocco, to ant eggs in Puebla, Mexico, to the anus of a warthog in Namibia, to a whole cobra – beating heart, blood, bile, and meat – in Vietnam. Unafraid to speak his mind, Bourdain, who often refers to himself simply as “Tony,” has admitted that he would eat human flesh and has even offered a recipe for cooking unicorn¹⁰⁴. Traversing seemingly obscure locations, mingling with the locals, he nibbles and narrates the ways of people, his effortless machismo tucked loosely in his casual panache and smug expression. His attire is characteristically Spartan: fitted blue jeans and his shirt buttons undone, revealing his year-round burnt orange tan. His six-foot-four-inch tall and lean body is topped with a full head of salt-and-pepper hair. His voice is deep and assertive, narrating his culinary escapades with equal parts matter-of-factness, thick description, and recipe recitation.

¹⁰⁴ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/19/anthony-bourdain-eat-human_n_1530268.html

Bourdain's public persona lends itself to his credentialed gastronomic expertise in French cuisine, prolific publications, hard-ball contributions in culinary blogs and magazines, and the dark, drug-riddled past that inform his undaunted vulgarity. For example, in his book *Kitchen Confidential*, Anthony Bourdain reveals the sinister side of his professional and personal career in a modish SoHo restaurant in 1981: "We were high all the time, sneaking off to the walk-in refrigerator at every opportunity to 'conceptualize.' Hardly a decision was made without drugs. Cannabis, methaqualone, cocaine, LSD, psilocybin mushrooms soaked in honey and used to sweeten tea, secobarbital, tuinal, amphetamine, codeine and, increasingly, heroin, which we'd send a Spanish-speaking busboy over to Alphabet City to get" (Bourdain 123). The *Gothamist* has characterized Bourdain as the "culinary bad boy" because of his liberal use of profanity and bountiful sexual innuendos, causing networks to place viewer discretion advisories multiple times in a single episode.

As his show titles *No Reservations* and *Parts Unknown* suggest, Bourdain's persona has also been tied to a sophisticated and worldly palate through his conceived ability to access and appreciate authentic tradition through a spontaneous, documentary-style lens. Bored by the wasteful excesses of modernity, Bourdain burrows through the obscure pantries and hearths of local peoples around the world, the objects of his desire are those intimate sites of food preparation where superior flavor quality and deliciousness lay, unmarred by the toxicity and destructiveness of commercialism, which he regards with utter disgust. In particular, he has openly expressed irritation toward the increased commercialization of the cooking industry through fiery criticisms of the Food Network's line of celebrity chefs such as Rachel Ray and Paula Deen, regarding them as

superficial commodities. In the same vein, Bourdain has made sarcastic remarks about the growing vegan and vegetarian diets as products of First World privilege and luxury, although he has also critiqued American eating habits as excessively dependent on meat consumption and gluttony. He has proclaimed deference for immigrants from Mexico, Ecuador, and other Spanish-speaking countries, who make up the majority of chefs and cooks in U.S. restaurants irrespective of cuisine, and has stated that their industriousness is underpaid and unrecognized even though the U.S. restaurant industry is reliant upon their culinary labor.

In fact, Bourdain's transition from the Travel Channel to CNN was due to the former's unwillingness to fund productions in controversial locales due to insurance liability nightmares. For example, in 2006, Bourdain traversed to Beirut, Lebanon to explore its gastronomic aesthetics for the running show *No Reservations*. While filming, Bourdain and his crew found themselves crouched in a hotel room while Israel unleashed a thirty-four day assault on Lebanon—the bloodiest Israeli strike on the country in 24 years, killing 1,300 Lebanese and 165 Israelis. Bourdain's crew continued filming despite the war and Bourdain even met with members of Hezbollah, Lebanon's paramilitary wing which is classified as a terrorist organization by the governments of the U.S., Netherlands, Australia, Canada, and the European Union. Eventually, Bourdain and his crew were escorted from their locked down five-star hotel to a U.S. marine ship with the help of a CIA agent. The string of events in Beirut landed him an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Informational Programming in 2007.



Figure 10: Anthony Bourdain. Photo Credit: *Borderless Culture Life and Style*, www.borderlessculturelifeandstyle.com, 2010.

This was exactly the sort of dramatic, expensive, and controversial programming that the Travel Channel was trying to avoid. Executives consistently pestered Bourdain to limit his culinary agenda within the continental U.S. Incensed by these restrictions, Anthony Bourdain pursued alternative networks to continue his culinary crusades. He was not alone in his disappointment. His fan base, which has found his daring quests mouth-watering, began to decline. During the final season of *No Reservations*, the *New York Times* reported that viewership had dropped to fewer than 500,000 per episode. As a result, Bourdain left the Travel Network to join CNN at a time when Jeff Zucker, president of the Worldwide Network, was attempting to rebrand the “worldwide leader in news” as enticing to a younger viewership. *No Reservations* became tarted up as *Parts Unknown*. Now, the program reaches more than 271 million households around the world.”¹⁰⁵ To date, *Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown* is delivered to 872,000 viewers.

¹⁰⁵<http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2013/05/01/season-two-of-cnn-original-series-anthony-bourdain-parts-unknown-launches-sept-15/>

On September 15, 2013, seven years after the successful release of the film *Paradise Now*, CNN premiered the highly anticipated and widely publicized second season of the Emmy award winning show *Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown* to anxious fans and food enthusiasts worldwide. The episode was circulated using various aliases including *Parts Unknown: Jerusalem*, *Parts Unknown: Israel*, *Parts Unknown: Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza*, indicating that Bourdain would relish the foods of both Palestine and Israel in his travels there. The following advertisement on the network's website also suggests the effort at equal opportunity tasting:

In the season premiere of *Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown*, the host and crew make their first trip to Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. While the political situation is often tense between the people living in these areas, Bourdain concentrates on their rich history, food, and culture, and spends time with local chefs, home cooks, writers and amateur foodies.

The statement that the “situation” is “often tense” between the people residing in “these areas” is undoubtedly vague, indicating that the conflict is something that can be overlooked by concentrating, instead, on “rich history, food, and culture”. This assertion does many things. First, it assumes that history and culture can be separated from the context in which they emerge. For Palestine in particular, this mutes the settler-colonial context as something circumstantial, perhaps even historical, rather than the central organizing principle of everyday life, one that is organized through what Patrick Wolf calls “the logic of elimination.” Furthermore, the naming, or rather, non-naming of Israeli settler-colonial occupation as a “situation” depoliticizes Palestinian struggles over land, which is the fundamental source of the equally ambiguous “tenseness”. That the conditions are “often tense” also falsely implies that there are times of amity within the context of a settler-colonial occupation which denies the narrative of those most

vulnerable to these conditions of violence. These conditions are always present within this context. They are not limited to the spectacular moments of exploded flesh and demolished homes, rather are woven into the fabric of everyday life in the most mundane manifestations of time and space: refugee residing in a camp with no indication of their existence beyond their pulse, hours spent waiting indefinitely at a checkpoint to go to the hospital, waking up to orchards of freshly dead olive trees bludgeoned to death by a chainsaw in the dead of the night, a denied permit to pray in Jerusalem at Christmas, the prohibition of seeing the ocean waves along Gaza for Palestinians in the West Bank, and the denial of access to the sea waters for a fisherman in Gaza.

However, given the hegemonic prototype of Palestinians as possessing a conditional humanity that is always already pathological, as depicted in the film *Paradise Now*, the Palestinian community in the United States and its supporters received Anthony Bourdain's with extensive gratitude and warmth. Maysoon Zayid, a celebrated Palestinian comedian and producer of the New York Arab American Comedy Festival, stated:

Bourdain has traveled to many places even a U.S. drone wouldn't dare infiltrate. He has showcased cuisine that almost put him in an early grave, but he has never done anything more controversial than what he did during the kickoff episode of the second season of his Emmy award-winning show. Bourdain said the word "Palestine" and he wasn't even sorry. The episode was titled "Parts Unknown: Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza [...]" Instead of force-feeding the audience, Bourdain served up something so delicious viewers on either side of the fence couldn't resist digging in."¹⁰⁶

Another comedian, Amer Zahr, an American citizen who was raised by Palestinian refugees and author of the book *Being Palestinian Makes Me Smile* (2014) stated in his

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/09/19/watching-anthony-bourdain-in-palestine.html>

blog “The Civil Arab,” “Something amazing happened on CNN last night. Palestinians were portrayed as human beings.”¹⁰⁷ In the same post, Zahr addressed Bourdain saying, “You fell in love with [Palestinians], and we fell in love with you.”¹⁰⁸ These immediate responses echoed many of the sentiments that Palestinians I know felt. Pamela Olson, American author of the award winning travel memoir *Fast Times in Palestine*¹⁰⁹ (published by Seal Press in 2013) commented on an article about the segment featured on the Mandoweiss Online News website:

Wait, what? Palestinians are talking? Without anyone “interpreting” what they are saying? [...] Showing cute Palestinian kids... in primetime? Without a single armed masked man or wailing woman? Just nice people making food and chatting and doing things for fun? AM I IN SOME BIZARRE PARALLEL UNIVERSE.....??¹¹⁰

The notion that Palestine can be desired as something edible—delicious even—was indeed flabbergasting. One sixty-year old Palestinian male who has resided in California for over forty years told me candidly, “I have seen many things in my life, but to me, this is a first.” For many like him, the focus on Palestinian food was a savory prospect—one that departs greatly from the pathological Palestinian suicide bomber. Gone was the ticking bomb strapped to a belt. Gone was the recital of imploding depression. Gone was the unremitting threat of exploding flesh. Gone, too, was the story of a bent mental case with a warped vision of redemption (of ‘paradise now’). Through the cultured appetite of a respected foodie and culinary artiste, Palestine was visible, digestible! In fact, Palestine became a place that people could be hungry for. In this context, a lip-smacking question

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.civilarab.com/anthony-bourdain-will-you-marry-me/>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.civilarab.com/anthony-bourdain-will-you-marry-me/>

¹⁰⁹ Voted Top 10 Travel Book of 2013 by *Publishers Weekly* and a Best Travel Book of Spring by *National Geographic*.

¹¹⁰ <http://mondoweiss.net/2013/09/celebrity-foodie-anthony-bourdains-trip-to-palestine-highlights-gaza-blockade-racist-settlers.html> (author’s original emphasis)

follows: how is Palestine consumable when it is not reduced to the usual mental case? Indeed, Olson, Zahr, and Zayid’s comments seem to swallow hard at the notion that Palestine is a place people desire to consume literally, a place where food is crafted for pleasure and delight.



Figure 11: Anthony Bourdain walks in front of the “separation wall” in the occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank. Photo credit: CNN, 2013.

While such a prospect seemed salacious to many in the Palestinian community, Jewish and Zionist communities in the U.S. had quite mixed reviews of Bourdain’s episode; many hailed his expose as laudable humanitarianism, while others condemned what they viewed as pro-Palestine propaganda. The critiques swayed between attacks against Bourdain’s alleged inaccuracies, his incomplete and biased narration that seemed to favor one side at the expense of the other, depending on the critic, the overlooked complexity of Israeli cuisine cultivation and his apparently anti-religious, liberal tendencies. The pro-Israel watchdog group, Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), released a scathing review of the episode. Referring to its content as “Palestinian grievance theatre”, their website retorts, “Bourdain felt

compelled to play to the perceived political orientation and pro-Palestinian sympathies of his audience.”¹¹¹

Perhaps anticipating the enormous amount of publicity and controversy his episode would invariably serve up, Bourdain opens his hour-long episode with obvious angst. His deep voice narrates a montage of images with the following qualifier at the outset:

*It's easily the most contentious piece of real estate in the world, and there's no hope -- none -- of ever talking about it without pissing somebody, if not everybody, off. Maybe that's why it's taken me so long to come here. A place where even the name of ordinary things are ferociously disputed. Where does falafel come from? Who makes the best hummus? Is it a fence or a wall? By the end of this episode, I'll be seen by many as a terrorist sympathizer, a Zionist tool, a self-hating Jew, an apologist for American imperialism, an orientalist, fascist, socialist CIA agent and worse. So here goes nothing.*¹¹²

The visual montage that accompanies this uneasy tone is a blended concoction of scenes from Palestinian and Israeli life, beginning with a landscape view of a paved road for Jews only along Israel's wall (or “fence”) with the segregated capital of Jerusalem peeking behind it. The image that follows depicts Palestinian villages juxtaposed with an Israeli-Jewish settlement perched atop a hill, followed by a full-frame image of the separation wall resembling a dirty canvas painted with murals, political slogans, and cryptic messages in mostly Arabic and English, with an ominous Israeli watchtower resembling something from a science fiction film. Intermittently, there are images of people too, their religious and racial orientations signified by their dress and places of worship. These people, the montage and narration suggest, are the characters in this

¹¹¹ http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=3&x_outlet=14&x_article=2550

¹¹² Note from author: In order to distinguish between different types of discourse operating simultaneously, I use italics for Bourdain's voice-over narration and non-italics for dialogue between speakers in the episode.

representation of “a place where even the name of ordinary things are ferociously disputed”: a Palestinian Muslim schoolgirl in uniform wearing sneakers and a hijab walks past an old bearded Jew steadying himself on a cane, his arm pressed against the arched limestone walls of the ancient city of Jerusalem; an elder Muslim pilgrim draped in white reveals his beautiful brown face, his creases deepen as he glances bashfully into the frame of the camera; A group of Orthodox Jewish men in black tailcoats and hats pray over a site etched in Hebrew letters, their pale hands grasping pages of the torah, their heads bowed low in devoted prayer.

This montage alone reveals the “contentious piece of real estate” that Bourdain delivers to his spectator as he eats his way through Palestine, consuming the country’s culinary traditions as well as the narratives that accompany them. Its corresponding qualifier reveals Bourdain’s own angst which we learn is at least in part because he is “hostile to any sort of devotion.” At the outset we learn of his ambiguous position in relation to Israeli Jewishness:

I was raised without religion. One side of the family long ago, Catholic... I think. The other side: Jewish. I've never been in a synagogue. I don't believe in a higher power. But that doesn't make me any less Jewish I don't think. These guys [sic] at the Wailing Wall don't seem to think so either.

Entering the Western (Jewish) side of Jerusalem, he is met with a community of Orthodox Jews who, upon learning that he is part Jewish, adorn him with a black kippeh, wrap his tattooed arm with tefillin, and have him recite Jewish prayers. “Mozeltov, thank you gentlemen” he responds sheepishly to the didactic rabbi that is schooling him on his faith. With the backdrop of Jewish observers touching their foreheads against the Wailing

Wall, Bourdain walks with his wrapped arm. He appears directly facing the camera, continuing to expose his discomfort:

I've never felt so much like I'm masquerading as something I'm not. I'm instinctively hostile to any kind of devotion. Certainty is my enemy. I'm all about doubt. Questioning one's self and the nature of reality constantly. When they grabbed hold of me in a totally nonjudgmental way, essentially [aid], 'God is happy to have you, you know, here you go...oh man... my treachery is complete.

It is immediately clear in this scene that this segment is as much about the ambiguity of Bourdain's position to the Middle East conflict as it is a testament to the staunchly liberal persona that is Anthony Bourdain. More importantly, his aloof casualness about religion is indeed, a position of privilege particularly in Palestine and Israel where Palestinians are required to carry an identification card at all times that includes their religious identification (Christian or Muslim), as well as other information. This identity card determines where Palestinians can or cannot live, drive, shop, harvest, and travel to. For example, my family in the West Bank cannot go visit my family in the Gaza Strip. As a Palestinian with a U.S. citizenship, I too cannot access Gaza, the birthplace of my father, without a special permit from the state of Israel, perhaps for forty-eight hours or perhaps for one month. These seemingly arbitrary protocols determine Palestinian life in a way that Bourdain cannot know simply based on his positionality. As a white Jewish man, Bourdain seems unaware of the fact that his claim to Judaism, however trivial to his personal convictions, carries immediate weight in Palestine. As a Jew, Bourdain can access a land and obtain citizenship to the Israeli state, one that identifies itself through the frameworks of European whiteness and particular notion of Jewishness as inherited and genealogical, factors that Bourdain embodies yet regards so flippantly. While I am

not particularly interested in Bourdain's biography, I find it important to highlight the absences as well as the presences in the episode, what these mean for Palestinians in this particular context and how they limit the ways in which Palestine is consumed.



Figure 12: Anthony Bourdain is pulled in for an impromptu bar mitzvah near the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. Photo credit: CNN, 2013.

Like a swinging pendulum, Bourdain shuttles between Israel and Palestine. In the process, his palate becomes our own. He chews and we chew with him. He narrates and we consume his narration. Each word seems to weigh very heavily. He eats with Jewish-American settlers in the West Bank and probes his hosts with questions about their Palestinian neighbors, as well as anti-Palestinian graffiti as part of the racist attacks known as “price tagging”. He then visits Al Rowwad Children’s Theatre in the Aida Refugee Camp near Bethlehem, where he inquires the theater founder Abed Abusrour about Palestinians’ glorification of violence. In his response, Abusrour asks him to consider the context of a settler-colonial occupation in shaping children’s dreams and aspirations, also cautioning him against hasty generalizations of hyped martyrdom. Just outside of Jerusalem, in the village of Ein Rafa, Bourdain eats at Majda, a restaurant that

sits in shady foliage run by husband-and-wife team Michal Baranes, an Israeli woman, and Yakub Barhum, a Palestinian Muslim. They serve Bourdain the fruits of their garden simmered in a fusion of Israeli and Palestinian cuisines: cauliflower in bitter yogurt, cucumbers blended in mint and sesame. Then in Gaza, he eats the popular Palestinian dish, *maqloobah*, which literally means “the flipped over”: spicy rice topped with cauliflower, eggplant, cardamum, nutmeg, and chicken. His guide is Laila El-Haddad, author of the book *Gaza Kitchen* and blogger for “the Gaza Mom.” Her tone is assertive and she delights in the delicacies of her native Gaza where Bourdain unconvincingly relishes in a local Bedouin delicacy of charred young watermelon cooked kalua-style in an underground oven, and hears the bitterness of old men displaced from their homes in 1948. Just on the other side of the Gaza border, Bourdain visits Natan Galkowicz, owner of Mides Brazilian Restaurant in the Negev kibbutz Bror Hayil who reveals that his daughter was killed in 2005 by a Hamas mortar.

Despite the pendulum’s swing, one that insinuates that Palestine and Israel can be equally represented through the realm of food, there are still a limited number of savory tropes for Palestine to become digestible. While these tropes do not necessarily rely on a reproduction of Palestine as always already pathological as in the film *Paradise Now*, they do contain within their recipes political myths that reflect an intimate network of inherently gendered and colonial power relations that reify the position of Israel through the devaluation of Palestine in the realm of culture. In what follows, I explore these political myths and reveal the ways in which they serve a colonial imaginary, one that contributes to the ideological formation of Palestine as abject, but also informs, and is informed by, the context of Israeli settler-colonial occupation. In doing so, we can see

how the Israeli settler-colonial occupation of Palestine is formulated by particular cultural ideologies that continue to relegate Palestinian land, desire, and peoplehood, to an indigestible space outside of knowledge.

Setting his first steps in the contested terrain, Bourdain's tone reveals an ambiguous relationship to Israel that stands in stark contrast to that is assumed to accompany Jewishness:

Just 'cause I was outside the faith with no particular attachment or loyalty to Israel, doesn't mean that plenty of people on earth don't hate me in principle. I know that. But the state of Israel? I never really knew what to think. First look around it's like everybody says: it's pretty; it's awesome; it's urban, sophisticated, hip. Like Southern California, only nicer.

Indeed, the Israel pictured is strikingly beautiful: crashing crystal blue waves engulfing a sandy shore, swimmers and tanners basking in merciless heat, young men jogging with blue and white lycra briefs that say 'Israel' across the rear, women oiling their bikini-clad torsos, young lovers sharing a meal and people-watching at a quaint café, mopeds and bicycles zipping across a path, seagulls hovering for breadcrumbs, and silhouette sunsets against an indigo sky. These images have undoubtedly garnered Israel the popular reputation among globe trotters looking for a new tourist destination. Bourdain pauses before his tone becomes more sobering:

Then you see the young draftees in the streets and you start to get the idea. This is Jerusalem.

Juxtaposed against the picturesque images of Israeli beaches, Jerusalem enters the frame and it is in this segregated city that Bourdain begins to get a good taste of the landscapes around him. Though he does not reveal "the idea", the presence of Israeli military is palpable, though not new. Following the 1967 war, Israel created what it calls "Greater

Jerusalem” by expanding the borders of East Jerusalem (the Palestinian side of the city) to include surrounding areas of the West Bank. It annexed this new “Jerusalem” and declared it to be its capitol. Since 1967, Israel has established numerous illegal settlements in this “Greater Jerusalem,” thereby ensuring a Jewish majority in the city. As a result, the military presence has only grown.

Here, Bourdain is chaperoned by the Israeli expatriate chef Yotam Ottolenghi, who now cooks in London. Ottolenghi leads Bourdain through the Damascus Gate explaining the city’s history. The B-roll is striking to a first time observer, but encapsulates everyday life in East Jerusalem at the Damascus Gate: a flood of people of all creeds are swarming in and out of its entryway; young Israeli men and women dressed in camouflage are fully armed, peering through their sunglasses; Palestinian shop owners are shouting their day’s best deals on meats, nuts, chocolates, shoes, purses, t-shirts, children’s toys, trinkets, gummy candies and Turkish delights by the kilogram, hair oils, zaatar, and spices; women from nearby villages are cowering by the ancient walls, begging for change from sympathetic tourists, or selling fresh produce from their fields: eggplants, apricots, chestnuts, and almonds. Nuns, priests, rabbis, and sheikhs—the Holy Land is hearing its prayers from all angles. Tourists with fanny packs walk along the narrow corridors with their church groups, snapping photos by Via Dolorosa where it’s believed that Jesus was crucified, many pausing to sob in devoted memory. Everyone is speaking loudly, either negotiating prices, or advertising products, or scolding children, and the crowd moves swiftly, pausing only to steer clear of crates and cartons, often on a makeshift wheelbarrow with cans as wheels, or on a cardboard platform steadied atop someone’s head.

It is here that Bourdain first tastes Palestine and where food becomes the site by which the viewer is able to taste Palestine with him. Through the B-roll of the city and its contested landscapes, our tongues are moistened by the portrait of a savory life exploding on-screen, though much different than the pending explosion featured in *Paradise Now*. Here, Jerusalem is portrayed as a city with people shopping and eating. We see life that is full of flavor and perhaps even crave the dried fruits and nuts that are bursting from canvas bags. With Ottolenghi guiding him, Bourdain approaches a falafel stand where the cook hovers over a very large deep frying pan, scooping out falafels as they form a crunchy golden exterior in the bubbling grease, and plopping them in a strainer. Passersby fumble for Israeli shekels from their pockets to buy the sizzling crunchy food throughout the day, either in a paper bag for a family to eat at home, or in a pita wrap with sour pickles, onions, hummus and garnish. The set-up for the stand resembles any number of Palestinian street foods. There are bowls of hand-kneaded, green falafel dough scooped into the boiling grease, trays of pickles, lettuce, tomatoes, tahini sauce, and a simple slaw. Besides the basic utensils and ingredients, there is a glass case keeping the cooked falafel warm, and fresh pita bread is stacked in plastic bags (which is customarily how it is purchased from the baker). After the cook strains the crunchy falafel to remove excess grease, he makes a sandwich with the desired condiments, and the overstuffed wrap is served piping hot and often eaten along the walk through the ancient walls of East Jerusalem, along the road where Jesus met his fate.

As they trod uneasily between the din and buzz of East Jerusalem life, the Bourdain's chaperone explains the centrality of falafel in Palestinian culture, as well as his learned secrets for its optimal consumption:

You just have to go for the typical falafel because it is so much part of the culture here, and again contentious because Jews or Israelis made falafel their own and everyone in the world thinks falafel is, you know, and Israeli food, but an actual fact is that it is much a Palestinian food, actually more so because it has been done for generations here. And here, you get falafel that's just been fried; you don't get in any other way. When I go to a place like this and I see he's got a few balls leftover from the previous customer, I don't take that. I want him to fry it in front of me. It makes all the difference in the world.

Plugged into this scene where Palestine is consumed through the falafel sandwich, is an ambiguous origin story, one that calls into question Israeli legitimacy and also hints at the cultural appropriation that accompanies settler-colonial projects. Bourdain probes Ottolenghi with questions about the origin of the now trendy food. However, Ottolenghi treads this topic very carefully, suggesting that we will never know the origin of the falafel. In this way, the origin story of the falafel is quite ambiguous save for Ottolenghi's casual admission that it is "more so" a Palestinian food because it has been cooked in the region, undefined, "for many many generations."

What's more, this state of ambiguity points to the contentious hermeneutical warfare between the conflicting origin story of Israel as a "land without a people for a people without a land"—as the popular Zionist slogan goes¹¹³--and the Palestinian narrative of the Nakbah, or "Catastrophe", which refers to the establishment of a Jewish state upon Historic Palestine's lands through the "transfer" or expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians (that is, three-quarters of the population of Palestine) and the depopulation of

¹¹³ The writings of Zionist pioneers (Halutzim) were full of expressions of Palestine as an empty and desolate land. On November 13, 1974, PLO leader Yasir Arafat told the United Nations, "It pains our people greatly to witness the propagation of the myth that its homeland was a desert until it was made to bloom by the toil of foreign settlers, that it was a land without a people". In its "Declaration of Independence" published November 14, 1988, the Palestinian National Council accused "local and international forces" of attempting to "propagate the lie that 'Palestine is a land without a people.'" Salman Abu Sitta, founder and president of the Palestine Land Society, calls the phrase "a wicked lie in order to make the Palestinian people homeless."

450 villages in 1948. In the words of Israeli military leader and politician Moshe Dayan, “Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you because geography books no longer exist, not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either.”¹¹⁴ What is particularly telling here is the use of the falafel as a means to construct a visual map of Palestine, one that negates the moment of Israeli settler-colonial control through its presentation as a regional food. As such, through the falafel, Palestine is made consumable but not as a story of colonialism; instead it is submerged within the ambiguous discourse of ‘a region in conflict.’ Taking a bite of a falafel ball presented to him in a napkin, Bourdain responds to Ottolenghi stating simply, “It’s a whole different animal, isn’t it?”

Bourdain’s trek continues to serve up a conditionally consumable Palestine, limiting his culinary expedition to the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the remaining 22% of Historic Palestine which was seized in 1967 (along with large sections of Syria and Egypt). Leaving the segregated city of Jerusalem, he travels along an Israeli-only road and enters the West Bank, describing Israel’s construction of its “security fence” (what Palestinians call the “apartheid wall”), as well as the 500,000 settlers “here in ever larger numbers” who reside in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In one scene, he confronts an Israeli taxi driver “Noam” from Tel Aviv about ‘price-tagging’ when Bourdain observes graffiti in Hebrew on the outskirts of a settlement. Noam explains “price-tagging” to the inquiring Bourdain: “when something happens in a settlement or some attack [against Jews], kids from the settlement will come

¹¹⁴ Interestingly, Moshe Dayan personally oversaw the capture of East Jerusalem in June 5–7, 1967 during the Six Day War.

and have a 'price-tag' for every activity. So they will come to a Palestinian village, destroy cars, write on walls like this "Against Arabs! The State of Israel is Alive! Death to the Arabs!" Bourdain responds, "Intimidating. You put two targets on my house, I'm movin'!" In the West Bank settlement of Eli where there is a population of over 3,000 Jews, Bourdain asks Amiad Cohen, chief executive of the Eli settlement and its former head of security, about the neighboring Palestinian villages that are now cut off from one another as a result of the settlements and the wall. Here, Cohen serves Bourdain an Israeli historical narrative: "Most of them are happy that we're here. Actually we gave them prosperity for the last forty-five years." Cohen then describes the high-tech security practices of surveillance, including the use of radars and cameras as "protocols" for Israeli security. Since the seizure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel has transferred many of its citizens to Jewish settler colonies which swallow up approximately 40% of the West Bank and are, of course, off-limits to Palestinians, who are not allowed to live in Israeli settlements, drive on the Israeli-only roads connecting these settlements, or live or travel through "security zones," surrounding the settlements.

Within this broader context, at the Ma'ale Levona settlement, Bourdain consumes his second meal in the West Bank. Perched atop a hill with 120 families, it is also home to the Pennsylvania-born Jewish winemaker Amichai Luria of the Shiloh Winery. Prior to wine-making, Luria worked in the field of construction and renovations for the purpose of literally building more Jewish communities as a way to fulfill what he sees is Israel's prophecy, employing exclusively Jewish laborers for the job. Bourdain describes the landscapes:

Hot, sunbleached, suburban feeling. Behind its ring of electronic surveillance sensors and security, everything they feel they need: a school, public transportation, and a petting zoo.

To accompany this suburban feeling, a visual montage of life in Ma'ale Levona ensues: porcelain gnomes decorate a dry garden, patches of turf beneath a tire swing, children on training wheels, and Orthodox women sweeping their front porches. The petting zoo features sheep and a chewing camel. Nearby, amateur cook and kosher winemaker, Amichai Luria, ignites a stove, purees garlic, drizzles olive oil over lamb chops, and presses peppers. He moves comfortably in his kitchen. Luria has been living here for 23 years. Accompanied by Cohen, Bourdain digs into a plate of cucumber-yogurt salad and a pomegranate marinated salmon, and a piece of grainy toast. Luria tells Bourdain proudly,

The salmon is marinated in pomegranate juice [...]. On the season, I squeeze pomegranate and I freeze the juice so I'll have it all year round.

Bourdain does not comment on the plate of aperitifs in front of him. His fork digs into the cucumber-yogurt salad, a side dish commonly served in Palestine, but he does not take a bite. Instead, he presses Luria about his origins to which Luria admits that he was born in Pennsylvania and brought to Israel at the age of four, a migration that was difficult for his parents. However, to Luria, God was on Israel's side:

You see prophecies happening everywhere. Things coming to life again. Mountains that nobody wanted to live on. For thousands of years nobody wanted this place. Finally we come here, everything is flourishing again. Makes you feel good.

Bourdain responds with a testy tone. While his hard-ball attitude seems to intimidate his host, the scene follows a second trope in which Palestine is conditionally consumable: that is, through the notion of individuated hatred based on ethno-religious antagonisms.

Consider the following dialogue between Bourdain and his host (Anthony Bourdain is indicated as “AB”):

AB: You’ve been here since...’90. You look over there [ushers with his right arm to the window), there is an Arab village right there...
 Luria: Um... yeah this is one that you could see from there...
 AB: [interrupts him] At any point during that time, you ever go to anyone’s house sit down and eat?
 Luria: Not there... but in other villages... [trails off]
 AB: Have you ever sat at a Muslim table?
 Luria: A Muslim table...
 AB: Your host or anybody else...?
 Luria: Coffee...
 AB: But not dinner?
 Luria: [...] No because... well... as a religious Jew, I eat only kosher. They respect that, so they don’t offer me.

The conversation seems too confrontational for Luria and the conversation cuts to a scene of him cutting the sizzling lamb over a portable griddle. Bourdain’s attention turns to Cohen who up until now had been quiet.

AB: I’m gonna ask you about something that troubled me coming up. The first house before you come up the drive to this village, the graffiti in the front. The targets spray painted on. Whodunnit?
 Cohen: Villains. Bad people.
 AB: Kids?
 Cohen: I don’t know. Apparently, kids [...]
 AB: [interrupts Cohen]. Look, I understand why kids’ll do it. [...] Why not paint it over?
 Cohen: [shifting uncomfortably]: Good question. Maybe we should. You’re right.

In this scene, Anthony Bourdain undoubtedly plays hardball. Rather than devouring the concocted delights in front of him, he is a reluctant guest, instead devouring their consciences. However, these conversations obscure the structural landscape of Israeli settler-colonial occupation of Palestinian lands by plugging in the dominant political myth that the conflict in the Middle East is a result of ethno-religious antagonisms. In the

first conversation with Luria, Bourdain presses his host to expose his Islamophobic leanings. Of course, this episode is a performance of reality; therefore, without overstating the intentionality of any of these actors, we can see that at the very least, Luria is hesitant to reveal his personal beliefs about the neighboring Palestinian villages. At the same time, his response that his Muslim Palestinian neighbors do not invite him to meals out of respect for his dietary restrictions does not answer the question of why he himself has not invited them to his dinner table as he has invited Bourdain. It also assumes Palestine to be Muslim, which denies the attachments of Christian Palestinians to the land, and reduces Palestinian settler-colonial experience to religious antagonisms, a persistent political myth.

More importantly, one might ask what Luria admission of anti-Muslim bigotry would accomplish, if anything at all? In the same vein, Cohen's discomfort is also highlighted in the scene for ostensibly the same reason: to position Bourdain as a no-nonsense kind of guy, whereby he is granted the position of an untarnished viewpoint, just like his tongue is privileged as the neutral, unadulterated palate by which he is able to communicate an untainted, objective view of "reality" in the occupied Palestinian territories. Furthermore, as in the interaction with Luria, Bourdain's "confrontational"¹¹⁵ stance grants Cohen the authority to speak about the violence of settler colonialism. Of course, Cohen defers the price-tagging phenomenon to unruly kids who have an uncomplicated view of the conflict. More importantly, however, even the admission that these acts are indeed violent presupposes the notion that settler colonialism functions

¹¹⁵ Note that this "confrontational" stance allows Bourdain to be read as properly masculine within dominant white, heteronormative tropes of masculinity, rather than as "violent" or predisposed to pathological behaviors.

through individuated moments of violence, further reducing the structures of elimination, as Patrick Wolfe defines it, to spontaneous impulses of villainous youth. While Bourdain's confrontation indeed implicates the men in settler colonial violence, their implication in this structure of elimination is limited to the disagreeable refusal to share a meal with their Palestinian neighbors as well as the men's dismissive regard to racist graffiti. These scenes and the perspectives they privilege effectively distance Palestinians from land claims, that is, the structural violence of settler colonialism, even within the liberal, alternative spaces that are believed to regard the Palestine narrative inclusively.

Finally, I return to *Paradise Now* by juxtaposing the consumability of Palestine as presented in the episode with the gendered, Western-centric models of morality that conditions Palestinian narration in the film. Here, I look at two scenes in the episode: a scene when Anthony Bourdain meets the all-girl Palestinian speed-racing team "the Speed Sisters" and a scene when Bourdain eats a traditional Palestinian dish in a refugee camp home to internally displaced Palestinians near the West Bank city of Bethlehem. These scenes, I argue, hover around the themes of terrorism, modernity and gendered notions of resistance that always position Palestinian men and women in competing spaces of embodiment. The first scene comes just outside of the West Bank city of Ramallah. Betty Saadeh and Mona Ennab of the "Speed Sisters" two young women who race in the West Bank. Betty, who was born in Mexico and raised in the U.S. and moved to the West Bank at age 13, tells Bourdain "When I drive, I speed. I feel free." Bourdain, who introduces himself as "Tony" for the first time in the episode, grasps the cushions beneath him as Betty screeches through the unpaved West Bank roads near Ramallah. A glamorous and sexy bleached-blond, Betty dons hot pink earrings, a hot pink tank top

with “bebe” written in silver sparkly letters across her chest, and a wrist stacked with pink bangles. Her lips are also glossy pink and her tight pants reveal her curvaceous figure as she clutches the gears of her sleek Peugeot sports car, a gift she received from a French sponsor. Betty’s voice is feminine and assertive to an intrigued Bourdain:

AB: Did you find people underestimated you at first?

Betty: At the beginning they could maybe make fun of us, but when we got good scores, we win all the respect.

AB: Now they know [nods enthusiastically]

Betty: [tauntingly] Well a car doesn’t know if you’re a woman or a man.

AB: Yeah [smiles]

Betty: A lot of girls want to join us, the Speed Sisters. But some of their families are reserved. They don’t like their daughters to be between men, racing, you know. Palestine is a very reserved society.

AB: So are things getting better, staying the same, or worse?

Betty: You never know what’s gonna happen in Palestine. One day, it’s good and the other day, it’s just... you never know. It’s a crazy country.

Their practice spot by Israel’s Ofer military prison is littered with tear gas bullets and canisters. Betty recounts to Bourdain a particular incident in which Ofer became off-limits: “One time we were here with the Speed Sisters and there was problems because of the prisoners. I just stopped my car over there [points toward the fence between the road and the prison] and started walking because I wanted to see what was going on. The Israeli soldiers came running at me and started shooting at me and I got shot in the back. It was a tear gas [canister].” Bourdain cringes in pain at her story. Betty’s bright acrylic nails dig into her upper back where she was shot, indicating scarred tissue.



Figure 13: Anthony Bourdain poses with Betty of the all-girl speed-racing team in Palestine, “The Speed Sisters”. Photo credit: CNN, 2013.



Figure 14: Betty of "The Speed Sisters" in Ramallah, the West Bank. Photo credit: *Anthroscape Human Biodiversity Forum* at <http://s1.zetaboards.com/anthroscape/index>.

In this scene, Betty’s position as a speed-racer as well as her overtly sexualized performance of femininity allows her to become legible within a particular narrative of resistance, one that conflates Western-centric models of feminism with racially marked notions of sexual excess and accessibility. Betty’s tone is inviting and her demeanor is

suggestive, allowing her body to become an object of consumption through an imagined Western masculine gaze. At various moments, her narrative is juxtaposed with B-roll of her taking “selfie” shots with pouty “duck lips”—flirtatious forms of presentation that have become particularly commonplace among Western youth. Indeed, her Western birthplace and upbringing make her a savory prospect by granting her access to Western tropes of sexualized femininity. Through her hot pink getup and glossy pink lips, she is made visible as a Western subject, reifying Western cultural hegemony but in a way that allows Palestinian digestibility. As a speed racer, Betty is particularly delicious to “Tony”—and by extension, an imagined Western consumer which here is a masculinized position and Betty’s body as the consumee is always already a feminized position—because she is at once the oppressed Palestinian and the Orientalist harem girl—a juxtaposition of multiple tropes simultaneously through the performance of a racially marked and sexualized subject. Bourdain’s questions, in fact, center her as a woman and speed-racer, rather than a subject of a settler-colonial conquest. The limitations of Palestinian consumability, then, are two-fold: on the one hand they plug in colonial tropes embedded in racialized fantasy as well as Western-centric models of liberation; and secondly, they de-center the processes of Israeli settler-colonial occupation in order to make Palestinians more edible. In both cases, Palestine is subordinated to a feminized colonial position and is effectively silenced while seemingly gaining visibility.

A very similar contradiction occurs when Bourdain enters the Aida refugee camp, although it is Palestinian masculinity—not Palestinian femininity—that is consumed. Chaperoned by Abed Abusrour, founder of the Al Rowwad Children’s Theatre at the camp, Bourdain enters Aida which is formed within the chokehold of the apartheid wall

(or “separation barrier” or “fence” as Israel calls it) which separates the camp from Jerusalem. The Aida Refugee camp is also adjacent to the four-star hotel Intercontinental Hotel, a site from which Aida has been shelled and gunned down by Israeli military. In the following conversation, Abusrour describes the origins of Aida:

AB: So this [camp] has been here since 1950?

Abusrour: Yes. It started with tents. People were under the tents for about seven years, and later on the U.N. saw it was not temporary as it was supposed to be so they started building what they call shelters.

[Bourdain narrates to an image of children riding their bikes and playing in a narrow pathway]. *First impressions of the camp, there's a remarkable number of kids.*

Abusrour continues: Now it's about 6,000 people and two-thirds are under 18 years old, so it's a very young population. Unfortunately, with the continuous degradation of the political and economic situation, we are in a situation where we have no playgrounds or green spaces anymore.

[Bourdain's narration continues}: *Children play in the streets beneath walls covered in images of martyrs, plane hijackers, political prisoners.*

AB: Six thousand people, of that number 66% are under the age of 18. I don't care where that is in the world, that's pretty much a recipe for unruly behavior I think would be the best [way of putting it].

Abusrour: Well, especially when you don't have any possibilities to evacuate the anger and the stress in a creative way. So after I finished my studies, I came back here, and I started using theatre as one of the most amazing, powerful, civilized and nonviolent means to express yourself, tell your story, be truthful. And this is, for me, the remedy to build peace within and hopefully help them to think that they can grow up and change the world and create miracles without needing to carry a gun and shoot anybody else or explode themselves or burn themselves but to stay alive.

At the camp's martyr's quarter, Bourdain is fed by a woman named Islam who runs a women's cooking collective as a means of income for herself and six children, one who is mentally disabled. Islam does not speak and she is not interviewed; instead, she is depicted cooking with a solemn expression on her pale face: first she is seen plucking jute leaves from their stems (ostensibly to make the popular Arabic dish *molokhiyya*) and then coating chunks of lamb in olive oil and spices before placing them on a pan. She

serves Bourdain and Abusrour the Palestinian national dish *qidra* (or ‘idra’), a rice dish named after the clay vessel and oven it is baked in. To make *qidra*, rice is cooked with pieces of meat inside of the vessel, with lamb or chicken, whole garlic cloves, garbanzo beans, cardamom pods, and many variations of spices including turmeric, cinnamon, allspice, and nutmeg. Islam makes the popular dish with vermicelli noodles instead of the traditional garbanzo beans, and creates a mound of rice (made by filling a bowl with rice and flipping it onto a plate) with a generous portion of chicken (where meat is considered a luxury—this is part of the broader tradition of hosting a guest with generosity and sacrifice).

Bourdain does not immediately dig in. In fact, we do not see him consume the plate of hot food and when Islam serves the men, they do not look up. Instead, the scene jumps to a discussion between Bourdain and Abusrour in which Bourdain probes his male host for his personal opinions about the effectiveness of terrorism:

AB: In America, kids grow up with pop stars, sports players—never a politician. I mean, it is unthinkable for a child to look up to a politician or to look up to a military figure. Sports or entertainment... Here, kids four and five-years old, everyday, they’re looking to somebody who, you know, brought down a plane. Now, I’m not questioning why[...] Do you think it’s helpful?

Abusrour: Well, I guess we have a history. We are people who are under occupation. People honor their heroes, and their heroes are those who resist the occupation, whether they resist through armed struggle or non-armed struggle. To tell you the truth, sometimes, I have been in a fight with some political parties when they put images of people who were killed in their own houses...Ahlam’s sister [points to Islam, who nods in response] on the 29th of October, 2001, she was killed in her kitchen by a sniper from the Intercontinental Hotel. But when these political parties take this woman and want to make a montage of photos with her carrying a gun to say “this is the hero who liberated Palestine” [my response is] “sorry, this is not true. This woman was killed in her house!” If you go, today, and ask Palestinians who is their great hero, ask these kids who they will recognize, they will recognize a young man from Gaza who is on

“Arab Idol” named Mohammed Assaf, a singer. He becomes more famous than Abu Mazen and Arafat and everybody else. This is another edge of Palestine.

In both conversations, Bourdain conjures the familiar tropes that align Palestine with terrorism. In the first conversation above, he is struck by the children who appear everywhere to stare at him and sometimes greet him with a thumbs-up sign or “hello.” In the first conversation, Bourdain’s comment on children’s predisposition to “unruly behavior” irrespective of their context (“I don’t care where this is in the world”) implies that because Aida is made up of mostly children, there is a predisposition to terrorist activity. Immediately, Abusrour’s monologue responds to this by centering the role of cultural expression as a way to “evacuate the stress and anger in a creative way.” Here, he also emphasizes his role in opening a path for Aida’s children, one that is characteristically nonviolent, and therefore, subduing the terrorist-inclination of the “unruly” minors. The use of theatre, he suggests, is a means of creating “peace within” despite the conditions of settler-colonial occupation. In the second conversation, Bourdain again probes Abusrour to discuss terrorism, particularly the ways in which children come to glorify militant figures. He asserts that for children in America, it is “unthinkable” to look up to anyone but a sports or entertainment figure. Rather than critiquing the consumption-orientation of America’s youth, Bourdain’s question again hovers around this notion that young children in Palestine are inclined to violence, racially marking Palestinian youth as inherently different than America’s youth.



Figure 15: Anthony Bourdain with children from the Aida refugee camp. Photo credit: CNN, 2013.

Both of these conversations point to the hegemonic discourses that, once again, situate Palestinian claims for land and Palestinian resistance to the settler-colonial occupation as always already inconceivable, indigestible, and illegible. These hegemonic discourses reify the relationship between Palestine and pathology through the broader discourse of terrorism similar to the representations of the morally subdued suicide bombers in the film *Paradise Now*. Taking this a step further, however, these scenes can be read as a form of emasculation of Palestine through the subject-position of Abusrour who is called upon to neutralize Palestine and legitimize Palestinians through the removal of masculine violence so often associated with Palestinian suicide bombing. In other words, to be consumed as legible, Abusrour had to be emasculated into a cultural ambassador of amity, one who is produced in the episode through a feminized position as a nurse or mother figure. This is manifested in his claims about theatre as being a proper way to evacuate anger, thus neutralizing the conditions as something that can be numbed through feminized forms of expression, but also through the ways in which he is depicted as he narrates: passing out ice cream cones to children in the streets from the back of a

minivan, embracing the children as he and Bourdain walk through the litter-strewn streets of the refugee camps, and the notion that through theatre he is performing a form of childrearing (“hopefully help them to think that they can grow up and change the world”). Unlike the Speed Sisters who are consumable as erotically feminized subjects that embody Western masculine desires as well as Western-centric models of feminism, Abusrour is consumable only as he poses no threat to a western hegemony—effectively subordinating him to a position of feminized labor in order to be conceived as legible, moral, and within acceptable forms of resistance from a Palestinian man (one that, again, is always defined against his alter-ego, the hypermasculine suicide bomber).

Conclusion

The Warner Brothers film *Paradise Now* and *Anthony Bourdain's Parts Unknown* allow for a conditional consumption of Palestinian people, history, memory, and land claims. These cultural texts offer a site to analyze the contradictory tropes that mark Palestinians as non-normative, as well as the intersections between the racial and gendered formations of Palestinianness. In the first case, Palestine is represented through the trope of the pathological suicide bomber, one whose moral deliberations are centered on Western standards of morality removed from the settler colonial context that subjugates Palestinian life to the abject position of subalterity. In the second text, Palestine is conditionally represented as visible through a multicultural global landscape through the consumption of Palestinian food. However, upon further scrutiny, we find that the liberal consumption of Palestine is also conditioned upon racialized and gendered forms that obscure the processes of ongoing vanishment.

Chapter Three: The Politics of the Palate

On June 18, 2012, fifty food industry insiders gathered at one of Washington DC's most well-known, upscale eateries, *Ris* to conduct a tasting for the inauguration of a new brand of olive oil from Palestine: "Daskara Palaestina Prima." Daskara is an extra virgin variety of olive oil grown, milled, and bottled at state-of-the-art facilities in the West Bank. The event honored Palestine's rich historic connection with the olive tree. On Daskara's website, the Palestinian olive oil is described as embodying a unique flavor reflective of the hints and tones indigenous to Palestine. Made from Nabali olives, the most prevalent variety grown in Palestine, Daskara oil is described as "robust and distinctly fruity, displaying both green and ripe olive fruit characteristics, as well as aromatic notes of tomato, grass, green apples, and almonds, and hints of toasted nuts"¹¹⁶. This golden liquid was marketed as a central staple to the most deciphering foodie's pantry, "best mixed with herbs and spices, and enjoyed dipped in fresh breads, or drizzled generously over grilled fish or with dips such as hummus"¹¹⁷.

"Daskara Palaestina Prima" is a conjoining of the ancient Arabic word *daskara*, meaning both "village" and "handmade," and *Palaestina Prima*, the region's name during the Byzantine Era of late antiquity¹¹⁸. As the name suggests, the dark green bottle of olive juice is infused with Palestine's aromatic essences, and produced through ancient methods of harvest, cultivation, and extraction, promising not only a delicious product, but also an earthy tradition untainted by the spoils of modernity. The oil represents an unprecedented public-private partnership between the International Finance Corporation

¹¹⁶ www.daskara.com

¹¹⁷ www.daskara.com

¹¹⁸ www.daskara.com

(a member of the World Bank group whose goals include “ending poverty by 2030” and “bringing prosperity to all developing countries”¹¹⁹), the Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI) (an international development company funded by the United States Agency for International Development or USAID¹²⁰), and Palestinian olive oil producers from the West Bank villages of Till and Sabastya. The result was a thick compression of Palestine’s most beloved fruit, first introduced at the Summer Fancy Food Show, the East Coast’s largest specialty food and beverage event, followed by its launch at *Ris*.



Figure 16: Daskara olive oil tasting at *Ris* Restaurant in Washington DC. Photo credit: Development Alternatives Incorporated, 2012.

At Daskara’s inauguration celebration, chefs and food journalists sampled the extract in stemless shot-size glasses alongside a decadent spread of mezzes prepared by the internationally acclaimed celebrity chef, *Ris* Lacoste. Chef Lacoste’s specialized *carte du jour* consisted of over twenty dishes, from fusion Middle Eastern fare to signature *Ris* entrees, including a cauliflower panna cotta, scallop margarita, tender lamb shank, rice with lentils and vermicelli noodles, purple and yellow beets in a hummus spread, Sicilian thyme focaccia, and an olive oil poundcake. Each dish was prepared

¹¹⁹ www.ifc.org

¹²⁰ www.dai.com

using Daskara Palaestina Prima, showcasing the versatility of Palestine’s flavors, the oil’s gastronomic sophistication, and its easy absorption into any pantry. The exquisite feast was complemented with select red and white wines, a champagne toast, and a parting gift of *Ris*’s signature lemon rosemary cookies for each guest. The crowd moaned in pleasure at the marvelous fête’s success. Chef Lacoste herself was so inspired by the oil’s bold essence her restaurant’s menu now permanently features a dish of grilled Portuguese sardines with feta and olive bruschetta made with Daskara olive oil. The invitees were also presented with a promotional video and literature about the centrality of olives in Palestine’s economy, culture, and cuisine, as well as information about the DAI’s development project successful endeavors.



Figure 17: Daskara olive oil launch at *Ris* Restaurant features a Sicilian thyme focaccia by celebrity chef Ris Lacoste. Photo credit: Development Alternatives Incorporated, 2012.

The event drew accolades from journalists and foodies alike, and specialty shops nationwide reported a surge in the demand for Palestinian olive products. Carrie Davenport, general manager of The Rogers Collection, an importer of “responsibly sourced handmade cheeses, olive oils, vinegars, from heritage food-crafters of small

farms rich in traditions and flavors”¹²¹ and the primary importer and distributor for Daskara olive oil, noted enthusiasm from specialty food buyers across the U.S. According to Davenport, “U.S. consumers can expect to find Daskara on retail shelves soon”¹²². Currently, Daskara bottles are sold in 500 milliliter bottles for USD 24 at delicacy shops including ‘Jones and Bones’ (www.jonesandbones.com/, shop located in Capitola, CA), the ‘Brooklyn Larder’ (www.bklynlarder.com/, shop located in Brooklyn, NY) and the Rockridge Market Hall Shop in North Oakland, California, the “only European style marketplace in the Bay Area.”¹²³

On the very same day food industry insiders indulged in a scrumptious banquet prepared with the essence of “Palaestina Prima,” Israeli soldiers invaded the West Bank city of Jenin, the Jenin refugee camp, and the surrounding villages of Burqin, Al-Hashmiyya, and Kafreet—regions located in the northern part of the West Bank, where olive trees are highly concentrated. Ten armed military vehicles searched homes in the Jenin refugee camp for individuals suspected of anti-Israel activity, firing flare shots into the air as they raided olive orchards belonging to local farmers.¹²⁴ A week earlier, Fathallah Abu Raisa, a farmer from the village of Qusra near the West Bank city of Nablus awoke just after the morning call to prayer, prepared to harvest his trees with his children only to discover that 170 of his olive trees had been decimated by Israelis from the surrounding settlements in the dead of the night. The settlers used chainsaws to drill through the trees’ trunks and used other weapons to pound the olive trees into the ground.

¹²¹ <http://www.therogerscollection.com/>

¹²² www.daskara.com

¹²³ www.rockridgemarkethall.com/

¹²⁴ <http://www.imemc.org/article/63747>

The Israel Social Television network¹²⁵ films Abu Raisa walking frantically amid a sea of broken limbs and lifeless remains, yelling, “Now look what they’ve done to me!”¹²⁶ Where once the olives stood tall and provided a vital source of income for his family, they now lay scattered around him, their joints awkwardly protruding from butchered stumps: “We all feel like someone died in our home,” he says.

Another farmer, Ahmad Hamdulla Yousef, reveals that this is not the first time that Qusra has seen her olives butchered: “[Israeli settlers] do this all the time, usually on Thursdays or Fridays,” he relays. “They come, enter our land, destroy our property, and escape. And then the military comes and closes the area. We try to access our land, but they don’t let us enter.”¹²⁷ Pointing besides him, Yousef says: “There were eighty trees here. Now look at those trees standing over there. They are all that is left. They cut everything down and leave nothing untouched.”¹²⁸ Abu Raisa tells the reporter that the fallen trees are like the death of a child after years of nurture: “It is hard for me to describe what I feel inside. These trees are like my children.... [Like my children] I’ve worked on them for 15 years.”¹²⁹ One day earlier, seven armed settlers accompanied by Israeli military tanks invaded the Palestinian village and harassed villagers, throwing

¹²⁵ This news story was accessed through the Israel Social TV channel on www.youtube.com and was researched, filmed, and edited by Rony Margalit and Yermi Brenner. Israel Social TV is an independent media organization (NGO) working to promote social change, human rights, social justice and equality as well as to mobilize its viewers towards activism. Israel Social TV does not accept commercial advertisements or governmental support but relies, instead on fundraising, its viewers and donations. The report was filmed with both the reporter and the Palestinian villagers from Qusra speaking in Hebrew, and included subtitles in English. For a direct link to this news clip, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7-mE-taI1w>. For more information about Israel Social Television, please visit <http://tv.social.org.il/eng/about-us>.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

stones at a village truck, and smashing its windows¹³⁰. That evening the Imam of Qusra's mosque issued a warning through his call-to-prayer speakers that there were armed settlers approaching the village from one of the surrounding mountains. Upon hearing the news, a crowd of about one-hundred Qusra village members rallied to defend the village from the armed intruders. The Israeli military fired several sound bombs to disperse the villagers. One of the bombs fell in between 19-year-old Ismail Aburedi's legs and he fell to the ground unconscious. The Israeli army refused to let Ismail be taken to the hospital. Later he was pronounced deaf and paralyzed.¹³¹

The uncanny snapshot of an exquisite gastronomic celebration of Palestine's olives in the United States' capital sits awkwardly against the deathscapes of fallen trees in the northern West Bank's villages. On the one hand, we can imagine salivating tongues, courteous closed-mouth chewing, cultured tête-à-tête, invigorated senses, hot aromas, carefully-crafted provisions, satisfied stomachs, and recreational munching. We can picture the guests swirling the compressed olive juice in carefully designed beakers, observing the oil's hue and viscosity, and sipping delicately, attempting to decipher the hints of fruit, nut, herb, and spice infused in the nectar, and cleansing their moist palates

¹³⁰ Located in "Area C" of the West Bank, Qusra has seen violent attacks from Israeli settlers residing in illegal outposts and settlements nearby on its residents and surrounding groves. Since the Oslo 2 Accords signed in 1995, the Occupied Palestinian Territory of the West Bank was divided into three zones, Areas A, B, and C. Area A is the part of the West Bank under the control of the Palestinian Authority and includes 3% of the entire West Bank territory (including seven major Palestinian cities of Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqilya, Ramallah, Bethlehem and 80 percent of Hebron); Area B is West Bank territories under Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control and accounts for approximately 24 percent of the West Bank territory (over 400 Palestinian villages and their surrounding territories); and, Area C refers to the part of the West Bank that is under full Israel civil and military control and accounts for 62 percent of the West Bank with nearly 300,000 Palestinian residents. The Palestinian populations in Area C is particularly vulnerable because of limited access to educational and health-care institutions, harassment by settlers, proximity to open fire from military training facilities, inadequate potable water, and minimal electricity infrastructure.

¹³¹<http://occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com/2011/06/14/armed-settlers-harass-the-villagers-of-qusra-a-village-south-east-of-nablus/>

in between sips with hearty mezzes and quaint banter. On the other hand, we see an image of Qusra villagers grieving over their lost “children”, their orchards now a necropolis of slain saplings and amputated trunks, their limbs awkwardly protruding or sawed off from their roots. Perhaps it is a quivering montage of Abu Raisa staggering through a sea of pulverized trees, forced to contend with the loss of the offspring he once bore of seedlings fifteen years before, while attempting to mutter something coherent in broken Hebrew to the Israeli news reporter filming the cadavers and broken branches around him. Perhaps this scene conjures an earsplitting warning from a frantic imam, the customary speakers used to summons Qusra to prayer five times a day, now a screeching alert of imminent danger from armed shadows descending from the nearby mountains. While the canvas is certainly subject to the brushstroke of her artist, it is precisely this eerie, asymmetrical snapshot that I analyze in this chapter. I ask, what are the conditions that allow for vibrant life at a posh eatery to exist alongside the enduring deathscapes of decimated olive groves in the West Bank? How does the pleasurable chewing of Palestine’s olives occur in tandem with the chewing of Palestinian lands by chainsaws and bulldozers?

Indeed, the incident in Qusra is not anomalous but part of the ongoing and systematic disappearance of Palestinian life through the annihilation of the olive tree. In this chapter, I argue that the material consumability of Palestine rests on the positivistic, liberal narratives of fair trade, which ultimately mask the ongoing context of settler-colonial occupation through a neoliberal discourse of inclusion in the global market. In order to argue this, I conduct multi-sited ethnographic research over the course of three years, extending from chic boutiques selling Palestinian olive oil in the San Francisco

Bay Area to residing with a Palestinian farming family in the North West Bank village of Burqin, a region whose olive groves are used to feed the fair trade industry. I interview the main actors in the fair trade industry and analyze hundreds of brochures, labels, advertising brochures, promotional videos, documentaries, and pamphlets relating to the material consumability of Palestine and the decimation of Palestinian olive groves. Finally, I read the liberal discourses of fair trade from these material cultural texts against the testimonies of farmers like Fathallah Abu Raisa and Ahmad Hamdalluh Yousef in order to reveal the contradictory position of Palestinian fair trade and Palestinian olive decimation.

Through an analysis of the material consumption of Palestine enabled by the growing fair trade olive oil industry, I also analyze what is rendered invisible in the celebration of the fruits of Palestine. I explore the ways in which the consumability of Palestine at such posh events as the Fancy Food Exhibit and Daskara's launch at *Ris* obscures the ongoing vanishment of Palestinian lands occurring as a result of Israeli settler-colonial occupation through positivistic narratives of neoliberal multiculturalism in which market entry becomes the site of indigenous empowerment. I argue that there is a contradictory relationship that forms between the growing fair trade movement in which the discourse of economic gains for Palestinian farmers and their families masks the structures of elimination and the violent ripping of the land in Palestine. I juxtapose the liberal discourse of fair trade vis-à-vis the emergent trends of Western consumption of the Palestinian olive in order to fill a gap within postcolonial studies by examining indigenous neoliberalisms as a site that settler-colonialism is simultaneously obscured but also negotiated through conditional tropes of legibility.

As I will demonstrate, the emergence of fair trade within the settler-colonial occupation of Palestine, an industry that has made the lands of Palestine consumable in the United States, allows for a neoliberal multiculturalism to co-reside with the ongoing vanishment of Palestinian lands. In this context, the Western palate comes to *chew Palestine* at the very same time that Palestine is *being chewed* through the settler-colonial occupation of Israel. If we read the Western tongue as an object of imperial penetration (through the merchandising of the brand of Palestine to fit Western desires for delicious and authentic treats from the Holy Land), we can better understand the transnational nexus of power relations particularly between Israel and the United States that occur at the site of the palate, one that enables the celebratory chewing of Palestine on the one hand, and the settler-colonial mastication of Palestine vis-à-vis the ongoing Israeli occupation, on the other. I juxtapose the liberal discourse of fair trade vis-à-vis the emergent trends of Western consumption of the Palestinian olive in order to fill a gap within settler colonial literature, which tends to overlook the fact that settler-colonialism and global liberalism can coexist.

At this particular juncture of unprecedented advanced capital accumulation, the site of material consumption of Palestinian fruits and lands has a particular significance. Just this year, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign targeted Israeli soda and hummus products. One report explained the relevance of consumption for the settler-colonial occupation of Palestine:

Consumers may not know it, but buying products like Sabra hummus and Sodastream helps fuel Israel's military control over Palestinians. Some companies have factories located in one of the 125 officially recognized settlements in occupied Palestine, which are illegal under international law. Other companies contribute to the maintenance of an occupation

through cooperation with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), whose main goal is to protect illegal settlements and exercise dominion over the lives of millions of Palestinians. Buying these products gives profits to companies who exploit Palestinian land and resources.¹³²

Such movements point to consumption and non-consumption as sites of praxis. In 1848, Karl Marx and Friederich Engels defined consumption as a result of “commodity fetishism” in which “the commodity-form, and the value-relation of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things” (1990: 165). For Marx and Engels, consumption figured in as the method of commodity exchange, thus reproducing all-determining economic relations of power. As such, the market exchange of commodities obscures the true economic character of the human relations of production, between laborer and capitalist. Fifty years later, the concept of “conspicuous consumption” was introduced by the economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen in his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions* (1899) to describe the behavioral characteristics of the nouveau riche social class who emerged as a result of the accumulation of surplus capital from the Industrial Revolution of 1860.

In the field of Sociology, many have reproduced Marx’s notion that ostentatious consumptive behavior is the unfortunate result of an inherently destructive system of advanced capitalism (Veblen 1912, Galbraith 1984, Toynbee 1973, Stanfield and Stanfield 1980), while others note that material ownership allows us to define who we are

¹³² <http://www.alternet.org/world/companies-and-consumer-products-boosting-israels-brutal-occupation>

(Goffman 1952, Belk 1988, Solomon 1983, McCracken 1987, Levy 1959). French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu rejected consumer preferences as innate, individualistic choices based on human intellect or whim. Instead, Bourdieu argued that “tastes” are socially conditioned and that the objects of consumer choice reflect a symbolic hierarchy that is determined and maintained by the socially dominant in order to enforce their “distinction” from other classes of society.

On the one hand, the emergence of fair trade, material consumption has become a site of self-identity with a moral dimension, a new form of “conspicuous compassion” in which charitability is attached to the palate (West 2004). On the other, fair trade dominates in the global North suggesting that consumption as a politicized practice is part of advanced capitalist privilege located at the intersection of individualized choice, taste, and surplus. At the same time, that fair trade offers some form of visibility to marginalized producers cannot be overlooked. As Soenke Zehle cogently notes, environmental justice demands for fair trade and sustainable development depend on solidarity between consumers and producers [...]” (Zehle 341). As such, entire commodity cycles—harvesting, extraction, production, distribution, consumption and so forth—should be carefully understood before any rendering of environmental and food justice can be imagined. Moreover, food stories leave behind traces—“crumbs”—that chart vast geographies of colonization and empire, as well as the subaltern suppers and memoirs that accompany them. Martin Luther King noted, for example, that a cup of hot coffee contains within it the entire legacy of chattel slavery. As such, even “inconspicuous consumption” links a multitude of individual, collective, and national

consumers and producers in ways that have uneven consequences—ones that call in to question who is allowed to savor Palestine and how.

At the same time, the emergent fair trade industry points to the internal complexity within the global capitalist dynamic and works against the tendency to flatten out the very dynamics within which value is created, circulated, transformed, and accumulated (Tadiar 2012). The circulation of Palestinian oils to posh eateries like *Ris* requires an analysis of its liberatory potential and the violent struggles over life that it obscures. Indeed for Palestine, fair trade has mediated the celebration of Palestine on the one hand, and its decimation on the other. If we were to bottle the fair trade movement, we can identify the myths that allow for the love of Palestinian land through the delightful mastication of its fruits, and the annihilation of Palestinian land—that is, the settler-colonial occupation—that has formulated the need for practices of “conspicuous compassion”. In what follows, I attempt to inspect the various elements of this “bottle” as well as the mythologies that accompany it, the Palestine that can be tasted, and the Palestine that is evacuated from epistemological and political knowledge formation.

Chewing and Vomiting Palestinian Roots: The Decimation of Palestinian Trees

According to a recent report released by Oxfam, olive oil from the West Bank is reputed to be among the best in the world and has become a lead contender in organic and fair trade markets worldwide. The report, titled “The road to olive farming: challenges to developing the economy of olive oil in the West Bank”, highlights how the olive sector in the West Bank contributes up to \$100 million in yearly income for some of

the poorest Palestinian communities¹³³. According to the Fair trade Foundation in London¹³⁴, Palestine is “the original cultivator of olive oil,” and today olive trees are still grown and harvested using ancient traditional methods. Approximately 45% of agricultural land in the occupied Palestinian Territories is planted with approximately 10 million olive trees, primarily in the West Bank. In a good year, the olive sector contributes to 15-19% of Palestinian agricultural production, which is equivalent to around \$160-191 million¹³⁵. The northern cities of the West Bank (particularly the regions surrounding the major cities of Jenin and Nablus where I conducted ethnographic work) are the most populated with olive groves and are where the most intensive practices of olive harvest, cultivation, and export are concentrated. The West Bank city of Jenin has become the headquarters for the Canaan Fair Trade Company, with oil extracting and milling technologies servicing clients all over the world, including international corporations like Ben & Jerry's, LUSH Cosmetics and major retailers like Whole Foods, Williams-Sonoma and Sainsbury's. In fact, according to Canaan Fair Trade's founder and managing director, Palestinian-American businessman Nasser Abufarha, Canaan Fair Trade is the largest fair-trade enterprise in the Middle East, and the largest fair-trade supplier of olive oil in the world¹³⁶. Palestinian olive oil is currently exported to countries in the Arab Gulf, Europe, North America and East Asia. As olives

¹³³ <http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/road-olive-farming>

¹³⁴ <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2014/02/canaan-fair-trade-palestinian-venture-olive-oil-israel.html#>

and olive oil are the main Palestinian export, olive harvesting and cultivation provides employment and income to around 100,000 farmers primarily in the West Bank¹³⁷.

Among the most vocal advocates for olive products cultivated, harvested, and processed by Canaan Fair Trade is the Escondido, California-based Dr. Bronner Company. Dr. Emanuel Bronner, a Holocaust survivor, founded ‘Dr. Bronner’s Magic Soaps’ in 1948, the same year that Israel declared its statehood in Historic Palestine. Since then, the founder’s grandson, David Bronner, developed a fair trade certified ‘magic soap’ for the company consisting of organic olive oil, ninety percent of which comes from the Palestinian fair trade industry. In a public statement issued through the company’s website, David Bronner identified this investment as a moral venture to promote peace in a way that is faithful to the traditional practices of Palestinian farmers and is also sensitive to Israel’s security needs:

“We the fourth and fifth generation family at Dr. Bronner’s are proud of our Jewish heritage and are strong supporters of Israel’s right to exist and security [...]. We also respect the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. We are optimistic that we can rise above religious and sectarian differences and realize our transcendent unity: that we are All-One based on mutual respect and recognition of eachothers’ rights and history.”¹³⁸

At the same moment, a sophisticated cast of U.S. consumers waft, sip, and decipher the complex tones of Palestine’s most beloved crop, Palestinians continue to grieve over the continued destruction of their olives, which have tended to peak during the fall harvests. In October 2010, Israelis from the settlement of Bracha burned 2,500 olive trees within one week in the Palestinian village of Burin¹³⁹ and stabbed a farmer as

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ http://www.drbronner.com/pdf/drbronnerpress_colbo_article.pdf

¹³⁹ Burin is located right outside Nablus, which is the second most important district for olive production. The village of Burin has 4,000 inhabitants who live in a valley surrounded on all hilltops by Israeli

he attempted to prevent the settlers from uprooting his trees¹⁴⁰. By June of 2010, the United Nations reported that hundreds of *dunums*¹⁴¹ of agricultural land and thousands of olive trees had been damaged in similar settler-related incidents¹⁴². The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in 2011 that the number of settlers' attacks resulting in Palestinian casualties and property damage increased by 32% in 2011 compared to 2010, and by over 144% compared to 2009¹⁴³. The same report states, that during 2011 Israeli settlers damaged or destroyed about 10,000 Palestinian trees, primarily olive trees, which significantly undermined the livelihoods of hundreds of Palestinian families. The following year, OCHA reported that 7,500 olive trees belonging to Palestinians were damaged or destroyed by Israeli settlers in the West Bank between January and mid October 2012¹⁴⁴. In Gaza Strip the Israeli military operations had leveled 7,300 dunums of land that were previously planted with olive trees. In 2013, OCHA conservatively estimated the damage and/or destruction of over 9,400 olive trees, compared to 8,500 in 2012¹⁴⁵. In total, it has been estimated that 2.5 million olive trees

settlements — Yitzhar, Har Bracha, and a Yitzhar “outpost.” In September 2011, settlers from Yitzhar, birthplace of the “price-tag” campaign of racist violence by settlers against Palestinians, burned 200 olive trees as villagers were celebrating a wedding according to an article “Yitzhar settlers violently crash Burin wedding, military watches” International Solidarity Movement on September 6, 2011 (<http://palsolidarity.org/2011/09/yitzhar-settlers-violently-crash-burin-wedding-military-watches/>). In July 2009, Oxfam reports that Israeli settlers destroyed 1,500 olives in Burin.

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.imemc.org/article/59698>

¹⁴¹ *Dunum* is the land measurement unit used in Palestine. One dunum is approximately a quarter of an acre.

¹⁴² <http://unocha.org/>

¹⁴³ <http://unocha.org/>

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ While the Gaza Strip has seen over a million olive trees decimated in the last decade alone, I focus my research here on the West Bank for several reasons. First, gaining access to the Gaza Strip requires Israeli permissions which are arduous and unpredictable. Palestinians are prohibited from leaving the Gaza Strip, the most populated region in the world and Palestinians residing in the West Bank (as indicated by their ID cards) are prohibited from entering the Gaza Strip. Permission for entry is granted only to foreign nationals and is granted for a limited number of days by the state of Israel, which controls all air, land and sea ports around Gaza. As a Palestinian with U.S. citizenship, I could gain permission to enter the Gaza Strip, although this might be deemed “suspicious” and could place my family residing in the West Bank in jeopardy. Furthermore, the prohibitions for entry into the Gaza Strip were harsher when I was in the West

have been uprooted in the occupied West Bank: from 1976 to 1999, Israel uprooted an estimated 1,000,000 olive trees and an additional 1,405,658 trees from between 2000 and 2006¹⁴⁶. Between 2006 and 2013 another one million olive trees are estimated to have been uprooted or torched due to the intensifying settlers' campaign of torching olive trees during the harvesting season¹⁴⁷. The Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture¹⁴⁸ stated that the Palestine's 2013 olive season will see a 60% deficit in production output, a decrease that falls well below the previous season, due to the increased razing of agricultural land planted with olive trees, particularly in the Gaza Strip where the Israeli army uprooted 20,000 dunums of land planted with an estimated half a million olive trees¹⁴⁹.

By 2012, tens of thousands of olive trees were uprooted to make way for the construction of the Israeli wall in the West Bank. Eighty-five percent of the land used for the building of the "separation barrier" (also called the "apartheid wall" by Palestinians and the "security fence" by Israelis) lay in the West Bank cutting Palestinian villages off from one another as well as farmers from their lands. Funded by U.S. taxpayer monies,

Bank conducting ethnographic research October 2012 – December 2012 as Israel unleashed an assault on the Gaza Strip ("Operation Pillar of Defense") in November, following a series of rockets fired by Hamas militants. The eight-day massacre resulted in the deaths of 175 Palestinians and injury of 1,000 others, and Israel targeted many civilian zones. In the future, I would like to expand the scope of this project to include Gaza Strip should I be granted permission into the region.

¹⁴⁶ Figure according to report titled "Status of the Environment" conducted by the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ), 2007.

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.arij.org/>

¹⁴⁸ www.moa.gov.ps

¹⁴⁹ According to the report "Environmental Scarcity and Violent Conflict: The Case of Gaza" Kimberley Kelly and Thomas Homer-Dixon argue that agricultural decline in Gaza is in part a result of water scarcity. Israel's racist allocation policies and the contraction and degradation of the water supply interact to produce significant reductions in crop yields. Israeli policy has not only limited Palestinian water consumption for agriculture, but also restricted the cultivation of water-intensive crops, in addition to Israeli authorities' uprooting of Palestinian fruit trees. To protect Israeli production from competition, exports from Gaza are heavily restricted. Today, olive production is heavily influenced by trade imbalances that are rooted in the settler-colonial occupation. While Israel restricts imports of Gaza crops that compete with Israeli produce, Israel sells freely in the Occupied Territories. Israel exports substantial quantities of fruits and vegetables at prices with which Gazan farmers have been unable to compete. Previously a net exporter of agricultural produce, Gaza has been a net importer since 1984 (1998: 67-107).

Israel's wall stands eight meters tall, twice the height of the Berlin Wall, and prevents Palestinians access to olive groves located on the other side of the wall, and separates Palestinian communities from one another. The wall is embedded with state-of-the-art surveillance technologies including armed watchtowers and an inaccessible buffer zone 30-100 meters wide for electric fences, trenches, cameras, sensors, and military surveillance. The wall costs \$3.4 billion, approximately \$4.7 million per kilometer. Due to the wall, Palestinians have lost access to an estimated 2,000,000 trees, causing permanent income losses due to the death of entire groves due to forced neglect. Israeli journalist Amira Hass reports that in the village of Qafeen alone, for example, 12,600 olive trees were uprooted for the construction of the wall, and "thousands more trees - perhaps tens of thousands - and thousands more acres of the West Bank are trapped behind the walls and fences and buffer zones surrounding the settlements"¹⁵⁰. In Qafeen, 100,000 trees are imprisoned behind the wall, and owners are prevented from reaching them. Hass reports, "All [the farmers] can do is gaze on the neglect from afar. The reason given is "security," of course, but for some reason security always ends up with the effective plundering of more Palestinian land for the benefit of the neighboring settlement [...]"¹⁵¹ According to several sources, uprooted trees are often sold to Israeli settlers who, in turn, have attempted to sell the olive oil from these trees to their original Palestinian

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/it-s-not-the-olive-trees-1.62013>

¹⁵¹ <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/it-s-not-the-olive-trees-1.62013>

owners¹⁵². Many sources report that Palestinian olive trees are often poached by Israeli settlers.¹⁵³

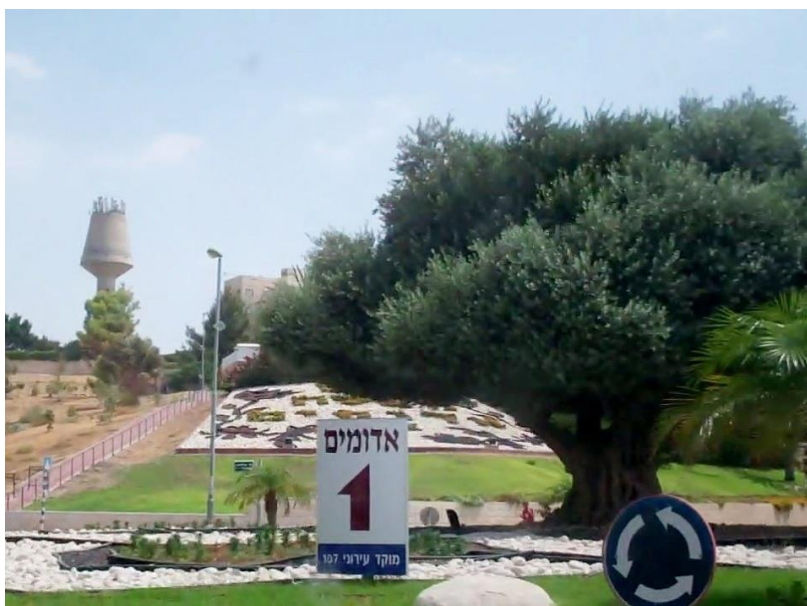


Figure 18: Palestinian olive tree planted by Israeli settlement entrance. Photograph credit: www.mandoweiss.com

Indeed, the olive tree as a symbol of Palestine has long figured into the settler-colonial domination through the transformation of the indigenous landscapes. The symbolic and material value of the olive tree for Palestinians became integrated into Zionist logics of conquest. Zionists employed gendered ideologies of barrenness and fertility to promote settlement, which often masqueraded as afforestation schemes by the Jewish National Fund, the first international Zionist organization. In her thesis “(En)planting Israel: Jewish National Fund Forestry and the Naturalisation of Zionism” (2005), Joanna Long states “afforestation schemes have been central to Zionist settlement in Palestine since the early twentieth century, with tree-planting promoted as central to

¹⁵²<http://www.chicagofairtrade.org/more-about-joomla/fair-trade-in-conflict-zones/135-north-american-fair-trade-for-peace-in-the-middle-east.html>

¹⁵³ <http://mondoweiss.net/2012/08/ancient-olive-trees-stolen-from-palestinian-lands-now-decorate-israeli-settlement.html>

‘developing’ the ‘barren and neglected landscape’¹⁵⁴. Long argues that the Jewish National Fund’s forestry initiatives worked to naturalize the Zionist colonization of Palestine by constructing the discursive and physical invisibility of the Palestinian landscape. Long also argues that trees themselves, particularly those planted over the remains of Palestinian villages depopulated and demolished during the 1948 war, construct the physical invisibility of Palestine by literally obscuring evidence of their existence on the same land.

Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the transformation of the landscape through the vanishing olive grove continues exponentially. However, the decimation of olive trees is not limited to sporadic acts by extremist settlers. In 2012, I conducted ethnographic research during the olive harvest in the West Bank village of Jaba’a. Traditionally, the olive harvest is done by hand by extended family members of all generations. I was crouched on the ground picking up olives from the ground as another volunteer was perched on a branch and shaking the olive tree gently above me. I looked up to find an Israeli defense force member perched in a hill monitoring us:

¹⁵⁴ Long, Joanna. 2005. “(En)planting Israel: Jewish National Fund Forestry and the Naturalisation of Zionism” MA Thesis. University of British Columbia.



Figure 19: Image of an IDF soldier descending from a nearby hill during the 2012 Olive Harvest. Photo by author.

The IDF soldier was Druze and confronted the farmer in Arabic, demanding proof that the farmer had attained permissions to access his olive groves. With the intervention of European and U.S. volunteers, the situation did not escalate, save for the armyman's insistence that our security was at stake as the Palestinian West Bank is dangerous and chaotic. This scene is far from exceptional, and from the incident we knew very well that our presence offered temporary protection to the farmer and his family members that day. In our interview, he stated "today my olives are here and we can come and pick the fruit. And tomorrow? God only knows."

According to The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ), since Israel re-occupied the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, thousands of Palestinian families lost over one million citrus and olive trees to the Israeli occupying

forces¹⁵⁵. The Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture reports that from September 2000 through June 2004 the Israeli military uprooted approximately 400,000 olive trees, with \$60 million in annual revenue loss for Palestinians who depend on income derived from the olive for survival. Olive harvests are biennial, with one year producing a low yield but the subsequent year producing yield threefold the prior year's. Olive trees begin sprouting fruit when they are five years-old, but require 50 years or more to achieve its full potential. Furthermore, where a tree is located (hill or valley) and how much sun and rain it receives determines its fruit yield with the trees atop hills and mountains producing the most desirable fruits. One tree produces enough olives for 4-7 liters of olive oil or an average of 10 bottles of olive oil (each 750 milliliters). If one dunum (approximately one-fourth of an acre) typically holds 16 mature trees are uprooted out of production, then in one year the farmer, worker and press operator lost income on the sale of 160 bottles of olive oil. These figures demonstrate the exponential, financial losses for the Palestinians directly resultant from the Israeli occupation. In the short-term these agricultural losses cost millions of dollars and in the long-term billions of dollars. The absence of olive grove decimation has been invisible in media outlets, an absence that further makes illegible the material annihilation of Palestine life.

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.chicagofairtrade.org/more-about-joomla/fair-trade-in-conflict-zones/135-north-american-fair-trade-for-peace-in-the-middle-east.html>



Figure 20: Palestinian woman shows her blood-stained dress from when settlers hit her with a stone while she was picking olives on Oct. 31, 2011. Photo Credit: Abbas Momani/Getty Images.

Fair Trade and the Emergence of the Delectable Palestinian Olive Commodity

Since the 1940s, the fair trade industry developed as a social, political and economic movement to address the growing inequities between the global north and the global south as a result of the legacies of chattel slavery, colonialism, imperialism and military interventions. According to the World Fair Trade Organization, the term ‘fair trade’ refers to “a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. Fair trade contributes to sustainable local development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers.”¹⁵⁶ Fair Trade focuses on: 1. improving the livelihoods and well-being of producers by improving market access, strengthening producer organizations, paying a fair price and providing continuity in the trading relationship; 2. Promoting development opportunities for disadvantaged producers,

¹⁵⁶ Definition posted on the World Fair Trade Organization website, viewed August 20, 2011, http://www.wfto.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1&Itemid=13

especially women and minorities, and protecting children from exploitation in the production process; 3. Raising awareness among consumers of the negative effects on producers of international trade so that they can exercise their purchasing power positively; and 4. Protecting human rights and promoting peaceful coexistence through an emphasis on social justice, sound environmental practices and economic security.¹⁵⁷

In the book *Fair Trade: Market-Driven Ethical Consumption* (2005), Alex Nicholls and Charlotte Opal describe this development in four “waves”. The first wave began to take shape following the Second World War, in which Western charities such as Europe’s OXFAM began to import handicrafts from Third World producers in an effort to alleviate poverty, particularly at a time when advancements in technology began to replace human labor. In an effort to combat the growing disposability of human labor and growing global inequities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious charities took to humanitarian and philanthropic efforts to provide farmers and workers better compensation for the goods they were producing. The second wave of fair trade saw the emergence of alternative trading organizations (ATOs) with expressly political (rather than philanthropic) aspirations, as well as a more astute grasp of the of the international system of trade. These ATOs rallied against major global financial and trade institutions who had every interest in maintaining the existing conditions of inequality. Centered in Europe, these progressive organizations worked in conjunction with a coalition of Third World nations known as “The Group 77” in an effort to reform the international financial and trade organizations that regulate global capitalism¹⁵⁸. These

¹⁵⁷ Redfern, A. and P. Snedker: “Creating Market Opportunities for Small Enterprises: Experiences of the Fair Trade Movement.” Paper presented at the International Labour Office in Geneva, 2002.

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.globalresearch.ca/alternatives-to-free-trade-fair-trade-and-beyond/9431>

efforts lead to the fair trade movement's formal recognition by the United Nations—which adopted the slogan “Trade Not Aid” at the Conference on Trade and Development—a program later derailed by wealthier nation-states' regressive policies that pit poorer countries against one another¹⁵⁹. The third wave of the fair trade movement involved the branding of fair trade products to a larger consumer base through the development of certification programs, bringing the concept of fair trade into the mainstream. The increased visibility and accessibility of fair trade commodities within mainstream consumer markets characterizes the fourth and current wave of fair trade development, in which global companies such as Starbucks Coffee and Sara Lee effectively utilized fair trade concepts in their branding techniques. Currently, the fair trade movement has broadened to include labor unions and associations representing demands and needs of Palestinian farmers through the broadcast of the now universalized fair trade standards listed above. This has occurred in large part due to the accelerated process of global economic integration due to the ever-expanding market of globalized capitalism. As such, fair trade is now “big business” with ever-growing momentum. It has amassed into a multi-billion dollar industry with over 10,000 products in the marketplace and more than \$1 billion dollars in annual sales in the United States.

However, due to the settler-colonial occupation of Palestine, the relationship between Palestine and fair trade does not neatly follow the timeline outlined by Nicholls and Opal above. As Palestinians were being ethnically cleansed from Historic Palestine in 1948, the need to demonstrate land as capitalistically productive became increasingly urgent. Israeli confiscation of land deemed “neglected” became part of its official

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

conquest policies inherited from the Ottoman rule of Palestine. As such, the process of reviving Palestinian agriculture and resisting “unproductive” status became a method of anti-colonial praxis for Palestinians since the year of the Nakbah (or “Catastrophe”) in 1948 when Palestinians were expelled and systematically massacred due to the institutionalization and international recognition of Israeli statehood in Historic Palestine.¹⁶⁰ However, the establishment of the Jewish state that year changed the vast majority of the Palestinian people into refugees in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. In order to remove Palestinians from the borders of Israel, the United Nations coordinated Palestinian movement to other parts of the Middle East. This “flight” continued in waves between 1948 to the 1970s as violence increased. At the same time, economic instability resulting from the Israeli occupation encouraged the flight of Palestinian men to Arab Gulf states rich with a different oil commodity gaining much more political momentum and economic significance worldwide: petroleum. Palestinians were attributed the reputation for being highly educated pioneers whose labor could contribute to host economies.

According to Palestinian sociologist Salim Tamari, the migration of young Palestinian men to the Arab Gulf and North and South America led to widespread abandonment of Palestinian olive groves (1981:52). Abdullateef, a 76-year-old farmer residing in a village near Bethlehem recalls this time with shame and bitterness: “We left the land to get money for our families and feed them so they can live a life like everyone else. This is the cost of the occupation, among the million others. Let’s not count the ways the occupation steals our lands just so that until now, we weep for our trees

¹⁶⁰ Israel, conversely, refers to the year 1948 as its official year of Independence with its popular slogan “Israel: Born in 1948” appearing on t-shirts, bumper stickers, and other patriotic gear.

[Interview, December 2012].” Though remittances from the Gulf States allowed some Palestinians to remain on their lands, the Israeli appropriation of capitalistically unproductive lands became a self-fulfilling prophecy and many echo Abdullateef’s melancholia. The flight of mostly Palestinian men as a result of economic instability and systemic violence from Israeli settler-colonial occupation had a major impact on olive orchards at home which became increasingly unattended to. Most Palestinians saw their time away from their fields as temporary, limiting social integration and often residing with other Palestinians in the same circumstances. They mobilized resources made accessible to them in the Arab Gulf to sustain land and life at home. However, since the Nakbah of 1948, Palestinians abroad became effectively isolated from their lands and families, as even communication became impossible due to the continuous destruction of Palestinian infrastructures during especially during wartime. For Palestinians abroad, exile and refugee status became increasingly permanent.

With more and more men seeking opportunities abroad, Palestinian women were called upon to pick up the pieces in the absence of their fathers, brothers, and husbands. Gendered standards shifted in relation to olive production with women now responsible for land cultivation and harvest. The traditionally gender-masculine role of picking olives from the top of the trees and ploughing earth became feminized labor as women were left behind to pick up the pieces in the absence of men during wartime (1981:51). Importantly, Palestinian men who followed the lure of financial opportunity due to the growing significance of crude oil in the global economy often brought Palestinian olive oil with them as signification of their homeland, which became increasingly feminized as a woman who had been hardened due to colonial penetration. For Palestinians exiled

from their villages and towns, the distinctive taste of Palestinian olive oil became a site of longing and lamenting. Nuha, a Palestinian woman residing in Jordan recalls: “Everyone can tell you stories about harvesting. It’s not like this idea that picking fruit is farmers work. No. We are all farmers in Palestine. Ask any child and he will tell you ‘You see? That’s the giving tree, the olive tree!’ We all miss our olives and if they are standing, they have missed us too. With our tears we water them, but of course it is not the same as sitting in their shade and eating from them.” Indeed, the lament for the lost and abandoned olive reverberates in Palestinian exilic poetry.

In my interviews, I was struck at the consistent memories formed around the olive since 1948. For example, one sixty-eight-year-old Palestinian woman residing in the village of Beit Sahour was the tender age of four when the Israelis came to evacuate her village. She recalls, “The first thing we did was grab a *fannous* and go to the olive fields. We sat under the trees and just waited. We felt safe among the trees and people from everywhere assembled there. Everyone knows the olive tree nurtures” [Interview, November 2012].

It is perhaps no surprise, then, that the olive became the site of survival during the most violent moments. During the first Intifada of the 1980s, localized justice movements and agricultural sustainability programs formed at the olive. During this time, Israel imposed curfews, conducted mass arrests, and widespread unemployment caused extreme economic hardship, particularly for Palestinian farmers who relied on the harvest for subsistence but whose lands became increasingly inaccessible. In response, Palestinian organizations such as the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) began to support makeshift household economies and rural cooperatives to keep communities

afloat. PARC began a “home garden” program which distributed seedlings, seeds, and sheep to thousands of poor and marginalized rural families who were living under the Israeli-imposed siege and curfew. A more elucidating example is a collective food movement in the village of Beit Sahour near the West Bank city of Bethlehem in 1988 that came to be known as “victory gardens.” By the spring of 1988, many Palestinians were refusing to pay income taxes to the Israeli government. That summer, soldiers and tax collectors raided Beit Sahour, impounding cars and other property as compensation for outstanding taxes. Israel then imposed a two-week curfew on the town and blocked food and medical supplies from entry. The residents of Beit Sahour and surrounding towns created “victory gardens” to harvest their own food, which they shared communally based on need. Committees formed to clean streets, collect garbage, educate youth, resolve disputes, and distribute resources, and a medical clinic formed to receive 1,500 patients per day.¹⁶¹

The Palestinian olive became the target of fair trade programs in the early 1990s through small-scale support programs particularly from other Middle Eastern nations, primarily in the Arab Gulf. On the heels of the Oslo Accords brokered by then-president Bill Clinton, Palestinian cooperatives sought to construct official organizational bodies with an infrastructure of leaders and constituents in order to gain international recognition and financial assistance. For example, PARC established a separate fair trade department in order to better organize Palestinian farmers and cater to international campaigns desiring Palestinian handicrafts. These first fair trade initiatives brought some visibility to disadvantaged farmers and women in rural areas of Palestine. By the mid- to late-1990s,

¹⁶¹ For more information about popular resistance in Beit Sahour during this time period, see Hunter 1993, Rigby 1991, and Vogeles 1992.

Palestinian olive products were destined for North American, European, Australian, and Japanese markets through solidarity campaigns. In 1998, a Scottish delegation from Equal Exchange¹⁶² came to Palestine and through a partnership with PARC's Fair Trade department imported the first fair trade shipment of olive oil and almonds from Palestine. That same year, Sendai, Japan began importing olive oil from Palestinian farmers in Israel as an act of solidarity. The founder of Palestine Olive¹⁶³, Masayuki Ishikawa, called on Japanese consumers to buy Palestinian olive products which were advertised as organically grown and additive-free to help stabilize a Palestinian economy. Profits from olive oil sales in Japan were used to plant more olive trees and improve Palestinian farmers' oil presses. The first batch imported in May 1998 was quickly sold out and another 1,000 bottles arrived on Japan's shores by the end of that year and sold to Japanese consumers at a rate of 1,000 yen per 250-millileter bottle.

Palestinians' desire to place their olives in the global market became particularly urgent in the early 1990s as neighbors began to close their doors to Palestinian olive imports. At the time, the majority of Palestine's olive oil exports had been to Jordan, the Arab Gulf, and Israel. However, after the first Gulf War, many Arab countries halted their import of Palestinian olive products because the Palestinian Liberation Organization, headed by then-prime minister Yasser Arafat, controversially sided with Iraq. Kuwait, a major financier of the Palestinian Liberation Organization as well as an

¹⁶²According to its website, Equal Exchange was founded in 1986 to challenge the existing trade model, which favors large plantations, agri-business, and multi-national corporations; support small farmers; and connect consumers and producers through information, education, and the exchange of products in the marketplace. With our founding, we joined a growing movement of small farmers, alternative traders (ATOs), religious organizations, and non-profits throughout the world with like-minded principles and objectives. For more information, please visit their website, <http://www.equalexchange.coop/fair-trade>.

¹⁶³http://sindyanna.com/solidarity_with_japan/

important financial resource through expatriate remittances, halted all aid to Palestine. By September 1991, Kuwait's Palestinian community of 400,000 had dwindled to some 20,000 (For a more detailed history see “Kuwait Expels Thousands of Palestinians” Steven J. Rosen in the *Middle East Quarterly* Fall 2012, pp. 75-83). That same year, King Hussein of Jordan, one of the major importers of Palestinian olive oil, blocked Palestinian oil from entry into Jordan in order to encourage the growth of Jordan's own olive oil industry. Israelis continued to exploit Palestinian vulnerability, importing Palestinian olives at below-market rates and marketing Palestinian products as a “Product of Israel” (For a more detailed history of the uneasy circulation of Palestinian olive oil due to Israeli restrictions on movements and control over ports of entry/exit see “Time in a Bottle” in the *Middle East Report*, Fall 2008, pp.18-23). As such, Palestinian farmers worked with international development programs in an effort to place their olives within a global market, particularly to Europe and North America.

The early 2000s brought an unprecedented level of hardship for Palestinian olive farmers. The eruption of the second Intifada halted local development plans and programs, causing the most active organizations to shift to relief work. Palestinian interest in the olive oil industry revived as the wage labor opportunities in Israel declined due to increasing restrictions on movement. Israeli state control and settler-colonial expansion saw an upsurge through the swarming of military bases, settlements and checkpoints in the West Bank; the building of the “separation barrier” that enclosed illegal settlements as well as Palestinian agricultural land, and the implementation of surveillance regimes through exhausting travel permits and enclosures that continue to hinder the movement of Palestinians and the few commodities they have available for

global circulation. During this time, virtual lockdowns of olive producing regions like Nablus and Jenin resulted in a revitalization in the rural development of Palestine. As Palestinians experienced increasing entrapment and “house arrest”, they returned to their fields as a way of alleviating the boredom produced by checkpoints, curfews and closures (Meneley 19). With the intifada’s death toll rising, Palestinians saw some opportunity through nongovernmental organizations assistance programs which provided local organizations foreign funds, often from private donor monies. The first major importers of Palestinian olive oil emerged as initiatives to help Palestinian farmers whose economic subsistence depended on selling olive products. For example, in 2003, Holy Land Olive Oil was founded as a follow-up to an all-volunteer initiative for Palestinian farmers whose economic subsistence has been devastated by Israel’s policies of restricting movement as well as its prohibition on the sale of Palestinian olive oil at the onset of the second intifada. Cased within a discourse of sustainability and support for farmers, Holy Land Olive Oil was determined to provide some economic opportunities during a time of great violence and uncertainty: “Our mission is to create and sustain a permanent market for Palestinian farmers – in spite of political, logistical, and market economics/pricing hurdles.”¹⁶⁴ These new initiatives brought a taste of Palestine to a limited number of pantries through the notion that the purchase of Palestine’s olives was a political statement and an act of solidarity. Within this context, fair trade emerged at its nascent stages as a method of bringing Palestine to a broader consumer base and establishing a “permanent market” for Palestinian products. Palestinian marketers appealed to the conscience of liberal Western consumers by exploiting narratives of violence and

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.holylandoliveoil.com/>

victimhood, which allowed their oils to stand out from Italian and Spanish oils. Customers were buying a moral product with the added social premium of solidarity.

Today, olives are still the most cultivated fruit in the West Bank, with more than 100,000 farmers working in the industry, Palestinian livelihood and subsistence is highly contingent upon the thriving of the fruit and its extractions (olive oil, soap and other hygiene products, medicinal ointments, etc.), which have become increasingly popular through transnational commodity circuits introduced by the fair trade industry. Since 2009, Palestine has become celebrated as a consumable entity through the authentic richness of its olives and the nuances of its oils. Palestine is the most active country in fair trade in the Arab and Muslim world, as demonstrated through its prominent role in the First Arab Fair Trade Forum held by the Palestinian Fair Trade Network in Amman, Jordan in December 2009. The first fair trade olive oil came from Zaytoun, a UK-based collaboration between Heather Masoud, Cathi Pawson, Atif Choudhury, and Saleh Achhala following their work with Palestinian farmers who had lost their olive oil export markets since the Second Intifada. According to Cathi Pawson, “fair trade olives and oil were a ‘first’ in many ways. They were the world’s first fair trade olives and oil, Palestine’s first fair trade product, and the first fair trade product from a conflict zone” she tells the *Electronic Intifada*¹⁶⁵. These first steps were overseen by the formation of the Palestinian Fair Trade Association (PFTA). The PFTA is a Palestinian national union of fair trade producing cooperatives, processors, and exporters founded in 2004 by Palestinian-American entrepreneur Nasser Abufarha. PFTA established the first internationally recognized standard for fair trade olive oil in coordination with the Fair-

¹⁶⁵ <http://electronicintifada.net/content/fair-trade-helps-palestinian-farmers-stay-their-land/12262>

Trade Labeling Organization (FLO) in 2004, and introduced fair trade and organic farming concepts to thousands of Palestinian farmers in the West Bank. According to its website, the main goal of the PFTA is to assist marginalized, underrepresented artisans, laborers and cooperative members in a way that emphasizes autonomy in transnational markets, decreases dependence on tourist economies, provides educational and technical assistance, and nurtures nascent economic projects through microloans. Such measures have made literally made Palestinian lands consumable globally. Furthermore, because Israelis control export, and have bought Palestinian olive oil at below market prices, often mixing high-grade Palestinian oil with lower grade local varieties, and marketing the product as Israeli, making the fair trade industry more desirable than ever.

That the Palestinian olive has historically been in a state of arrested development underscores the crop as an important site for material analysis, one that necessitates a colonial studies lens. However, such an analysis of Palestinian olives, too, remains in a state of arrested development. In “Uprooting Identities: The Regulation of Olive Trees in the Occupied West Bank,” Irus Braverman argues that Palestinian olive trees and groves are targeted by the state of Israel and Jewish settlers in an effort to disrupt Palestinian life both materially and figuratively. Her paper cites testimonies from Palestinian farmers, and reproduces tragic Palestinian poetry by renowned exile poets Tawfiq Zayyad and Mahmoud Darwish, to illustrate the olive tree as a living memory of the destroyed Palestinian village and its people, and as a silent witness of Palestinian suffering (Braverman 14). At times, her analysis is meditative and elegant: “The olive is depicted as growing where drops of Palestinian blood have been spilled, standing for the Palestinian by bearing witness for what has been erased and is no longer there [...] In this

very literal sense, the olive, still firmly rooted in the land from which its planter was uprooted, re-presents the Palestinian” (Braverman 13). However, Braverman’s transition from the poetics of Palestinian olives’ historical erasure to the official narratives appropriated by the Israeli state suggests that these two “sides” (Palestinian and Israeli) that can be compared. Furthermore, her analysis also renders the settler-colonialism of Palestine as an event of the past, rather than seeing Israeli settler-colonial occupation as an ongoing process of annihilating Palestinian land and life. Moreover, Braverman presents the idea that the Israel state has promised Palestinians whose olive trees have been uprooted that it will replant trees to make up for their losses; “apparently not all the olive trees have been transplanted” (Braverman 19), suggesting that the problem rests on a replacement of lost private property rather than the ongoing process of settler-colonialism.

Similarly, Michael Fischer argues that “olive narratives” emerge as romanticized “icons of ecology,” dismissing the material impact of land loss and olive decimation on Palestinian life. Fischer’s limited reading of the olive as a signifier of a nostalgic past evacuates the political and material value of the olive as well as the settler-colonial conditions that corroborate its demise. Trent University anthropologist Anne Meneley cogently challenges Fischer’s assumption that culture and materiality exist in discrete realities. “Olive trees and olive oil are not only images; they are an integral part of the efforts to keep land in Palestinian hands” (2008:19). While Fischer notes that much contemporary Palestinian olive oil cannot be sold, in contrast to the vibrant long-distance trade in olive oil and olive oil soap centered in nineteenth-century Nablus, he does not mention the obvious reasons why not: the infrastructure of containment imposed by the

Israeli occupation, which distorts time as much as space. If olive trees are “icons of ecology,” icons of rootedness, then olive oil is an icon of arrested circulation, as the movement of bottles of oil, bottled Palestinian labor-time, is itself bottled up within the occupation time¹⁶⁶ of the Israeli state” (Meneley 2008: 23). Meneley’s conjoining of the symbolic with the material underscore the ways in which Palestinian land and Palestinian culture are but branches of the same tree.

In a paper presented as part of the 2009 conference for the International Development Studies at Trent University, Meneley offers a nuanced analysis of the Palestinian olive as a uniquely racialized commodity through a comparative study of olive oil from Tuscany and Palestine. This paper, titled, “A Tale of Two Itineraries: The Production, Consumption and Circulation of Tuscan and Palestinian Olive Oil” argues that Tuscan olive oil embodies desires stemming from familiarity, desirability and safety, rather than Orientalist tropes of violence, chaos and danger: “Tuscan peasant cuisines, house renovation projects and picturesque rurality all seem to have become key fantasy spaces of modern urban alienation” (Meneley 2009: 2). As such, the movement of oil to and from Tuscany “is facilitated by a ‘reverse Orientalism’ whereby Tuscany is imagined as a beautiful, be-shuttered and terracotta-tiled, sexy-siesta kind of place” – a representation that appears in gourmet wine and foodie magazines and films such as *Under the Tuscan Sun*, linking typical “house porn” with “food porn” (3). These memoirs

¹⁶⁶ Here, Meneley is referring to Israel’s tyrannical role as an agent of Palestinian olive decay through its authority over time, which directly impacts the circulation of Palestinian olives as extra virgin grade. The production of extra-virgin olive oil that consumers demand is very sensitive to time, and time is seemingly one of the elements of existence that the Israeli infrastructure of colonial dominance serves to “steal” (see Julie Peteet, 2008). According to Meneley, “the consumer’s desire to consume high quality extra-virgin olive oil while expressing solidarity for the oppressed farmer makes it easier for Israel to exert the “spoiler” role – taking value from the commodity – by delaying its circulation” (21). Olive oil forced to endure time at Israeli ports rapidly declines in quality, such that the oil polluted by exposure to direct sunlight could no longer be marketed for its “virginity” now tainted by time.

of Tuscany register a sensual encounter with its olive oils in which consumers are invited to dip their breads and their fingers in the oil, moaning in culinary delight (ibid). In contrast, Meneley argues that Palestinian olive products are forced to refigure the racialized and colonial tropes into their marketing campaigns in order to appeal to consumers' sympathies. As such, emerging fair trade initiatives brought a taste of Palestine to pantries through the notion that the purchase of Palestine's olives was a political statement and an act of solidarity. Palestinian marketers appealed to the conscience of liberal Western consumers by exploiting narratives of violence and victimhood, which allowed their oils to stand out from Italian and Spanish oils.

According to Meneley:

The circulation of Palestinian olive oil depends tracing the oil back to the conditions of production: the metaphoric congealing of emotion in Palestinian olive oil. The fear and uncertainty, the suffering and hope, of the Palestinian farmer are stressed in hopes of evoking another embodied emotional state – empathy -- in the consumer. [T]here is an attempt to reshape and reorient the emotions of activists/consumers to engender feelings of anger and empathy for the harsh conditions that the Palestinians endure. Palestinian olive oil producers emphasize that the high price of their oil is not only its higher expense because of the difficulties of transport, but also because of the difficulties, emotionally and physically, of production. These experiences are highlighted to consumers, who show their solidarity and sympathy by purchasing Palestinian olive oil (Meneley 2009:17).

However, as the scene at *Ris* illustrates, olives from Palestine, too, are celebrated as delicious and savory ingredients for a variety of culinary creations. In fact, in the last five years, Palestine has become a new contender in foodie foodgasms, one that does not necessarily require consumer knowledge of the miserable lives of producers'. At the *Ris* gathering for example, the superfluous imagery of Palestinian women grasping their trees

did not accompany the bill of fare, but the following image did appear in numerous publications, promotional videos and other advertisements for Canaan, did:



Figure 21: Canaan Fair Trade “Press Packet”, author's collection.

As such, where once marketers employed tropes of Palestinian victimhood to appeal to charity-touting, conscientious consumers, and solidarity activists who wanted to assist and develop Palestine through their consumption habits and purchase power, a lucrative industry appealing to gastronomically sophisticated, cosmopolitan consumers and world-renowned chefs came in its place. As a result, the international fair trade market for Palestinian products has expanded, resulting in an ever-expanding fair trade market for Palestinian products in Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and the Arab Gulf. At the very same time Palestine is experiencing the exponential rate of Jewish settlement in the West Bank, the building of highways exclusively for settler use, and of course, the apartheid wall funded by U.S. taxpayer monies, Palestinian olives are being cultivated for celebrations and festivals in the U.S.’s capital. Over the years, European agronomists have traveled to Palestinian to intervene in Palestinian olive oil marketability in accordance with the latest standards for high-quality extra virgin oil. In what follows, I

theorize the emergent tropes that enable the consumption of Palestine as the settler-colonial occupation of Palestinian lands is increasing at an exponential rate.

‘We Heart Palestine’, ‘From Tree to Table’ and Other Scrumptious Myths

On an unpaved road called Kufor Qud in the village of Burqin five kilometers away from the West Bank city of Jenin, the Canaan fair trade facility sits impressively surrounded by olive groves. The multilevel structure features a cutting-edge olive press, state-of-the-art processing and bottling equipment, a beautiful visitor’s center, and garden with robust olive trees planted at its center. Herein sits the Canaan Fair Trade Company’s headquarters, a Palestinian commercial enterprise that provides premium agricultural goods produced by networks of smallholder groups in Palestine. Built in 2008, the facility is 3000 square meters above ground and 600 square miles below ground where tanks are stored to stay cool and avoid direct sunlight; it is here that the Palestinian Fair Trade Association presses and bottles olive oil for the Canaan Fair Trade Company, owned by Palestinian-American entrepreneur, Naser Abu-Farha, who also directs the Palestinian Fair Trade Association. Burqin is considered a large village in the West Bank, with a population of 6000 people and a municipality that governs a little over 19,000 dunums of land. With forty-five of its members part of the Palestinian Fair Trade Association, Burqin alone produces over 80 tons of olive oil per year. The olive press was designed by Alfa Laval “the foremost authority in olive processing technology”¹⁶⁷ which efficiently extracts oil, while preserving the nuances of the fruit’s flavor. Olive oil is extracted without the threat of oxidation through bottling machines designed by the

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.canaanusa.com/burqin.php>

well-renowned firm, CLIFOM from Asti, Italy. The machine fills double-chamber glass bottles using a nitrogen blower to protect against oxidation, and seals the bottles with an aluminum screw-cap lid. The oil is then stored in stainless steel tanks which come from Albrigi in Verona, Italy, the premier storage company of Italian wine and olive oil. The \$2.5 million dollars required for the facility represents the largest investment in fair trade in the region.

Naser Abu-Farha defines fair trade as “a way to address disparities between the conditions of small producers in developing countries who are uncapitalized, unsubsidized to give them assistance in market entry in comparison to the competition of subsidized farmers in industrialized nations, capitalized farmer” (Interview, November 2012). I interviewed Abu-Farha over the course of two days during Canaan’s fair trade festival in fall 2012, as the harvest season came to a close. We were continuously interrupted by visitors from all over the world wanting to discuss collaborations with Abu-Farha, who greeted his guests with graciousness and professionalism. With his signature hat shielding a balding head, Abu-Farha stands tall with a seemingly permanent, goofy grin across his burgundy lips, fluidly transitioning from perfect Palestinian Arabic to perfect American English: “I have a PhD in Anthropology and International Development from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. I’m a published scholar with a book on suicide bombings and a number of publications, some on landscape and issues to the land in Palestine, some on the subject of violence, some on planning and development” (Interview, November 2012). His office stretches across the second floor of the Canaan company’s fair trade factory, sophisticated but simply decorated. In the open space, our voices ricochet from the walls. Other than our

reverberations, the room is quiet compared to the buzz of the festivities happening in the facility's garden below us. Every now and then, his assistant, Laila, enters to take coffee or tea orders, or to remind Abu-Farha of his scheduled phone conferences and commitments.

Ten years ago, Abu-Farha wrapped up his dissertation on suicide bombers and headed back to Jenin where he discovered the Palestinian olive industry in a disastrous state. He found low yields due to malnourished soil, little to no access to water, restrictions in tending to land, and Palestinian farmers barely breaking even. Many were moving from the villages to Palestinian cities, where they encountered a 40 percent unemployment rate. Tapping into savings from running a Middle Eastern restaurant in Madison, Wisconsin, Abufarha invested \$100,000 to start Canaan. The son of a watermelon farmer, he offered growers nearly twice the going rate during the olive harvest that year and soon started shipping oil to the U.S. and Europe. Determined to bring fair trade to Palestine, he encountered a major stumbling block - there was no international fair trade standard for olive oil. In 2004, Abufarha developed the standard himself based upon recognized international fair trade principles. In 2006, PFTA achieved independent third party fair trade certification by IMO of Switzerland, and in 2009, with Fairtrade Labeling Organization (FLO), making PFTA the first producer of fair trade certified olive oil worldwide.



Figure 22: "I ♥ Palestine" 4-pack case of Cnaan Fair Trade olive oil. Photo by author.

Abu-Farha describes the significance of fair trade in the context of the West Bank where the Israeli occupation still maintains a stronghold over Palestinian participation in consumer markets. While Palestinian farmers unhesitatingly saw Israel as the central structure of power that prohibited Palestinian population in the global market, Abu-Farha suggests that it is Palestinian poverty, not the settler-colonial occupation that fair trade seeks to alleviate:

Here in Palestine, the concept of fair trade takes on an additional dimension. It is not necessarily unique in itself, but it does take a different dimension. Fair trade is normally fighting poverty and about trying to empower small, excluded, marginalized communities. That's true also in Palestine, but it has an added dimension which is that this poverty is not caused by lack of development, but rather by conditions of conflict and the political marginalization of these communities who are suffering from loss of income, loss of access to land resources, water resources, loss of access to orchards. So fair trade becomes a lever to help them from a position of vulnerability to a position of economic security. And that is really the goal of our company (Interview, November 2012).

That the settler-colonial occupation is an “added dimension” certainly reverberates in the superfluous promotional literatures for Canaan products. Indeed, Canaan’s motto is “Insisting on Life”, suggesting that fair trade is a sort of ammunition against pending death. However, the decimation of lands rarely comes up explicitly in my conversations with Abu-Farha nor does it appear in the vast publications for Canaan’s products. Instead, the settler-colonial context is only hinted at. Warm-toned images, smiling sun-burnt faces, soiled hands, and sparkling products “From the Land of Milk and Honey”, effectively evacuate the context of violence from which these products emerge. Like the nitrogen-infused bottling techniques that allow the oil to emerge in its most full-bodied form, settler-colonialism becomes an added “dimension” or ingredient to the full-bodied bottle of Palestinian land, fruits and labor. The celebration of Palestinian products in the site of fair trade, then, becomes part of the performance of neoliberal multicultural theatre. In describing the successes of the Canaan Fair Trade company, Abu-Farha is unhesitatingly optimistic: “We have great success. The impact has been significant economically; it increased value return from the farm whether by increasing output from the farm or increasing the value of the crop that they produce, and finding sustainable long-term markets for the product which encourages the farmer to invest more in the land and in their industry.”

For Abu-Farha, the success story of the fair trade company rests on the ways in which, by consuming Palestinian products, Palestine is no longer invisible to the world:

[Fair trade] has also, at the cultural level, had an impact in that it connected farmers with communities in the Western world where there has always been a sense of abandonment where Palestinians feel like all these things are happening to us and the world has done us unjustly. There is an international dimension to the support of Israel and a protection of the

injustices Israel has subjugated our farmers to, so to find that solidarity and connection coming from abroad, it's meaningful to the farmer in that it creates hope and hope is important for the farmers to carry on. Not to mention, people *love* what we are doing here and what we are producing.¹⁶⁸

As Abu-Farha hints here, the visibility of Palestine is enabled by a series of narratives formulated within fair trade, that allow Palestinian products and stories to sit comfortable in a Western comfortable. That people “love what we are doing here and what we are producing” suggests that Canaan is successful because of its ability to transform Palestine into something delectable. In this way, through fair trade, Palestine is transformed from its commonplace site of violence and chaos to a commodity that is saturated with affective desires and high grade content. Palestine is suspended from violence, charity, and darkness, but is mainstreamed into a commodity that a worldly consumer can salivate over, chewing and digesting without the added ingredient of pain and violence.

As such, the commodity fetish that allows Palestine to become visible and desired by a Western consumer is circulated with a cultural subtext: Palestine can be loved, too. Here, “love” is defined as the opposite of isolation through the site of consumption. Now, Palestine is loved as a consumable product in the global market of condiments where before Palestine was unlovable because its material consumability was impossible. Now, as a contender in the global market through the stage of fair trade, Palestine, too, can be delicious, not scary. It, too, can be flavorful, full-bodied, and familiar. Like the Tuscan oils that Meneley theorizes as the preferred liquid consumers seek to dip their fingers in, Palestine, too, can offer pleasure. In fact, as the vast publications indicate, Palestinian oils are even made through the same machines of extraction and bottling as their

¹⁶⁸ Interview, 2012; emphasis added.

Mediterranean counterparts. As such, Palestine is no longer a lonely colonial subject forced to contend with its abject position; instead, it can be loved from its marginal position in the dark corners of the earth.



Figure 23: "From Our Fields to Your Table" Cnaan Fair Trade promotional literature, author's collection.

Consider, for example, the brochure pictured above (Figure 22). Here, Palestine is produced through a multiplicity of 'lovable' imagery. First, the warm and earth tones create a nostalgic appetite for a simpler, prosaic life. To the left, the slogan "From Our Fields To Your Table" invites consumers to purchase a product straight from the groves of the ancient Holy Land. Indeed, "Palestine is called 'the land of milk and honey' for a reason," the advertisement promises. In addition to the promise of an olive product untainted by the spoils of time, the brochure constructs Palestinian as a gastronomically versatile, featuring a number of oils, tapenades, tahini, organic honey, sun dried tomatoes, couscous, almonds, zaatar, capers, fennel, cactus jellies, fig preserves, olive oil soaps,

and, of course, olives. Each “treasure of the earth” contains a description of its sensory qualities. Olive oils are sold as traditional “estate” varieties, but also as chili- and garlic-infused oils. At the top, there is an image of three workers who look as though they were caught off guard when the photograph was snapped. One stands tall and lean in fitted jeans staring directly into the camera’s frame, while the young man next to him smiles as he leans in to prepare some produce for processing in the “state of the art” facility on location. At the bottom of the brochure, the various logos indicate third-party certifications, making Canaan’s products not only stand out for their impeccably efficient processing, versatile products, and untainted earthliness, but also as products that are authenticated. These authenticators are Fair Trade South Africa, Switzerland’s Fair for Life fair trade and organic certification, Germany’s Naturland Association for Organic Agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture’s organic compliance, the European Union’s Regulation’s organic compliance, and Japan’s Agricultural Standard of Organic Agricultural Products, to name a few. The statement that Canaan’s commodities are certified by organizations in the Global North constructs Palestine’s palatability as significant, effectively constructing Palestine as worthy of inclusion in the global cafeteria of consumable commodities. Like the presence of foreign volunteers that temporarily protect olive farmers during altercations with the IDF during the olive harvest, these certifications validate Palestinian commodities as valuable, delicious, and even, lovable. Through these technologies of legibility, foreign consumers have been invited to taste Palestine “from tree to table,” and the crop’s cultivation has thus shifted from familial to global.

The flipside of the brochure is the image on the right. This page is much more telling in the ways in which Canaan fair trade attempts to validate Palestinian consummability. The first statement (“Since 2005, Canaan has consistently supplied major international consumers including Whole Foods, Dr. Bronner’s Magic Soaps, and Sainsbury”) furthers the assertion that Palestine is desired on a massive scale. Where once these desires were limited to charities and solidarity activists, they have now evolved into unprecedented market demand since 2005, indicating a considerable shift in the globalization of the Palestinian commodity. The global love of the Palestinian commodity is reinforced by the statement “From oils to za’atar (thyme), our traditional delicacies are highly prized by food lovers around the world.” Again, the theme of “love” plugs Palestine to palates and stomachs all over the world. There is no indication of the dangers experienced by the producer; there is no discussion of armed IDF soldiers monitoring Palestinians from the surrounding mountains; there is no mention of the vanishing landscapes and grieving farmers mourning the decapitation of their olive “children”; there is no reference to an image of the apartheid wall penetrating fragmenting the West Bank into incoherent and suffocating ruptures; there is no still of caked blood on an elderly woman’s dress from violence in the fields. Indeed, the violent settler-colonial occupation is effectively evacuated from these images. In order for Palestine to be loved, it must appear happy, coherent, and unbroken, free of anger, violence, and anguish.

The interview with Abu-Farha is pregnant with academic terminology presumably gained from his training in International Development as a Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. During our interview, he often pauses to show me a map of

relevant structures, draw bubble charts, or point to laminated diagrams depicting “transparency,” “development” and “empowerment” that are strewn across his desk. At one point he calls his assistant to photocopy a diagram showing the electoral processes of the Palestinian Fair Trade Association. Among the “press packets” his company provides is a booklet featuring the biographies of representatives from the fifty village-based cooperatives of farmers and women producing for Canaan. The booklet was part of a three-year project to interview and photograph members of each group as part of a major public relations campaign. Each profile follows a similar format: there is an image of the producer or women’s cooperative representative, their name, their trade and location in the West Bank, and a slogan that encapsulates their character. The profiles highlight the farmers’ relationship to the land, the joy they experience in their labor practices, and the ways that they have transmitted these native qualities to enhance the Canaan brand. The profile of Abu Adnan Abed El Salam (pictured), an olive oil producer from the West Bank village of Faqu’a:



Figure 24: Abu Adnan Abed El Salam, Pictured in Canaan Fair Trade Promotional Booklet, author's collection.

Abu Adnan’s slogan is “A Natural Environmentalist” and his story reads:

Abu Adnan does not talk about a global movement to save the earth. He doesn't know much about Greenpeace or the Kyoto Protocol; but he does know everything about keeping his soil healthy and fertile, and the terraces he builds to protect his soil make his mountainous piece of land a visual paradise. A farmer since childhood in his home village of Faqua in the Jenin district, Abu Adnan Abed El Salam, who is now 78 years old, has built over 60 terraces in his lifetime, one stone at a time. When people come to talk to him about the "new" trend of organic agriculture he smiles. "My grandfather, my father, and I have been planting trees all our lives without using any chemicals." He declares proudly, "I have a thousand olive trees, and I remove all the weeds from under each one of them with these bare hands. I never get tired." He is aware that he could buy a bottle of pesticide for 70 shekels and get the job done in half a day, but such an idea would be considered criminal in his book.

Here, Abu Adnan is presented as a joyful laborer, one who is not educated in worldly matters, but embodies a form of indigenous knowledge that is gained from the cultivation, harvest, and milling of the earth. In the image above, Abu Adnan's hands are dirty. His fingernails are encircled with crust from the earth. His fingers are bent like the aged trunks of an olive branch, a testament to long hours of labor. However, in the image, he appears content, humored even. His dirty hands are raised as though to signal something; perhaps they are raised in bashful protest against his photograph being taken, or maybe they are a playful chastisement. (In Palestinian culture, the raising of the last three fingers is a reprimand that parents use towards their children, for example, to suggest disciplinary action. Here, Abu Adnan could be using the same gesture as a flirtation or tease). His lips are frozen between a smile and laughter, as though he teasing or joking with his photographer.

The image of Abu-Adnan's soiled hands, and jovial grin are accompanied by a narrative of humility, serenity and simplicity. And, why shouldn't he be? His soil is "healthy and fertile" and he has been building terraces in Palestine since he was eighteen

years old! In addition, to his thousand pesticide-free olive trees, Abu Adnan gets to revel in the delights of the earth with his beloved wife by his side. The profile reads:

He and his wife Siham consider their days working together in the field to be the most romantic experience. They don't go out to the movies or to fancy dinners, instead they pick wild [thyme], sage and grape leaves together. They take water breaks next to their well where Abu Adnan drops a bucket and brings out fresh clear rainwater for his wife to enjoy. Their snack is some grapes, a piece of bread, and za'atar.

From the description above, Abu Adnan and Siham are portrayed as perpetual honeymooners. Together they bask in their groves and gardens, among a bounty of herbs and greens that sprout from the earth. They do not attend indulgent dinners at upscale restaurants like *Ris* where U.S. foodies indulge in meats and cakes made with the fruits of Palestine; instead, Abu Adnan and Siham picnic with the heavenly fruits of their labor. They do not toast to champagne; instead, they drink crystal clear rainwater collected in a bucket from a well in their grove. They do not feast gluttonously; instead, they bring together bits of the heartiest ingredients of homegrown vegetation and a bit of bread. Reveling in the delights of the land beneath their feet and getting high on rainfall, this segment of Abu Adnan's profile reveals that his land is both a place of love as well as a place of labor. His devotion and industriousness united converge at his fields. In these ways, Abu Adnan is constructed as the perfect candidate to service the palate of a Western consumer.

Abu-Adnan is also described to possess a form of knowledge embedded in the skin of indigenous folk. His profile continues:

Abu Adnan's relationship with nature is not limited to taking care of his trees. He and his wife don't carry cell phones and they don't need watches to tell them when the day begins and when it ends. Their clock is the sun and when it comes up it is time for work and when it starts to fade away

they load the weeds on their donkey's back and stroll down to their village enjoying an evening walk to their home where they cook a hearty dinner and prepare for the next day's work. They both attribute their health and strength to their lifestyle and what they describe as their "content hearts" because they believe that there is nothing more sacred than the humble meal and the simple life of the earth.

Abu Adnan's body is called to work by the sun's rays. From dawn until dusk he labors with humility and contentment with his wife. Such a lifestyle, this passage suggests, not only brings Abu Adnan and Siham great joy, but it is also good for their health. In other words, Abu Adnan's long arduous labor fits his body's kinesthetic needs. As such, the Palestinian fair trade industry is inherently fit for the needs of a global market, as farmers' bodies are depicted as yearning for the accumulation of capital, arduous labor, and most of all, enjoyment by the Western consumer. It is not settler-colonialism, the decimation of the olives, or an increasingly vanishing landscape that must be addressed, these narratives suggest; instead, it is the desire for Palestine to be eaten. It is the wetted tongue of indulgent consumers that liberates. The only grief Abu Adnan has experienced, it is revealed, is when his children abandoned their land for more lucrative economic opportunities in Israel. Indeed, Palestinian "day laborers" camp out at the invasive checkpoints at four o'clock in the morning, or find ways to dig beneath the apartheid wall, in order to enter Israel by daybreak, often working as undocumented laborers and getting paid at exploitative wages. Abu Adnan's profile explains:

The father of six children, Abu Adnan is proud to say that his eldest son, Adnan, who used to work as a day laborer inside Israel has returned to the land, and [Abu Adnan's] daughter and her family have joined the Canaan coop and are planting almonds and olives. Before Canaan started buying Abu Adnan's olive crop, Abu Adnan says that he came to a point where despite a lifetime of serving the trees he almost stopped loving them because no matter how much he took care of them he knew that at the end of the season he would have nowhere to sell his crops. Today, he says, "I

reconnected to my love for the trees and I even planted new ones because I am encouraged and I know my hard work will be appreciated by people all over the world.

In this segment of Abu Adnan's profile, he references Israel as a site of potential loss encapsulated by his son's economic ventures away from the family's plot of land. This segment is loaded with possible implications, and while settler-colonialism is only hinted at, it haunts this notion of loss significantly. On the one hand, this passage suggests that there is an imminent "taking" of Palestine through the figure of Abu Adnan's son, who is lured away from his land to become a day laborer. However, this ghostly trace is easily overlooked in favor of a commonplace tale of an adventurous youth looking to expand his horizons beyond what his family has given him. Israel's presence as a more dominant economic power is never extrapolated, however. Read another way, the segment suggests that Abu Adnan's son was destined to return to the land because the land is part of him. Like Abu Adnan's crooked fingers that resemble branches of an ancient olive tree, his son's rightful place is digging into the earth.

At the same time that the dirty, brown, happy and servicing laborer is produced in these myths, there is a settler-colonial story that disrupts the tidiness of these tropes. There is no doubt that Palestine is presented as a site of feeding the West. However, within these racialized and romantic logics, the centrality of land is registered, suggesting that land is not simply a matter of capital, but it is a sustaining feature in Palestinian life and joy. For Adnan to abandon his land would be the death of him, suggesting that to abandon Palestinian land is the death of Palestine. However, in the passage above, this transient hint at pending doom due to settler-colonialism returns to a positivistic tale of love and redemption vis-à-vis fair trade. Abu Adnan "almost stopped loving" his olive

trees, which he had served all his life, because nobody would consume them. Canaan fair trade came to salvage his crop, his life, his labor, and his land, by allowing his olives to circulate to salivating tongues all over the world. Beyond the obvious racial implications about indigenous “others,” there is a more complex story hidden, one that reveals fair trade market access as both promising and obscuring.

What’s more, these processes of consuming the fruits of native labor are gendered tropes that employ notions of “service” and “nurture” within a transnational network of commodity fetish exchange. The performance of gratitude for and joy of feeding the Western palate is evident in Abu Adnan’s profile, as labor and love are enjoined through his work, his kinesthetic need, and his embodied desires. In this way, Abu Adnan’s body becomes suspended at the intersection of imperialism, colonialism and feminization, a laborer who exists for the able-bodied, exotic-seeking, gastronomically-sophisticated Western eater. Abu Adnan and the countless other profiles that saturate fair trade brochures and pamphlets are perceived to be endowed with embodied ability to achieve deliciousness as part of their essential being; they exist to feed and nurture the West. Within a broader neoliberal context of advanced capitalism, Palestine is produced a site of the social reproduction of Western fetishisms.

However, the inclination to dismiss fair trade as yet another Orientalist modality within the political economy of advanced capital accumulation is also an incomplete and hasty conclusion. Indeed, in the context of settler colonialism, market entry and olive commodity legibility for Palestinian producers is an enticing prospect, particularly for the preservation of Palestinian life and culture. In an interview with Abu Sameh, a forty-year-old farmer in Burqin, father of four, and member of the Palestinian Fair Trade

Association, he describes his feelings of both excitement and hesitation about getting on board with Abu-Farha's vision:

Abu Sameh: We began when some people came to us here [names people] in Burqin wanting to create a fair trade association for Palestinian olive oil that had been exposed to this idea that they create this oil cooperative – the Palestinian Fair Trade Association. To me, this idea was excellent, this particular man said he has the determination to make a market [for Palestinian olive oil] in America and Europe. And there are people who will receive this product. And we will raise the price of the value of olive oil so there was an economic incentive... The conjecture interested me. At first, I did not think this would ever work.

LS: Before Canaan, were people able to send their olives to Europe and America?

Abu Sameh: No, they were not able to. Our only foreign buyers were Jordanians and the Arab Gulf countries of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. (Interview, November 2012).

While farmers like Abu Sameh are clearly grateful for the ability to provide their families economically with a consistently flourishing market enabled by Canaan Fair Trade, daily news reports of Palestinian olive trees being chain-sawed and burned down by settlers and IDF soldiers point to the precarious life that encircles the beloved olive tree. Indeed, for farmers in the West Bank, there is danger everywhere, a reality that is obscured in the optimistic neoliberal narrative in which liberation is perceived as market access. In late November 2012, I drove with Abu Sameh from the village of Burqin to the open fruit market in Nablus, the *hissbeh*. He tells me, "It is more centrally located and if you take into account the wait time at checkpoints and the difficult road, going to Nablus rather than further north cuts merchants' time in half. If I want, I can go to more local markets here by Burqin and Jenin, but why should I when I know that at the *hissbeh*, there are more buyers from the south [of the West Bank] like Al-Khalil [Hebron] and

Bethlehem and the shop owners from Ramallah too” [Interview, November 2012]. In his truck, Abu Sameh has crates of cucumbers, cauliflower, eggplants, grapefruits, pomelo, oranges, and other produce that he and his workers collected from his land that day: “Sometimes I hire workers to help me because there are people who do not have work. We set up tents for them and they stay here. Even if it is cold, because, you know, life is hard.” I sit in front with him as he drives, his eldest daughter, eight-year-old Masa nestled between us. His wife, Rana, rocks their infant son against her chest in the backseat. Rana’s cousin Sundus sits beside her along with Rana and Sameh’s two other children: four-year-old Buraqa (Arabic word meaning “purity”) and three-year-old Sameh. The trip is very frightening but “aadi” (or normal) for them; we take the unpaved “Palestinian only” road that snakes through unlit areas and rough terrain.

As he drives, Abu Sameh describes a life fraught with imminent death since his youth:

I tried working in Israel, you know, without papers. They paid us cheap but we made money. But some days we camped out at the checkpoints. We worked at restaurants, mopped floors, mostly service sector jobs. They liked that we worked hard for cheap I guess. But a lot of people got fired because they didn't make it to work after Israel would decide to close the checkpoints. No two days are the same here. And when I was maybe seventeen or eighteen, [Israel] arrested me. They claimed I was active in the resistance but I was not. It was torture. You know they do things to make one insane. [I ask him, like what?]. Like they will hold your face and your eyelids and force you to watch one of those adult films, you know, but they will put a device, like coils, around your penis so that... you know... it cuts into you. A wire, understand? They also do things to make you turn other people in for nothing. They will threaten to kill our families and name them one by one. They say they will rape the girls. Our village is known for hunger-strikers. They will shove food down your throat. You will cough, and you will choke and they will laugh. I think the worst time in my life is when my mother came to visit me in my cell. I didn't want her to see me like that state... [Pauses, and then, silence]. [Interview 2012].

At one roundabout near Nablus, we see a collision. A minivan and a truck crash into one another. There were two men sitting in the back of the truck and at once their bodies go flying. Masa clenches my arm, and I cover her eyes with a trembling hand. Abu Sameh stops the car to check on the men who lay strewn across the ground, one with an arm no longer attached to his body. A crowd forms around the men but they hesitate to collect the body and its strewn parts so as not to mishandle the remains and exacerbate their pain. Masa and I listen and shock to one man screaming “Oh mother! Help me, mother! Please help me!” Abu Sameh insists on waiting until the ambulance arrives. One of the men is pronounced death on site and the other is carried onto a stretcher and wheeled into the back of the ambulance, a van that is in horrible condition. Abu Sameh reappears and says soberly to me, “you see this? This is what an occupation does. There is no way he will live; there is one road for us and the hospital is still a distance from here. Do you see? You see how this occupation is killing us?”

At the Nablus market, Abu Sameh unloads his truckload with the help of the overseer. They do not weigh his produce: Abu Sameh tells them what he has in his truck and the kilograms of each fruit, vegetable and leafy green. On the way home, Buraqa whimpers and he mother consoles her. We are still in a state of shock—the image of the bodies shooting into the air only to fall to the ground lifeless weighs on each of us. Back in Burqin, Abu Sameh and Rana are concerned their children will have night terrors and tell them to sleep with them; Buraqa insists on sleeping in the room with me, and asks me to tell her a story. I conclude the story of “‘Ahmad’ and the Beanstock” (in Arabic, of course) before Buraqa begins to cry and shake. Immediately, I am concerned that she is traumatized by the night, and I ask her to tell me what is wrong. She replies, “Israelis are

going to take my father away again, aren't they? Please tell me, Lila." I am speechless. I had envisioned Buraqa's trauma about the two young bodies crashing the ground, one with limbs detached from his sockets, and the other lifeless just feet away from us. Instead, it was Buraqa listening to the interview between her father and I that is locked in her memory. The monsters under Buraqa's bed remind me of the imminent danger that makes "fair trade" an impossibility in Palestine. Buraqa's fear teaches me that there is no protection, economic or otherwise, from settler-colonial occupation, where vanishing (of land and peoplehood) is always imminent.

For Naser Abu-Farha, however, the "fair" in "fair trade" means an opportunity to participate in the global economy through a port of entry that was previously unavailable to Palestinians and their olives. His measure of success is expressly capitalistic: "[Fair trade] is a capitalist endeavor. It does operate within a free market economy. And it has developed within a capitalist system. It's a positive form of capital growth or trade because it factors a social dimension to empower the marginalized within trade – trade can be a source of poverty but it can also be a source of empowerment." As such, the Palestinian fair trade industry has made a market based on the insistence that Palestine can be desired, even loved, through credentials, certifications, and other performances of legibility, as well as tropes of joy and nurture. These sit nicely in a Western stomach, untainted by the acidic taste of violent settler-colonialism. Consumers of Palestinian olive oils do not have to be bothered by the vanishing landscape from which their wetted palates are satiated. Abu Farha's insistence that fair trade is a path to empowerment for marginalized producers masks Israeli settler-colonial occupation. Moreover, Palestinians farmers are called upon to perform in ways that emphasize their economic

marginalization so that they are made legible in the global theatre of suffering. In effect, the Palestinian narrative of Israeli settler colonial occupation becomes increasingly invisible through the notion of a decontextualized Palestinian poverty.

However, the evacuation of violence and danger of Israeli settler-colonial occupation relies upon a positivistic neoliberal framework that allows for Palestinian consumability within a multicultural space of depoliticized cuisine. Fair trade enables the consumability of Palestine through its deployment of neoliberal multiculturalism in which market entry for racialized commodities from warm and earthy bodies is presented as the path to freedom. Neoliberal multiculturalism within the fair trade movement in Palestine relies on the notion that the Palestinian farmer is happiest when providing his body and service for the fulfillment of the Western consumer. However, the very notion of “fair” trade is obstructed by the imminent vanishing—the structures of elimination—that annihilate Palestinian life. Through the narratives of Palestinian farmers produced in hundreds of brochures, pamphlets, videos and other advertisements, the Palestinian farmer is constructed as a pair of soiled, laboring hands, eager to satisfy the palate of a conscientious Western consumer. As I’ve shown, Canaan Fair Trade’s marketing techniques are uniformly constructed: a catchy slogan followed by a snapshot of farmer successful in his retreat to the ancient cultivation practices of Palestine due to the conscientious Western consumers who know a good product.

This research data points to the differential “life-times” of unequally valued bodies in a moment of advanced capitalist accumulation and the neoliberal discourses of postraciality and market entry freedoms that accompany them. Here I am employing Neferti Tadiar’s notion of “life-times” to refer to the bottling of Palestinian life, labor and

land that allow the valued tongues of the world to consume its content (Tadiar 2012). Situating Palestine in this neoliberal multicultural framework suggests that the extraction of value from Palestinian life takes place through multiple and contradictory modalities. In her landmark essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?”¹⁶⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak analyzes the power structures and racist logics that led to the banning of the sati ritual. In her analysis, she identifies the “subaltern” as those individuals and communities in the most extreme positions of marginalization who are stripped from having their voices heard or of becoming visible through self-representation due to the logics of power that render them unspeakable subjects. According to Spivak, such conditions of illegibility arise within the context of globalized capitalism, in which the subaltern is submerged within a space outside of history and knowledge. If the subaltern cannot be heard, read, or seen within dominant systems of power/knowledge, then she also cannot claim personal or political autonomy, banning her of a meaningful selfhood or political agency. As such, according to Spivak, oppressed peoples resort to “strategic essentialism,”¹⁷⁰ temporarily assuming or exploiting a single-dimensional aspect of their subjectivity (such as performing the role of the jovial Palestinian olive producer) in order to achieve limited political goals and to oppose the leveling impact of globalization.¹⁷¹ In the same vein,

¹⁶⁹ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1985. “Can the subaltern speak?” *Wedge* 7/8 (Winter/Spring): 120-30.

¹⁷⁰ The term “strategic essentialism” refers to a limited form of self-representation in which members of oppressed groups will consolidate an aspect of their identity, or temporarily “essentialize” themselves, to achieve certain goals. Although Spivak has expressed discontent with the ways in which the term has been taken up to promote essentialism for its own sake, she has not completely abandoned the term. Furthermore, the concept has gained currency within critical fields in the humanities such as queer studies and feminist theory. For example, the Belgian feminist Luce Irigaray has used term “mimesis” to similarly describe a form of resistance where women imitate stereotypical notions of themselves as a way of confronting, and ultimately, undermining them.

¹⁷¹ I employ Spivak’s definition of globalization as “the imposition of the same system of exchange everywhere” from *Death of a Discipline*, pp.72.

Spivak argues that the patenting of indigenous knowledges¹⁷² occurs in the rural landscape of the Global South, a site of intensified globalization — much to the detriment of the local peoples and lands. Relatedly, Duncan Ivison's book *Postcolonial Liberalism* (2002) describes the ways in which liberalism has been used to justify and legitimate colonialism through the inability of mainstream liberal political theory to contend with settler-colonial contexts. Ivison argues that liberal discourse tends to exclude the preferences of indigenous people because social, political and legal norms are structured around Western-centric ideals that privilege individualism and offer a limited notion of justice based on economic access and entitlement (47-48).

In the past decade, neoliberalism has been observed beneath a magnifying glass by various scholars reflecting different conceptual and political agendas. As Larner (2003) describes, the dissimilar accounts of defining neoliberalism indicate that there is no overarching definition; instead we can recognize neoliberalism as an evolving process that reflects a multiple and contradictory formulations. In spite of these dissimilarities, neoliberalism has often been conceptualized exclusively in economic terms, as a process involving deregulation within a globalized market as well as increased privatization and individualization of market actors. The reorganization of society under neoliberalism occurs along the lines of decentralization of power, the reduction of state intervention in the market, affirmation of human rights discourse, and the responsibility of stakeholders (Hale 2005, Brodie 2020, Altamirano-Jimenez 2013). Neoliberalism opens up a space for

¹⁷² According to Rauna Kuokkanen (McMaster University) “Indigenous knowledge” refers to the nuanced and complex systems of knowledge that Indigenous peoples have gathered and developed particularly in relation to the natural environment, including plant and animal ecology, climate, and other local conditions and resource management. Indigenous knowledge, therefore, insists on a body of knowledge based on Indigenous peoples' positionalities livelihoods, practices, and skills, although these systems of knowledge should not be romanticized as stagnant or historic.

the recognition of indigenous rights as well as for the institutionalization of practices that have uneven implications for Palestinians olive producers (Swyngedouw 2009: 122-123). Jodi Melamed describes the racial and gendered formations that enable neoliberal multiculturalism which, I argue, are figured within the broader narratives of fair trade for Palestinian olive producers:

[A] kind of multicultural rhetoric portrays neoliberal policy as the key to a post-racist world of freedom and opportunity. Neoliberal policy engenders new racial subjects, as it creates and distinguishes between newly privileged and stigmatized collectivities. Yet a kind of multiculturalism codes the wealth, mobility, and political power of neoliberalism's beneficiaries to be the just desserts of "multicultural world citizens." A language of multiculturalism consistently portrays acts of force required for neoliberal restructuring to be humanitarian: a benevolent multicultural invader (the United States, multinational troops, a multinational corporation) intervenes to save life, "give" basic goods or jobs, and promote limited political freedoms. In all these expressions, an idea of the ethic of multiculturalism appears as the spirit of neoliberalism.¹⁷³

Here, Melamed argues that neoliberal multiculturalism portrays an ethic of multiculturalism to be the spirit of neoliberalism and posits neoliberal restructuring across the globe to be the key to a post-racist world of freedom and opportunity¹⁷⁴. While the discursive formations of fair trade allude to Palestinian liberation, the deployment of these tropes effectively "hollow out [fair trade's] epistemological and political project"¹⁷⁵ while, at the same time, making Palestine consumable as a global contender in the cafeteria of commodities. Moreover, through the appeal to the Western consumer, the site of consumption becomes an "unspoken and unspeakably bourgeois space, where Western cultural and political supremacy are taken for granted"¹⁷⁶ through the notion that the

¹⁷³ Ibid: p.9

¹⁷⁴ http://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=english_fac

¹⁷⁵ http://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=english_fac, p. .8.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

Palestinian farmer is happiest when servicing the privileged Western palate, one that is “distinct” in its assessment of deliciousness and superior quality. We know that the consumers a Ris drank in Palestinian olive oil with a sophisticated tongue; as such, to rephrase Spivak’s question, one might ask: “Can the subaltern taste?”

At the same time, the rise in international discourses of various kinds of rights—indigenous, human, gender—has played an important role in various forms of indigenous performance leading to conditional forms of legibility and limited modes of agency. Through this emergent universalized discourse of rights, environmentalism, and the global market, neoliberalism opens up a conditional site of recognition for indigenous attachment to long so long as it satisfies the demands of market, which are increasingly attached to consumable tropes that are easy on the stomach, so to speak. For Palestine, these neoliberal, inclusionary schemes require a politically vacant configuration of Palestinian subjectivity. However, as Nancy Postero cogently notes, international nongovernmental organizations have continued a global discourse that has made ‘indigenouness’ and indigenous rights central tropes of social movement organizing (2007:5). As such, Palestinian attachment to land is overstated in Canaan’s publications where the producers of fair trade commodities become romanticized as extensions of the land itself. While these modes of performance might be dismissed for their fetishistic and saturated representations, Palestine comes to be seen globally as a land of love with a rich history of cultivation, and people who want to remain. Submerged within the interstices of life and love on the one hand, and pending disappearance on the other, Palestinian livelihood vis-à-vis the fair trade olive commodity is perpetually hinging on death, but insisting on life. Often, academic traditions have locked native peoples in immutable

identitarian schemes in such a way that any attempt on their part to “open their land” to commercialization, resource extraction, or waste disposal in the pursuit of some (albeit limited) economic autonomy and self-determination is seen as a betrayal of their ‘rightful’ position as extensions of olive trees and fig roots, without acknowledgement of the global hegemony of capitalism and the direness of being suspended from the broader political economy (Zehle 335). In this respect, by feeding the west’s “fair trade” fictions, Palestinian land and labor is imagined as a sort of prostitute ‘making ends meet’ in the global economy. However, as Neferti Tadiar has suggested, the perilous paradox of capitalism is that to be outside of it bears wretched consequences (2011). As Palestinian production in fair trade becomes homogenized into a resource for servicing the needs of a cosmopolitan consumer, Palestinian life is conditionally sustained and Palestine is not completely vanished. According to Tadiar, it is precisely these contradictory experiences that “fall away and outside”—experiences that are regarded as marginal, the “accursed share” of capitalist and nationalist productions—which simultaneously invite domination and evade its full force (Tadiar 2011).

Conclusion: Clutching the Remains of a Vanishing Landscape

I close this chapter with a reading of the image of Mahfoutha Odeh, a seventy-five year old Palestinian farmer who embraces a tree sawed down in her olive grove in the village of Salim near the northern West Bank city of Nablus. On Sunday Nov. 27, 2005, Jewish settlers from the settlement of Shomron cut down two-hundred olive trees to prevent Palestinians from attacking settlers while hidden among them. The reader will note that this not the first time that the olive trees as a form of “cover” emerges in popular

narrative; many Palestinians I interviewed saw the olive tree as a refuge from armed Jewish settlers in 1948. The image of Mahfoutha circulated in various blogs and newspapers in the Arab world and became iconic of Palestinian attachment to the olive tree, and by extension, the lands of Palestine.



Figure 25: Mafoutha Odeh from the northern West Bank village of Nablus clutches her olive trees as an Israeli military tank and soldier hover in the background.

This image depicts a different kind of affective narrative, one that departs from that of the jovial, servicing farmer, whose hands are but extensions of the olive tree. In this image, Mahfoutha is in a state of crisis, grief, and protest. She embraces a skinny trunk that almost camouflages with the leafy branches that once sprouted from it. Her eyes are sealed. Her mouth is parted as though heaving a gasp of air or perhaps speaking to the remains of the tree she clutches on to. All around her are remains of Palestinian life—beautiful silvery-green leaves. Her bright red sweater contrasts the dead greenery around

her. Even her dress is an olive-green as though her body is itself part of the landscape of olives now resembling yet another deathscape. Behind her, a watchful gaze witnesses her mourning. It is an Israeli Defense soldier, a young man armed and dressed in camouflage. Between the freshly naked, spread branches he watches her, his eyes fixated. His military vehicle's tires are dusted with soil. In a report following the image's wide circulation, Mahfoutha recants:

*We were working the land. We plowed the land, harvested, and cleared it here and there near the bypass road over there. We came this way to work the land and found the olive trees grounded like martyrs... we had no more mind in us left... we went insane! And I confronted the [Israeli] soldier and said to him, what did the olive tree do to you to be uprooted like this? What did the olive tree do to you?*¹⁷⁷

That the olive trees are “grounded like martyrs” departs drastically from Canaan’s depiction of Abu Adnan as a farmer surrounded by endless bounty. Here, the violent beheading of Mahfoutha’s martyr represents the settler-colonial presence that enables the vanishing of Palestinian land. The gracious performance of the Palestinian commodity producer is replaced with a dark image of a Palestinian farmer traumatized to the point of having “no more mind in us left.” The direct confrontation between Mahfoutha and the IDF soldier revealed in the quote above is also a departure from the notion of a welcome foreigner who is invited to consume Palestine’s olives. In the image, Israel’s presence is ominous and disturbing and the image of Mahfoutha clutching her chewed land’s remains reflects the contradictory placement of Palestinian consumption: where in Abu Adnan’s case consumption represented life and freedom; here it represents death and annihilation, grief and terror.

¹⁷⁷ Testimony from Charlotte Kates ‘s film “My Beloved Olive: Palestinian Farmers On Their Land” retrieved from the internet at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uc3BcB0CT9g>.

When I service the olive trees, plow the land or harvest, I see their value like my child, or even more than that. A child that we raised. [That day] I cried and embraced the olive tree like a woman who sees her martyr son and rests on him in an embrace. I saw my tree like a fallen martyr because of its value to me. I hugged that tree out of endless love¹⁷⁸.

As in Abu Adnan's profile, Mahfoutha's story is filled with love and the desire to service. However, in the context of decimation and vanishing, narratives of love and service are strikingly different. That day, Mahfoutha says, she cried and embraced the remains of a fallen hero, a loss she values like a child she bore from her womb. Against the backdrop of pending death and fallen martyrs, the image of Mahfoutha conjures the settler-colonial context of occupation and the imminent vanishing of the landscape of Palestine through the decimation of the olive tree. She is not smiling as Abu Adnan is and her photograph will never make it to a brochure. This powerful image offers an important counter-narrative against the positivistic neoliberal discourse that suggests that Palestine can be freed through the consumption of its land. Yet, as the images demonstrate, liberalist discourse and the celebration of the Palestinian commodity can co-exist. In this way, we are reminded that consumption of both land and fruit is a layered process that summons the intricate relations of power that at once allow the conditions of possibility for the celebration of Palestine on the one hand, and the decimation of its land on the other. Within the context of neoliberal multiculturalism and the emergent fair trade industries, Palestine can be at once chewed as a delectable commodity, and on the other, Palestine is chewed as a landscape.

According to Mazin Qumsiyeh, a Palestinian professor and researcher in the West Bank, the centrality of Palestinian olives is simply inarticulable to those unfamiliar with

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

the settler colonial context that mars Palestinian livelihoods: “It is hard to describe to non-Palestinians what the olive tree means to us. We could tell of the practical things but that would be like saying our spouses mean a lot to us because of ... (and then list all the things they do). Of course these things are important but not the whole picture and we could never do justice that way to people or other living things we love.”¹⁷⁹ As this chapter has argued, at the same moment that Palestine is certified as a site of production of fair trade for the global citizen, parts of Palestine are experiencing vanishing at exponential rates. Fair trade allows for the settler-colonial occupation of Palestine to coexist alongside an artificial celebration of Palestine insofar as Palestine is a brandable commodity presented in its depoliticized form.

¹⁷⁹ <http://sabbah.biz/mt/archives/2009/10/20/palestinian-olives/>

Chapter Four: Memories and Olives

On January 23, 2012, Palestinian-American author, self-professed foodie, and television personality, Blanche Shaheen created a post for her web-blog “Feast in the Middle East” in which she describes conducting an olive oil tasting with world-renowned author Tom Mueller. Mueller had inspired Shaheen with his book *Extra Virginity: The Sublime and Scandalous World of Olive Oil* (2012), a hard-line indictment against “olive oil fraud”—the unethical, exploitative market practices that have led to counterfeit, toxic olive oils branded as “extra virgin”. These widely circulated, diluted brands from the Mediterranean have stripped olive oil of its antioxidant qualities and robust flavors. For Blanche, Mueller’s appraisal deeply resonated: “Our tastes have been eroded by the glut of mediocre olive oils, where consumers have been guided to value a mild smoothness of flavor versus the robust, rich, fruity and peppery taste of good quality oil,” she writes. After meeting Mueller at his book-signing in California, the pair participated in a tasting of six varieties of olive oil from around the world. Blanche narrates: “[...] we were instructed to swirl, sniff, sip, and smell from each cup. We cleansed our palates in between with green apple wedges and water.”¹⁸⁰

Among the fragrant and rich oils Blanche tastes is Daskara olive oil from the West Bank—an oil so familiar and exquisite in flavor, Blanche is carried across time and space—back to the land of Palestine:

The oil not only talked to me, but sang music to me as well. Instantly I was transported to my childhood, where I spent summers in Bethlehem with my grandmother. We would dip her fresh baked pita bread in olive oil just like this, followed by the nutty and fragrant zaatar spice. I almost cried from the memory.

¹⁸⁰ www.feastinthemiddleeast.com

Here, Blanche's palate becomes a vehicle that transcends any checkpoint, movement restriction, curfew, or wall—one that carries her to a place of nurture and fresh, hot food—where her grandmother would bake bread and together they would delight in the extracts of Palestine's beloved fruit, sprinkled with zaatar's aromatic herbs, spices and crushed seed. Her memory is triggered by her tongue's delight—a joy uninterrupted by the violent processes of settler-colonial vanishment. This Palestine is lovely—musical, even. The demarcation between memory, taste, scent and sound prove deceptive as the sensory engagement is multiple, simultaneous and transcendent—an *intersensoriality* inspired by Blanche's emotive and imaginative attachment to the lands of Palestine. In a state of marvelous surprise, Blanche herself wonders how such a memory could be mediated by her tongue: *Is this what olive oil was supposed to do? How could [the olive oil] bring out all of these emotions?* Blanche's mother had accompanied her to the olive oil tasting, and she too is deeply moved by the olive oil's flavors. Blanche narrates:

[A]s she tried the West Bank oil she began to excitedly dip every piece of bread she had on her plate until she finished it all. She recounted how her mother in Palestine would make her drink ¼ cup of the elixir every morning to make her bones stronger. She recalled how they would rub olive oil on their skin to cure everything from swollen glands to stomach pain.

For Blanche's mother, the taste of Palestinian olive oil conjures feelings of excitement and nurture. As she dips into and savors Palestinian olive oil, she attaches the flavors to memories of her own mother's kitchen where olive oil was a medicinal agent, an "elixir," used daily to strengthen bones and revitalize the ill.

What is particularly striking here is the ways in which, for both women, Palestinian femininity is plugged into memory as the provider of healing and protection.

This suggests that there is an inextricable link between taste, memory, and gender—one that anchors native bodies back to the land. While many Western feminists might problematize the romantic feminization of land as an installment of colonial-patriarchal power relations, I instead focus my analysis on the ways in which Palestinian women exercise a form of agency by linking food, memory, and land from their complex positionality as “doubly effaced” subjects. Rather than dismiss Blanche and her mother’s gendered memories as a set of patriarchal-nationalist fictions (an argument that has been tried by many; see for example Joseph Massad: 1995 and Sherna Berger-Gluck: 1995), I argue that gendered memory allows for the rearticulation of a Palestine against the hegemonic current of vanishment. As these women’s memories suggest, vanishment is not complete, and the Palestinian story cannot be subsumed within versions of history that privilege the positionality of colonizers. Sites where food is prepared, consumed, and enjoyed become sites of daily memory-making, where native claims to land are negotiated and passed on, unsettling the narratives of European Zionists, who declared their inhabitation in Historic Palestine as a manifest destiny, for white men to make an unloved, barren desert “bloom”.

In this chapter, I trace the life stories of Palestinian women through a methodology that links cooking, tasting and listening, to explore the ways in which vanishment is disrupted daily through sites of food where indigenous memories are articulated and transmitted. Here, ‘memory’ is not a passive depository of events passed, but an active process of creating meanings that are liberated from the hegemonic constraints of fixed, historical ‘facts.’ Indeed, history as a scientific discipline of chronological and linear events represents no more than the dominant stories of those

who possess the power to ‘speak’ (Foucault 1980, Spivak 1994). As such, ‘memory’ allows for the resuscitation and transmission of subaltern subjectivities, particularly when they are assumed to be vanished. In this way, memory is linked to the ‘ghostly matters’ of apparent vanishment—no wall or checkpoint can deny the ghosts that destabilize settler-colonial myths of rightful replacement.

Borrowing from Rachel Slocum (2011), I take “food” to mean all the processes that make animal, vegetable and mineral into something literally consumable. As a sociologist and ethnic studies scholar, I utilize interdisciplinary research methodologies that combine explorative, in-depth interviews with cooking and eating. I interview three generations of Palestinian women from one family in Beit Sahour, inheriting their oral histories and recipes. The women are *fellaheen*—the Arabic word meaning ‘peasants’ and ‘agricultural laborers’—in lifestyle, values and practice. They are 35-year-old Yasmeen, 60-year-old Farida, and 85-year-old Aziza. The interviews were conducted over a three-month period and involved cooking, picking olives, tasting foods, taking walks in fields, and follow-up meals and teas. In the interviews, the gardens and fields were viewed as extensions of kitchens as they figured into the ways in which food is stored, eaten and prepared. 85-year-old Aziza did not possess a kitchen and instead used a stove in her bedroom quarters as well as the spaces surround her house to collect produce and clean leafy greens. This suggests that kitchens are not necessarily enclosed spaces, but attached to bedrooms, yards, porches, and the *stooḥ*¹⁸¹ where meats are cleaned and salted, apricots are dried, vegetables are stored, and olives are pickled.

¹⁸¹ These are flattened rooftops that are also spaces of gathering, smoking, cooking, and eating in the Middle East.

In Palestine, foods, kitchens, and farms are sites of memorializing and surviving what has been lost and resurrecting that which has been marked for disappearance. They are also, however, sites of struggle where settler-colonial vanishment is always pending. As such, a socially- and politically- contextualized examination of food sites becomes a way to navigate the interstices between memory and survival on the one hand, and vanishment and death on the other. One elucidating example of this interstitial position comes from the Gaza Strip. In summer 2010, Gaza native Laila El-Haddad and her colleague, Maggie Schmitt, traveled through the Gaza Strip collecting recipes from locals to build on the extensive knowledge that Laila had gained from family and friends. The impressive collection of 130 recipes developed into a workbook-size paperback co-authored by the two women called *The Gaza Kitchen: A Palestinian Culinary Journey* (2012) which has earned praise from food luminaries including Claudia Roden, Nancy Harmon Jenkins and Anthony Bourdain—who featured El-Haddad as his chaperone in the Gaza Strip during his *Parts Unknown* episode in the region and is quoted on the book’s cover. The vibrant illustrations depict the culinary features of the emaciated string of land squeezed between desert and sea and the spicy porridges and stews of its mostly refugee population, whose cuisine is still firmly rooted in their native villages depopulated by Israel in 1948¹⁸². As the authors demonstrate, many other things happen in the kitchen besides cooking including the exchange of humor, the re-telling of family histories, the daily drama of survival, and creation of pleasure in an increasingly vanishing context. El-Haddad states, “When so much has been lost and so little remains in a physical and geographic sense, things like food become one of the only means of

¹⁸² <http://brownbook.me/the-gaza-kitchen/>

locating one's self and one's identity, of retaining the attachment to and the memory of these lost places."¹⁸³ In a public statement released during the initial launch of the book concept, El-Haddad and Schmitt highlighted the ways in which food speaks to the mundane forms of violence as well as the everyday labor to sustain life:

Why do we want to talk about food and cooking? Because food is the essence of the everyday. Beyond all the discourses, the positions and the polemics, there is the kitchen. And even in Gaza, that most tortured little strip of land, hundreds of thousands of women every day find ways to sustain their families and friends in body and spirit. They make the kitchen a stronghold against despair, and there craft necessity into pleasure and dignity.¹⁸⁴

In this way, food is a site of recuperating life in the context of settler-colonial vanishment. Indeed, as these authors suggest, food sites are ongoing spaces of struggle particularly in “that most tortured little strip of land” where “so much has been lost and so little remains.”

¹⁸³ <http://brownbook.me/the-gaza-kitchen/>

¹⁸⁴ Note from author: Because this chapter is rich in testimonial data, I italicize all dialogues/testimonies in order to distinguish them from the other content.

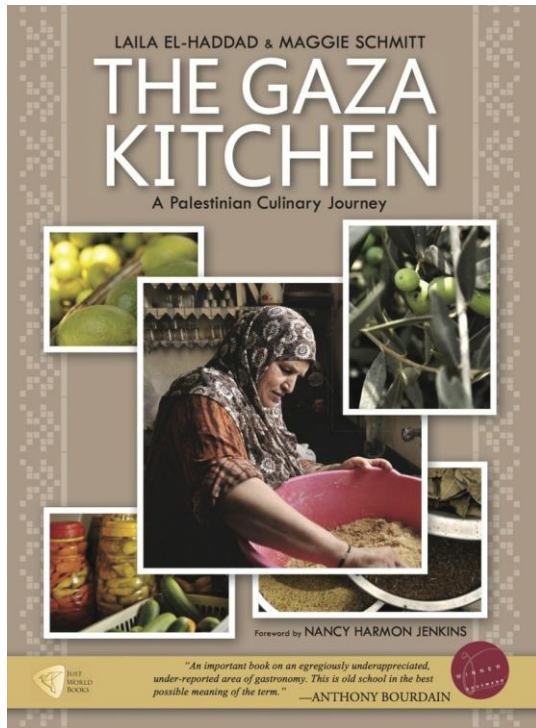


Figure 26: *The Gaza Kitchen* book cover. Photo Credit: www.justworldbooks.com

At the same time, the site of the kitchen cannot be suspended to a space “beyond all the discourses, positions, and the polemics,” particularly within the context of settler-colonialism. In fact, food is a politicized site where vanishment is negotiated. Returning to the example of Gaza is illuminating. In his book, *The Battle for Justice in Palestine* (2014), Ali Abunimah describes the ways in which the Gaza Strip has endured material vanishment through the replacement of Palestinian foodstuffs with Israeli brands at supermarkets. He writes: “I was struck when I visited [Gaza] at how supermarket shelves in the territory are stocked with Israeli goods, priced beyond the reach of many impoverished families” (108). As such, the material replacement of foods in Gazan supermarkets is part of the broader settler-colonial project of vanishing Palestine. Abunimah details how, during the 2009 assault on Gaza, Israeli forces destroyed chicken farms belonging to Sameh Sawafeary and his family in the region of Zeitoun. Sawafeary

and others hid in terror as they watched Israeli bulldozers systematically obliterate land, crops, chickens and farming infrastructures in Gaza (ibid). In all, Abunimah reports, 31,000 of Sawafeary's chickens were killed with an additional 100,000 chickens killed at other farms. As a result, egg prices soared and Gaza's stores are now full of frozen chickens supplied by Israeli firms. Israel also destroyed dairy processing plants and on January 4, 2009, bombed the El-Bader flour mill to the ground—the last one still operating. As a result, the population of Gaza is now more dependent on the Israeli state to grant official permission for flour and bread to enter the Gaza Strip. Abunimah argues that through surveillance practices, “Israeli military planners were very familiar with how many chickens laid how many eggs” (109) as well as the damaging effects of its restrictions on imports of supplies and of the prohibition on exporting goods out of Gaza. This suggests that destruction of Palestinian chickens, dairy, flour and bread in the Gaza Strip is a calculated and deliberate maneuver of vanishment in the site of food. Palestinians' desperate need for food became a lever to promote the prosperity of their occupiers (109-110).

As the example of Gaza demonstrates, Palestinian food is simultaneously a site of life and death, memory and vanishment, nurture and danger. Food mediates the cultural with the material, such that eating and drinking, picking and pickling, grocery shopping and chicken-hatching cannot be suspended from the broader mechanisms of historical, material, and cultural vanishment at play. In Palestine, food is the intimate site where the breath of life and the threat of death co-occur.

Vanishment, Memory and Palestinian Women

Within the context of vanishment—which I defined in chapter 1 as the process of disappearing and replacement of land, people and history—memorializing lands and peoples becomes particularly urgent for indigenous populations as settlers erect colonies, policies, and historiographies that masks conquest. Indeed, since the formation of the state of Israel in 1948, various sites of memory have been established that are tailor-made for settler-Zionist nationalist ideologies. As a result, according to Palestinian sociologist Fatma Kassem, Palestinians in Israeli “have seen their own history and memory transformed into a security threat...this history and memory is not only forbidden but subject to systematic destruction, distortions and erasure”¹⁸⁵ (7). The measures of making Palestinians “forget” their attachments to Palestine are ongoing. On May 9, 2009, Israel’s Ministerial Commission for Legislation adopted a bill which prohibited the commemoration of the “Nakbah,” which David Rotem of Israel’s Beiteinu party explained was an act “against the democratic character of the State of Israel”¹⁸⁶. The silence around the Nakbah manifests in physical space through the absence of any monuments to commemorate the depopulated villages or massacres brought by Israeli settler-colonial conquest. Moreover, Palestinian identity has become subject to policing practices within social institutions like education in Israel that seek to evacuate Palestinian memories from hegemonic history formations—a form of epistemological vanishment that is institutionalized in K-12 schools. For example, in her book *Palestine in Israeli Books: Ideology and Propaganda in Education* (2012) Israeli professor of Language and Education, Nurit Peled-Elhanan, argues that “Arabs” (Palestinians are only

¹⁸⁵ Kassem is examining this specifically in relation to Palestinian citizens residing in the state of Israel. However, these forms of systematic erasure can be applied to Palestinians everywhere, particularly within the broader moment of the so-called ‘War on Terror.’

¹⁸⁶ Minutes of the hearing are available at: www.knesset.gov.il/protocols/data/html/huka/2009-10-26.html.

referred to as “Palestinian” in reference to terrorism—otherwise they are subsumed within the flattening category of “Arab,” which can be read as a linguistic form of vanishment) are depicted only as refugees, primitive farmers and terrorists in educational texts. According to Peled-Elhanan, “It's not that the massacres [of 1948 and beyond] are denied, they are represented in Israeli school books as something that in the long run was good for the Jewish state. For example, Deir Yassin [a pre-1948 Palestinian village close to Jerusalem] was a terrible slaughter by Israeli soldiers. In school books they tell you that this massacre initiated the massive flight of Arabs from Israel and enabled the establishment of a Jewish state with a Jewish majority. So it was for the best.”¹⁸⁷

Within these multiple contexts of vanishment, the memories of Palestinian women are “doubly effaced” due to their status as women within Israeli and Palestinian patriarchies as well as their positionality as colonized subjects (Spivak 1994: 82-3). The ways in which the Nakbah has been a site of silence elucidates this double effacement. Israel’s policy of banning any memorialization of the ongoing Nakbah demonstrates that Palestinian women’s narratives around the events of 1948, and its ongoing legacies, are silenced. As a white-supremacist¹⁸⁸ nation-state, Israel privileges its Jewish citizens in comparison to Palestinian women in the West Bank who have been displaced as refugees, imprisoned, are poor, are not recognized as citizens, and have no social or political recourse against the Israeli military. At the same time, Palestinian women have also been left out of the idealized forms of Palestinian national memory, which has been based on the historical narratives of Arab nationalists and the Palestinian masculine elite (Kassem

¹⁸⁷ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/aug/07/israeli-school-racism-claim>

¹⁸⁸ On June 3 2012, Israel’s Interior minister Eli Yishai stated that Israel is for “the white man.” For more information, the author recommends the following article published on June 10, 2012 by Human Rights Watch: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/06/10/israel-amend-anti-infiltration-law>.

4). When the state of Israel was imposed on Palestinian lands in 1948, an influential Greek Orthodox Syrian intellectual by the name of Constantin Zureiq published a document called *Manaa Nakbat Falasteen* in which he referred to lost Palestinian lands as victims of rape by Zionist intruders (Kassem 92). However, as Fatma Kassem shows in her elucidating book *Palestinian Women* (2011), the women she interviewed rarely, if ever, used the term “Nakbah”. These renderings, she argues, reflect the positionality of Palestinian men, who saw the land as a beloved, virginal geo-female body defiled by foreign intruders, subordinating Palestinian women to objects that must be liberated by young normative Palestinian men (98). What’s more, where Palestinian women are mentioned, they are often treated as nationalist symbols relating to honor, pride, and familial responsibility (Yuval-Davis 1997; Rema Hammami 2004).

As a result of this double effacement, Palestinian women’s struggles for equality have necessarily functioned alongside resistance to settler-colonialism. Since the late eighteenth century, Palestinian women transgressed socially acceptable roles in order to participate in local and national resistance efforts against colonial powers. As early as 1884, Palestinian women *fellaheen* participated in uprooting the first settlements erected by European Jewish Zionists¹⁸⁹. Nationalist discourse reveals that in 1920, Palestinian women “stood side by side with Palestinian men in resisting the British Mandate”¹⁹⁰. During the six-month rebellion of 1936, Palestinian women demonstrated *en masse* against British forces, smuggling guns and ammunition to Palestinian guerilla forces¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁹<http://www.palestinianconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/WomensStruggle-DemocraticPal-Mar1984.pdf>

¹⁹⁰<http://www.palestinianconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/PLO-PalestinianWomen.pdf>

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

Interestingly, in the nationalist literatures I have found, Palestinian women have been celebrated and memorialized insofar as their resistance efforts have taken the form commonly associated with militarized masculinity, such as by taking up arms and smuggling weapons for guerilla groups. The most exemplary moment in the militarization of Palestinian women's resistance emerged during the 1960s. These were particularly formative years for women all over the Arab world. It was the pinnacle of the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM), one of the major political parties of the period. The Palestinian branch of this movement became the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary organization, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine after the 1967 Six-Day War. When the Arab armies were brutally defeated by Israel in 1967, Palestinian reliance on neighboring Arab states transitioned to national sentiment of frustration as the poorly trained Arab armies experienced a bloody defeat, and Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip with the plan to begin settling Jews from around the world. During this time, Palestinian women's role in anti-colonial struggles became revived as more and more Palestinian men were imprisoned, often organizing to distribute food and clothing in the occupied territories and taking to the streets to demonstrate against Israeli atrocities. By 1968, Palestinian women had joined the ranks in armed struggles against Israel. In April 1968, five women were killed in Beit Hanoun, many others were arrested in al-Khalil and Bethlehem on charges that they were secretly procuring funds to finance anti-Israeli propaganda. Abla Taha was three months pregnant when she was arrested on July 25, 1968 on charges of belonging to the PFLP and carrying explosives. She was subject to torture in Israeli prisons. That same year, 19-year-old Miriam Shakshir was accused of planting a bomb in the cafeteria of the Hebrew

University. The February 3, 1969 issue of the *New York Times* reported that Israelis “cleared the streets by force” from the raucous caused by “Palestinian” girls who marched in the streets carrying banners with the slogan “We Are All Fidayeen” (We are all Revolutionaries).

In 1969, the image of Leila Khalid became emblematic of the militarization of Palestinian women in the resistance. On August 29, 1969, Khaled was part of a team that hijacked TWA Flight 840 on its way from Rome to Athens, diverting the Boeing 707 to Damascus. No one was injured, but the aircraft was blown up after hostages had disembarked. After her image was widely published, she underwent six facial reconstruction surgeries on her nose and chin to conceal her identity to allow her to take part in a future hijacking. This second attempt on September 6, 1970 involved Khaled and Nicaraguan-American Patrick Argüello. The pair attempted to hijack El Al Flight 219 from Amsterdam to New York City as part of the Dawson's Field hijackings, a series of simultaneous hijackings carried out by the PFLP. The attack was thwarted by Israeli sky marshalls on flight, who shot and killed Argüello. The pilot diverted the aircraft to Heathrow airport in London, where Khaled was turned in to the Ealing police station. On October 1, the British government released her as part of a prisoner exchange.

The iconic photograph of Leila Khalid taken by photographer Eddie Adams made her the symbol of women's role in the Palestinian resistance. In it, Khalid's sharp cheekbones, thoughtful gaze, delicate hands, and fragile frame seem uncannily juxtaposed against the AK-47 rifle cocked upright in her tight grip. A Palestinian keffiyeh is wrapped loosely around her shiny hair and she wears a camouflage button-up shirt that resembles the ensemble of her fellow male *Fedayeen*. The only accessory she wears is a

ring on her third finger. She tells a reporter, “I made [the ring] from the pin of a hand grenade—from the first grenade I ever used in training. I just wrapped it around a bullet.”¹⁹²



Figure 27: Famous photograph of Leila Khalid holding a Kalashnikov rifle after the 1969 hijacking.

Until today, Khalid is idealized as a heroine in Palestinian national memory. In Beit Sahour, where I conducted the interviews I describe here, her image is stenciled on a wall near a residential neighborhood, as well as on various locations of the apartheid wall. However, what is often obscured from this form of commemoration is the ways in which Khalid struggled with her role in Palestinian resistance as a woman. Though her father supported her participation in the PFLP, Khalid’s mother prohibited her from attending PFLP meetings, finding such participation inappropriate for women. Khalid recalls sneaking out of her house to attend a meeting in her nightgown only to be

¹⁹² <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/jan/26/israel>

criticized by her commander and comrades who saw her disobedience as abominable. She recalls to a reporter, “That was a turning point in my life. I realized that I was simultaneously discriminated against in my life and in my family. I had to prove myself. Eventually, I managed to gain my mother’s acceptance. But it was only with the support of my father as he reminded her that we were all driven out [of Historic Palestine] irrespective of sex.”¹⁹³

Khalid’s experience hints at the struggle for Palestinian women to be taken seriously as Fedayeen within the social structure of patriarchy. Moreover, Palestinian women’s commemoration as participants in militarized forms of anti-colonial struggle “side by side with Palestinian men” masks the specifically gendered forms of violence by Jewish male and female citizens of the Israeli state. A statement by Palestinian Human Rights organization Addameer (2010) states:

A frequent complaint expressed by many Palestinian women political prisoners is Israel’s routine and systematic practice of strip and body searching, a process by which all, or almost all of their clothing is forcibly removed by Israeli soldiers [both male and female], sometimes including their undergarments. During strip searches, female prisoners are often asked to squat while naked, and are frequently subjected to intrusive internal body searches. Those who refuse to comply with these practices are often sent to isolation cells...Sexual harassment of Palestinian women prisoners also occurs through threats of rape (including threats of rape of their family members) and sexually degrading insults made by prison personnel. These occurrences are a fundamental part of Palestinian women’s prison experience and should be understood as a common and systematic form of racial and gender-based state violence¹⁹⁴.

These findings concur with research by Palestinian Sociologist Nahla Abdo, who has shown that Israel’s prison authorities deliberately exploit Palestinian women’s

¹⁹³ <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/2720/resistance-and-revolution-as-lived-daily-experienc>

¹⁹⁴ Report titled: “Palestinian Women Political Prisoners: Systematic Forms of Political and Gender-based State Violence” (2010: 11) retrieved from www.addameer.org.

vulnerabilities within Palestinian patriarchy as well as gender stereotypes within particular customs of Palestinian society (2008). Imprisoned Palestinian women are subject to threats of rape against them and their family members, for example. These conditions are exacerbated by the fact that sexual assault is a stigmatized issue for Palestinian families and post-assault resources are often difficult to obtain. The primary intervention guiding this study, then, is to resist the epistemological reproduction of native women as “raped” subjects, as dormant objects of patriarchal nationalist desires, and as sensationalized militants. Instead, I want to highlight the ways in which native women act through an analysis of how they sustain life in their everyday practices of memory-making—in even the most seemingly mundane moments that many of us take for granted. Heeding the call by Palestinian sociologist Fatma Kassem to emphasize ‘ordinary women’s lives’ I challenge patriarchal and colonial ‘Histories’ as well as the “post” in postcolonial theory—by theorizing around the palate in the context of ongoing settler-colonial vanishment.

Food as Politics: Vanishment and the Appropriation of Palestinian Foods

In her poignant article “What is Settler Colonialism?” Maya Mikdashi,¹⁹⁵ an anthropologist and professor of Near Eastern Studies at New York University, who is of Lebanese and Chippewa descent, describes feeling ambivalent about her Native American heritage due in part to the “inherited silences” of her family members, who sought forgetting as an escape from the pain and trauma of native vanishment, by locking up photographs of those who “look Indian” in a dusty suitcase for decades:

¹⁹⁵ Maya Mikdashi is a Faculty Fellow and Director of Graduate Studies at the NYU Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies.

My grandfather went through life largely denying that he was “an Indian.” Scarred by the inherited memories of forced removal and “education” inflicted on his mother and grandmother and by the discrimination that marked his life as a child in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, he did not tell his children that they were part Native American. One year, his sister, who had been born on the reservation and was at the time residing there, told my mother and her siblings that they were Native American and had a proud ancestry stretching back centuries. My grandfather was livid, convinced that his children would be mercilessly harassed and made to feel less worthy once they returned to their home in Howell, Michigan. For decades, he refused to talk about his family's history and how he navigated his life as a “half-Indian.”

As this passage indicates, the ongoing traumas of vanishment are signified by the absent-presences locked in a dusty suitcase on the family “farm” over at the Bad River Tribe Reservation on Lake Superior. Raised in Beirut, Mikdashi learned about settler-colonialism not through her Indian grandfather, but through the stories of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, many who had barely survived the machetes and bullets during the 1982 massacres of Sabra and Shatila¹⁹⁶ that left 2,000 among them dead. In the following passage, Mikdashi narrates a trip back to Bear Creek where she articulates the loss of settler-colonialism through food, shedding light on the consumption and appropriation of indigenous pantries as part of ongoing settler-colonial projects from Palestine to North America:

I learned that the wild rice that is sold in expensive packaging in supermarkets across the United States is nothing but the rebranding of settler colonialism. In fact, hummus is to Palestine as wild rice is to Native America. As Israel continues to claim the Palestinian kitchen as its own, so does the United States with Native America: consuming corn, wild rice, quinoa, cranberry, cornbread and turkey with the confidence of a national cuisine.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ On September 16-18, 1982, in the middle of Lebanon's civil war and a few months after Israel's invasion of the country, hundreds of members of the Phalange party - a Lebanese Christian militia - in collaboration with the Israeli army, slaughtered about Palestinian refugees, mostly women, children, and the elderly, in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camp located in Beirut.

¹⁹⁷ Published electronically on the world wide web at www.jadaliyya.com, July 17 2012.

In this passage, Mikdashi defines settler-colonialism as a function of the appropriation and consumption of the foodstuffs of native kitchens. Through food, she is able to locate the ways in which pantries and kitchens become contested sites of negotiating settler-colonialism, from Bear Creek to Beirut, from wild rice to hummus. Understood in this way, maintaining rites to harvest and prepare food for indigenous peoples becomes particularly urgent, and imbued with the power to disrupt settler-colonial claims to native foods, and by extension, native lands.

In the West Bank and beyond, Israeli appropriation of Palestinian foods has mobilized activists who have seen this as an act of cultural genocide—contributing to the replacement of the native, who is slated to vanish. Recently, food has been a particularly urgent site of inquiry as Israeli-made products have become branded as environmentally friendly and trendy as well as the authentic foodstuffs of the region. One current example is SodaStream, a DIY at-home soda machine that turns tap water into carbonated (sparkling) water or flavored soda in under thirty seconds, reducing the carbon footprint caused by bottling and making soda a healthy and ‘food forward’ alternative to the mainstream corn-syrupy beverage. The sexually provocative commercial released by the brand during the 2014 U.S. Super Bowl features the voluptuous Hollywood starlet Scarlett Johansson “saving the world” one soda can at a time. In the commercial, her sexual innuendoes (“want a sip?”) propel her to shed a robe for a black body-hugging dress in the name of environmentalism. Aside from the efficient soda making machine and the starlet’s body, the commercial revealed very little. In particular, there is no mention that the rapidly growing company manufactures most of its products in the

Ma'ale Adumim settlement's industrial park, a community of approximately 40,000 Jews located about seven miles from Jerusalem, well within the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank. Johansson, the daughter of an American Jewish mother and a Danish Christian father, defended SodaStream as a "bridge-builder" between Israelis and Palestinians because the settlement allegedly compensates Palestinian and Israeli labor equally. The third largest West Bank settlement has been in the spotlight because of a proposed highway project called the E-1, which would connect Ma'ale Adumim to Jerusalem, fragmenting the West Bank further (along with the separation wall that cuts within, rather than runs along, the "Green Line") and making it nearly impossible for Palestinians in the northern part of the West Bank to travel south or reach Jerusalem. Ma'ale Adumim's former mayor has been quoted as saying the settlement was built to make a contiguous Palestinian state impossible. Johansson's endorsement of the product forced her to step down as ambassador for the humanitarian group Oxfam, which campaigns against trade with Israeli settlements.



Figure 28: Scarlet Johansson's SodaStream ad juxtaposed against separation wall as part of BDS campaign. Photo Credit: www.mandoweiss.net.

In addition to Israeli settlements becoming a site of the production of foodstuffs branded as environmentally sound and chic alternatives to destructive and noxious mainstream commodities, Israel has long appropriated Palestinian cuisine to make claims of authenticity to Historic Palestine. As a nation-state peddling as “the only democracy in the Middle East”, ‘Israeli’ cuisine has gained global visibility with Palestinian falafel, hummus, shawarma and maftoul (Israeli “couscous”) becoming increasingly ‘Israeli’ products. The Sabra Dipping Company—a U.S.-based corporation that produces “Middle Eastern style” foods including hummus, babaghanoush and a “Mediterranean salsa” that aims to put their Israeli chickpea dip “on every American table”¹⁹⁸—has become the largest hummus manufacturer in the world. Founded in 1986 as Sabra Blue and White Foods, the company was sold to Israeli food manufacturer The Strauss Group in 2005 (currently, Strauss and PepsiCo each own 50% of Sabra). The Strauss Group is the

¹⁹⁸ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/10/sabra-hummus_n_3391688.html

second largest Israeli food and beverage company with revenues of over \$1.8 billion. According to the company, “Hummus is one of our national foods [sic], and can be found in just about every Israeli home.”¹⁹⁹ The Strauss Group is also well known for its vigorous support of the Israeli military, adopting the Golani reconnaissance platoon for over 30 years and providing them with food products during training or missions, as well as care packages for each soldier that “completes the path”.²⁰⁰ According to a report by Vacy Vlazna in *The Palestine Monitor*, the Golani reconnaissance platoon “is complicit in Israel's illegal...that controls, in collusion with secret police, Mossad and Shin Bet, the indigenous Palestinians under a system of rule by terror at checkpoints, by arbitrary arrests...by extrajudicial killings, the ruthless dispossession of homes and land for colonial expansion, harsh apartheid policies including Jews-only roads and the illegal Annexation Wall, massive bombardments by drones, Apaches and F16s.”²⁰¹ The same source states that during the 1982 Lebanon War, Golani soldiers assisted the Phalangist death squads to massacre Palestinian men, women and children in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps of Lebanon—one recognized as genocide by the United Nations²⁰². Moreover, the Golani Brigade led a vicious offensive against the Jenin refugee camp in 2002 “demolishing hundreds of homes while burying some Palestinians alive and killing terrified residents...”²⁰³

¹⁹⁹<http://mondoweiss.net/2010/10/no-justice-no-chickpeas-philly-activists-go-gaga-to-spread-hummus-boycott.html>

²⁰⁰ Factsheet titled 'SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE: PLEASE DON'T BUY SABRA HUMMUS!' produced by Boston Coalition for Palestine, 2010, retrieved from www.bcprights.org.

²⁰¹ http://palestinechronicle.com/old/view_article_details.php?id=19155

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

Another Israeli brand called ‘Tribe Hummus’ is partnered with the Jewish National Fund, which one of the central bureaucratic mechanisms that institutionalize and make legal the apartheid system of land ownership in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. These brands, among many others, have been targeted by the Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions (BDS) movement. In October 2010, Philadelphia’s BDS launched a consumer boycott campaign against Sabra Hummus and Tribe Hummus by creating a Lady Gaga youtube video that went viral within days, coining the slogan, “No Justice, No (Chick) Peas.” The appeal of these campaigns has been immediate and momentous, with further slogans “Don’t Dip Into Apartheid!” and “First My Land Then My Hummus?!” appearing on BDS websites, posters, and stickers all over the world.



Figure 29: "Buying Israeli Goods Is Funding Apartheid!" cartoon. Photo Credit: www.bdsmovement.net

In the cartoon above, a chicly dressed woman grasps the handles of a shopping cart through a grocery store, presumably to shop for a family. Her cart is filled to the brim with boxes, jars, bottles, and packages. She sees her reflection, and in the place of the stockpile of foodstuffs, she sees a mound of skulls in her cart. The cartoon’s caption reads “Buying Israeli Goods Is Funding Apartheid” with the image indicating that there is a direct link between purchasing Israeli products and Palestinian death.

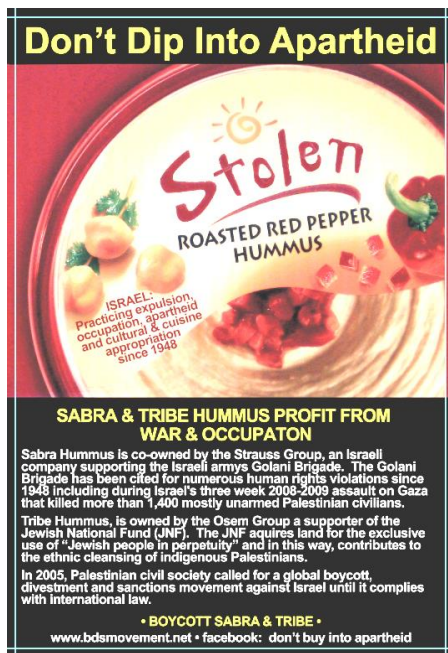


Figure 30: "Don't Dip Into Apartheid" Boycott Sabra Hummus Poster. Photo Credit: www.bdsmovement.net

In Figure 29 above, the image depicts the familiar red-trimmed lid of Sabra hummus containers. However, in place of “Sabra” the word “Stolen” appears, in the same curly lettering on Sabra containers. Where the description of the contents normally appears, it reads: “Israel: Practicing expulsion, occupation, apartheid, and cultural and cuisine appropriation since 1948.”

In both cases, the mundane practices of food shopping and food packaging are juxtaposed with political slogans that directly link food consumption to Israeli settler-colonialism. As such, these colorful strategies have emerged as methodologies to disrupt Palestinian vanishment, through the politics of the palate. Through these tactics, since 2005, the BDS movement has continued to gain momentum with associated student bodies of five University of California campuses voting in favor of divestment since 2013, and many more set to vote in 2014. DePaul University, Wesleyan University, University of New Mexico, and Kings College London have each voted in favor of

divestment, and many countries have halted imports of any products that were manufactured in West Bank settlements. Celebrity divestors have included Roger Waters, Pete Seeger, Massive Attack, Klaxons, Gorillaz, U2, Bjork, Jean Luc-Godard, Carlos Santana, Elvis Costello, Devendra Banhart, Faithless, Gil Scott Heron, The Pixies, Mashrou Leila, Alice Walker, and, allegedly, Snoop Dogg, who was quoted by Palestinian-American hip-hop producer Fredwreck as saying, “Why they building a wall around y’all’s people’s shit? That’s fucked up, cuz”²⁰⁴.

Despite the ongoing efforts to chomp our way to justice, hummus and falafel have made recent mainstream news reports depicting Palestinian cuisine as a hot plate of terrorism on the one hand, and authentically ‘Israeli’ on the other. On September 12, 2012, Minnesota Congresswoman Michele Bachmann courted controversy by reportedly declaring falafel a “gateway food” that should be banned from school lunches in the United States. *The Daily Current*²⁰⁵ reported that after visiting a local elementary school, Bachmann was irate when she found out that falafel patties were being offered as a vegetarian option. In a report later retracted as satire²⁰⁶ Bachmann stated, “Before you know it our children are listening to Muslim music, reading the Koran, and plotting attacks against the homeland. We need to stop these terror cakes now, before they infiltrate any further.”²⁰⁷ Less than a year later, these “terror cakes” became symbolic of Israeli culinary pride, a delectable “snack” that was a “local favorite”. On March 21, 2013, the *Times of Israel* reported that U.S. President Obama was to dine at Israeli

²⁰⁴<http://www.laweekly.com/informer/2014/06/06/the-actors-gang-saves-cat-on-a-hot-tin-roof-resurrects-play-as-noh8-fundraiser>

²⁰⁵ <http://dailycurrent.com/2012/09/28/bachmann-we-ban-falafel-school-lunches/>

²⁰⁶ <http://global.christianpost.com/news/michele-bachmanns-falafel-is-a-gateway-food-satire-mistaken-for-real-82559/>

²⁰⁷ <http://dailycurrent.com/2012/09/28/bachmann-we-ban-falafel-school-lunches/>

President Shimon Peres's residence to a feast that would reflect "local Israeli cuisine."²⁰⁸ The menu included "falafel balls" and hummus, topped with tahina sauce, to be followed by a main course of lamb chops and zucchini flowers stuffed with mushrooms²⁰⁹. Following the announcement, Palestinian chef, Ghassan Abdul Khaleq, told reporters that hummus and falafel "never were, and never will be, Israeli"²¹⁰. In a public statement, Abdul Khaleq stated: "We, a group of Palestinian chefs, are prepared to counter this flagrant Israeli attack on our culture by preparing the official dinner for presidents Obama and Abbas... [Our meal] will reveal the fallacious claims of the occupation and its continuous attempts to rob our folklore, this time in the presence of the president of the biggest country in the world."²¹¹ Obama's meal with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah was comprised of traditional Palestinian dishes including *msakhan*, a dish of roasted chicken seasoned with sumac and olive oil, baked with grilled onions and served on fresh *taboun* bread, Palestinian maftoul, and *frikeh*, a mildly spiced young wheat soup²¹².

The debates over soda bubbles, pureed chickpeas, and "terror cakes" is more than a political food fight. These mainstream and activist currents have made explicit the inextricable link between food and power, particularly within a the context of settler-colonialism. Indeed, Israeli appropriation of Palestinian cuisine has been part of a broader project of Palestinian vanishment. A most revealing example is, of course, olive oil. After Zionists expelled much of the Palestinian population in what is now considered Israel

²⁰⁸ <http://www.timesofisrael.com/chefs-clash-over-obamas-menu/>

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ <http://www.timesofisrael.com/chefs-clash-over-obamas-menu/>

²¹¹ <http://www.timesofisrael.com/chefs-clash-over-obamas-menu/>

²¹² Ibid.

proper, they had to decide what to do with the olive groves. As Israeli political scientist Meron Benvenisti recounts in his book *Sacred Landscape* (2000):

At first officials responsible for Jewish settlement thought that the production of olive oil might constitute a profitable venture, but it very quickly became clear that the Jewish agricultural sector was not set up to sustain this labor-intensive branch. Only a fraction of the olive groves were cared for and cultivated, whereas the vast majority were neglected. Tens of thousands of dunams of olive trees were uprooted to make room for field crops. (165)

However, olive trees proved to be much more resilient than the Zionist colonizers had anticipated. The project of vanishing the Palestinian olive was replaced with a new objective: to proclaim Jewish indigeneity through the appropriation of Palestinian olive oil. In a January 16, 2012 article published on the *The Electronic Intifada*²¹³, Ali Abunimah reports: “Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank are attempting to steal perhaps the most important symbol and source of economic sustenance for rural Palestinians: olive oil and olive culture.” In the article, Abunimah describes a professionally made YouTube video released by the ‘Matteh Binyamin Regional Council’ – an organizational body that represents illegal settler-colonies in the occupied West Bank – which reveals Jewish settlers, not Palestinians, as the true caretakers of the region’s olive trees and the heirs of its olive culture. The skit begins with an Israeli (represented an impressionable liberal) is dining at an Arabic restaurant eating hummus and olive oil. He finds the olive oil delicious, and inquires about its origins to two Palestinian servers (who are depicted as shady and slimy). One of the waiters explains that the oil has been made for “thousands of years” in a method consistent with

²¹³ *The Electronic Intifada* is an award-winning independent online news publication and educational resource focusing on Palestine, its people, politics, culture and place in the world. Founded in 2001, the news source has earned widespread recognition for publishing original, high-quality news and analysis, and first-person accounts and reviews.

Palestinian tradition. While he is speaking, the video cuts not to scenes of Palestinians harvesting olives and extracting oils, but rather to Jewish settlers wearing skullcaps using modern technology to sift through olives. The naïve Israeli diner completes his meal thinking he ate olive oil prepared by Palestinians, while the two caricatured Palestinian servers mock the fact that the oil is actually made by Jewish settlers. At the end of the video, the following message appears:

To the mountains of Binyamin and Shomron, Hebrew farmers returned, to grow olive trees lovingly as per the traditions of their forefathers, which is thousands of years old.

This form of Israeli cultural appropriation suggests that Palestinian food is a target of vanishment through the severing of Palestinian relationship to olives. The settler is represented as the proper cultivator of authentic and delicious oils produced from the land. Indeed, as Maya Mikdashi suggests, food appropriation has long figured into the processes of native vanishment, suggesting that sites of food preparation are fraught political sites where the processes of settler-colonial can be articulated and negotiated. Scott Morgensen argues that “non-Natives *become settlers* by adapting modes of gathering and cultivating food, as well as spiritual knowledges and practices²¹⁴. As such, Zionist Jews continue to *become settlers* through the appropriation of hummus, falafel and olive oil, and through the expropriation of land to make settlements where Israeli sodas can be manufactured on once Palestinian lands.

Neuroanthropologist John Allen has argued that the taste, smell, and texture of food can be extraordinarily evocative, bringing back memories not just of eating food

²¹⁴ Morgensen, “Un-Settling Settler Desire” from *Unsettling Ourselves: Reflections and Resources for Deconstructing Colonial Mentality* a sourcebook compiled by Unsettling Minnesota, September 2009, my emphasis.

itself but also of place and setting (2012)²¹⁵. Food is an effective trigger of deeper memories of feelings and emotions, internal states of the mind and body²¹⁶. This is not, however, a decontextualized story about Palestinian food and its relationship to memory. Instead, I see food as a site and a methodology where vanishment can be disrupted. It is where the ghosts of vanishment come to haunt. As Palestinian women pickle eggplants, stuff cabbage, cook prepare cactus jams, mold date cookies, and bake black cumin cakes, they speak, and they have many stories to say. The consumption and material production of food opens up conversations about pain, loss, and fragmentation and the ways in which native women create a sense of home, pleasure, and celebration within the harrowing and perturbing context of settler-colonial vanishment.

Despite the clear link between food and settler-colonialism, very little scholarship has addressed this relationship beyond the assertion that cultural appropriation of native peoples is form of genocide. What is surprisingly missing from the broader political and intellectual discourse on food, is that native peoples, in fact eat, too and food has been a vital way of surviving settler-colonialism and challenging cultural genocide. Due to the absence of cooking institutes to preserve and document Palestinian cooking, the art of cooking and preparing food has been passed on from generation to generation. Families become used to a certain method of cooking and develop their own tastes and techniques over the years. In each city of Palestine there are families that are well known for their fine cooking. Interaction between families takes place through marriage and neighborly relations, thus spreading recipes and cooking methods.

²¹⁵ John S. Allen is author of the *Omnivorous Mind* (2012). This citation comes from a post titled “Food and Memory” posted on the Harvard University Blog on May 18, 2012 at http://harvardpress.typepad.com/hup_publicity/2012/05/food-and-memory-john-allen.html

²¹⁶ Ibid.

Recent scholarship has analyzed the complex relationship between race and food, merging food studies, cultural studies, and ethnic studies, among other fields. Broadly, these works suggest that the study of race is critical to understanding food. According to Rachel Slocum, bringing together anti-racist theory and food research allows us to better understand farming and provisioning, tasting and picking, eating and being eaten, going hungry and gardening by paying attention to race (2011: 1-2). However, there is significantly less work on race and the consumption of food from the standpoint of colonized peoples. This is due in part to a difference between those who study production—generally from a political economy standpoint—and those who study consumption, generally from a more cultural perspective (Goodman and DuPuis, 2001). As such, this chapter intervenes within this burgeoning discourse to correct the lacuna, bringing in a study of food with settler-colonialism through a transnational feminist framework.

Gendered Memory: Palestinian Women’s Daily Struggles against Vanishment

*Can I record you?
I have no problem being recorded. Isn't my voice nice enough?
Yes, it is very nice.
Well, let me know when you begin. Here, I'll drink water to stay pleasant
for your ears.*

This is the beginning of my recorded conversation with Farida, a 60-year-old Palestinian *fellaha*²¹⁷ homemaker residing with her 68-year-old husband Jerius and 85-year-old

²¹⁷ A *fellaha* is a Palestinian female agricultural laborer and peasant (male form: *fellah*). The women that I interviewed plant, harvest, cultivate, prepare and cook from their farms and gardens, which I see as an extension of their kitchen. Rather than storing fruits and vegetables, for example, in a refrigerator as is common practice in many other kitchens, these women pick their produce directly from the land. Seeing

mother-in-law Aziza in the West Bank city of Beit Sahour. “We are from here” Aziza says, indicating a strong sense of place, belonging and attachment to the small Palestinian town just east of Bethlehem. Beit Sahour has a population of 12,400 people, 80% of which are Christian (most of them Greek Orthodox) and 20% Muslim. Among the many religious sites in Beit Sahour is Shepherd’s Field, a small valley filled with olive trees, some of which date back 2,000 years. It is in Shepherd’s Field where it is believed that an angel announced the birth of the Prince of Peace to the shepherds. Christian pilgrims and tourists from around the world regularly visit Beit Sahour to pray at the Cave Church where the tombs of three of the shepherds to whom the angel announced the birth of Christ are still visible. The origin of the name Beit Sahour (the house of vigilance) stems from the Canaanite words “Beit” meaning ‘place’ or ‘house’, and “Sahour” meaning ‘night watch’. The land provided shepherds green pastures for their flocks and herds to graze upon during the day and shelter in its caves at night. Its old stone houses are built between gentle hills separated by terraced green patches of wheat, grain, fruits and vegetables.

large trays of tomatoes drying in the sun (to make, for example, sun dried tomatoes) or piles of *molokhia* (jute’s plant) in the home is common and usual in any Palestinian household.



Figure 31: Shepherd's Field in Beit Sahour, 2014. Photo Credit: www.holylandpilgrimages.org

Today's Beit Sahour looks far different than the uninterrupted hills and abundant pastures of antiquity. In fact, Beit Sahour is increasingly shrinking. Israel's creation of the Har Homa settler-colony in the 1990s and its ongoing expansion today, as well as the apartheid wall, checkpoints, and Jewish-only bypass road 356 have been instrumental in the direct expropriation of land from Beit Sahour's residents, establishing a suffocating chokehold on the town and its indigenous population. Farida relays:

They've taken our land that we loved and that served us. Now we cannot use or even enter these lands. And Israel is choking our lands with a wall. We had 12 dunams of land. We used to plant wheat, grain, and sweet cucumbers. But today it is prohibited that we plant or harvest crops. They've fenced it and created a road in its place. There was also land belonging to Jerius's uncle, also gone. My mother-in-law tells me that the corn husks were taller than any man. It was a fertile and giving land. Now there is a barrier and they comb through the soil day and night looking for Palestinian trespassers, yelling through their megaphones that they depart or else be imprisoned. In the place of our lands, they've also made settlements. The settlers terrorize us. They don't allow that they go about their lives and we go about ours.

Indeed, Beit Sahour has been called a “strategic colony” as well as a “microcosm” of Israeli settler-colonialism by journalist Ben White for very good reason²¹⁸. After 1967, the state of Israel unilaterally and illegally expanded the municipality of Jerusalem, expropriating more land from Palestinian villages in the West Bank in order to do so²¹⁹. As a result, Beit Sahour lost 1,200 of its 7,000 dunams, amounting to 17% of its total land²²⁰. According to “Shrinking Space”, a report by the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the trajectory of Israel’s separation wall has charged through land belonging to Beit Sahour’s residents such that Palestinian olive groves are now “only accessible through two gates” that are opened “for limited periods during the annual olive harvest.”²²¹ Some communities in Beit Sahour will be completely encircled when the wall is completed, with a single gate controlled by Israel. Along with the wall, bypass road 356 is designed to contain the growth of Beit Sahour while also connecting Jewish settlements. The road connects the Har Homa settlement, occupied East Jerusalem and the Israeli settlement of Teqoa in the southeast, stretching from Bethlehem south to al-Khalil (Hebron).

²¹⁸ <http://electronicintifada.net/content/beit-sahour-microcosm-israeli-colonization/8790>

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.



Figure 32: Map of Separation Wall and Endangered Houses in Beit Sahour. Photo Credit: Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem.

The impact of this chokehold is felt in everyday life, particularly through the economic hardships faced by Beit Sahour's residents. Since the development of the settlements, wall, and other enclosures, the economic status of the population has severely declined, as many citizens have lost their jobs and have become unemployed. The unemployment rate in Beit Sahour has reached 17%²²².

Farida: The economic situation is atrocious. Work prospects are miserable. And we have gotten older. There is no retirement, no insurance, no social security, and no state to protect us. Life is hard. My children give us money, but they have their own expenses. And everything is expensive. Today the water bill collector came and charged us 140 NIS. I told him, 'I don't money to pay you'. And in two days the electricity comes. This is why so many people live in exile away from their land. They could not bear such a life that's like prisons. And what kind of life is there away from the land? They want us to disappear!

²²² http://vprofile.arij.org/bethlehem/pdfs/VP/Beit%20Sahour_cp_en.pdf

Aziza: Look at me, dear, I am 85 years-old. Who is going to mind my life? I work a little here and there—selling zaatar and some stitching—just to support myself. My son Jerius, Farida’s husband has had no work for 2 years! My other son has six daughters to mind, the one son he had was murdered by Israel. My younger son has four. And I am to add to my son’s burden and say, “son, I need money”?

Here, Farida and Aziza point to the intricate mechanisms of vanishment that shape their everyday experiences as Palestinian women living in the West Bank. Farida’s assertion that economic hardship and the absence of social security for Palestinians are part of a system of erasure that manifests in the most seemingly mundane forms. Her exclamation “They want us to disappear!” suggests that vanishment is always hovering and that the choking of Palestinian landscapes and livelihoods are part of these mechanisms of vanishment. Moreover, Farida’s statement that Palestinians are forced to live in exile “away from their land” due to these unbearable conditions can be read as another form of vanishment—Palestinian bodies are literally vanishing from the landscape in order to find opportunities for surviving elsewhere. Aziza reinforces this when she states that as an elderly woman—which in Palestinian tradition requires that her offspring care and provide for her as the elderly are considered sacred—she also must work in order to not burden her sons who are barely able to make ends meet. Here, Aziza is articulating her anxieties about the ways in which Palestinian cultural traditions of providing for elders have, too, vanished through these unbearable conditions, and that she has had to labor in order to resist pending vanishment.

In addition to being an important case study of the ongoing mechanisms of vanishment, Beit Sahour is a key site to analyze the relationship between gendered memory and food as it known as a village where Palestinian women and sustainable food

movements have played a decisive role in the resistance to Israeli occupation. During the First Intifada (1987-1993) the inhabitants of Beit Sahour refused to pay taxes to Israel, organizing a grassroots tax revolt appropriating the slogan, “No taxation without representation.” Many Sahouris were imprisoned as a result and in many cases the Israeli army raided homes, stealing the belongings of people who refused to pay taxes as compensation for their ‘debt’ to the Jewish state. One woman saw all her furniture and household equipment carried away. At last, she stood alone in her freshly robbed house. As the Israelis departed, the famous story goes, the woman stood on her porch and yelled to them: “Please don't go away. You’ve forgotten something... My curtains!”²²³ During this time, food became scarce. In 1988, Israel imposed curfews for months at a time, prohibiting Beit Sahour’s residents from going to buy groceries. Forty-one-year-old Bethlehem University professor, Jad Ishaq, was arrested in his home in Beit Sahour for growing and selling tomato and eggplant seedlings to encourage Palestinian economic self-sufficiency, which the Israeli state declared “illegal popular activity”²²⁴. Though the gesture was “mostly symbolic”, Ishaq hoped that the distribution of seedlings would offer some sustenance for the local population, particularly during the violent and unpredictable uprising that saw the murder of over 1,200 Palestinians—241 of them children—and arrests of over 120,000: “In case of hardship you’ll have tomatoes and eggplants to feed your children,” he said²²⁵. When the Israeli authorities closed West Bank schools for five months, Palestinian women in Beit Sahour opened makeshift classrooms in their kitchens.

²²³ Arab Educational Institute, *Moral Stories from Palestine*. Culture and Palestine Series, Bethlehem 1999, retrieved from <http://palestine-family.net/index.php?nav=5-206&cid=496-253&did=336>.

²²⁴ http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1988-06-12/news/8802040204_1_palestinians-west-bank-eggplants

²²⁵ http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1988-06-12/news/8802040204_1_palestinians-west-bank-eggplants

During my conversations with Farida, Aziza, and Yasmeen, food became a way to discuss a history fraught with vanishings: vanished peoples, vanished time, vanished love—all of which are linked through the broader condition of vanishing landscapes. In these ways, these conversations reveal the intersection between food, gendered memory and settler-colonialism. These women described historical and contemporary events from their complex positionalities in the context of ongoing vanishment. Their experiences as women within a settler-colonial occupation shaped their experiences through how they came to see their position in relation to the land, people, survival, and agency. At the same time, as they also transcend settler-colonialism precisely because they are women through subversive practices that are “off the radar”. Their role within a patriarchal society shaped these forms of agency as they used socially acceptable tropes of maternity and nurture to contribute to the resistance efforts particularly in times of crisis.

As a Palestinian cisgender woman who speaks fluent Arabic, and with family living in the West Bank, my dissertation project was enthusiastically received by Palestinians I met and much of the information I received I regarded as privileged information. People were constantly offering to share their stories, recipes, foods, and produce as a way of encouraging my research as well as a way of showing me in practice the ways in which the land was at the heart of their lives. This was in part enabled by the fact that before anyone could dismiss me as an *Ajnabiyeh*²²⁶ from yet another NGO, I transitioned from Valley Girl inflection to local dialect proficiency in a single sentence without a stutter. Having lived in the Middle East and spent my summers in Palestine since I was a child, I was aware of the familiar expressions and social codes, local

²²⁶ This is an Arabic word used to refer to Western European and U.S. peoples which literally translates into “foreigner.”

formalities and proper moment when etiquette could be dislodged among women. This knowledge garnered me the privileged status of *bint al balad*²²⁷. However, as a U.S. citizen, I also had freedoms in Palestine that the women I interviewed could only dream of, and they saw my undertaking as part of the collective resistance effort and individual responsibility against Palestinian vanishment. Moreover, Palestinian women were interested to hear about my studies and were drawn to my project about food, often insisting that I interview them because “everyone knows I am the best cook in town.” Viewing me as a valuable resource from the ‘land of plenty’, I also became a proficient Googler, answering questions about U.S. university tuition costs, how to obtain a visa for so-and-so to advance their studies, and in one case, how to get a divorce from an estranged U.S. husband. During the course of six years of research, I travelled to Palestine three times, for 3 months each time. I sat at many tables, ate many things, heard many stories, cried lots of tears, and laughed until I couldn’t breathe. These experiences culminated into a mixed methodology of listening and eating. Food allowed me to earn the trust that compelled these women to share all the tragic and lovely pieces of a fragmented life within the condition of vanishment. As such, I came to see food as an integral part of my methodology—it became the mechanism through which knowledge could be transmitted—linking material production with the relay of intimate knowledge. As we chewed, tasted, picked, sniffed, sipped, and sampled together, all of the dramas, frankness, tenderness, and anxieties of everyday life.

I met Farida through a circle of volunteers and tour guides from the 2012 olive picking program I participated in, who were helping me find a place to stay that was

²²⁷ Homegrown girl of the town or homeland; a “homegirl”

located close to the Palestinian *servees*²²⁸ station. She owned a flat next to her home that I was considering. It was a large, clean space with bare floors, and windows facing the sun. When Israel unleashed its eight-day assault on the Gaza Strip in November 2012—one that killed 40 children and over 100 civilians—I would often go into the vacant room with the large window and watch the sunset to the sound of bombs and shots in the distance. Farida was immediately taken by my dissertation project:

Well it should be about our food, our olives. We are Palestinian! Our insides yearn for olive oil. We wait for the olive tree all year to collect her fruits, we sell her bits, we extract the oils, and if there is extra, we sell what we can for income. The olive wood we benefit from and the jift²²⁹ we use for our furnaces. Our dishes—Palestinian dishes—call for olive oil.

Here, Palestinian survival is linked to the olive in many ways; the Palestinian olive is a sacred tree that indicates that Palestinian spiritual survival is contingent on the symbolic value of the olive tree—what many in Palestine call *al shajara al muqadassa*²³⁰ or *al shajara al mubarak*²³¹. Farida’s assertion that “our insides call for olive oil” suggests that olive oil sustains Palestinian corporeal life—that Palestinian flesh and bones are invigorated by the fruit and its extracts. In other words, olive oil is a vital necessity for literal life. Her use of the words “our” and “we” move beyond her individual desire and need to a collective one—suggesting that her own body is linked to the collective body of Palestinian people. The notion that “we wait for the olive tree all year” indicates that time in Palestine wraps around the fall olive tree harvest. Moreover, the women explain to me that the olive tree is consumed to sustain familial life because even its by-products are made into blocks of dirt that provide fuel for furnaces in the winters. Above all, the olive

²²⁸ Minibus taxi

²²⁹ Mill byproducts

²³⁰ ‘the sacred tree’

²³¹ ‘the tree of blessings’

oil is the central ingredient in Palestinian cuisine where virtually Palestinian meals depend on olive oil. Moreover, themes of nurture and abundance versus vanishment and scarcity were immediately apparent as I began to converse with Palestinian women about olives.

Though I did not end up staying at her flat, Farida would often call me to provide me with any information including flyers for olive oil tastings and festivals, contacts for people in Beit Sahour working with olive wood and seed, and other literature she thought would interest me. Because Beit Sahour is a popular alternative spring break destination for Europeans wanting to perform humanitarian service, the town is filled with NGOs distributing flyers and pamphlets, statistics and studies—all of which Farida saved for me. To her, every bit of information was precious, and I seemed to represent a window to a world that had already vanished the Palestinian people:

These papers I brought for you, Lila. There's a lot of good information for you. You must read them for your project because it is relevant and important. Every detail is good for you to know. Go and take this information to America. They do not know about us here. Tell them about how we suffer here.

At first, our meet-ups were a matter of convenience. I would come by to see if she was home as I travelled to and from interviews, bus tours, workshops, lectures, volunteering, and cooking classes. Some nights were cold and rainy, and running low on energy and money, I often found comfort and hot coffee at Farida's home. I enjoyed hearing her speak and like most Palestinian women I met, she had many questions about my studies (in Palestine no interview goes one way):

*Farida: You came. I will make you coffee.
LS: Thank you; I will enjoy a coffee with you.*

Farida: It will warm you. The night's breeze is cold enough to shake the bones! And why aren't you eating your cookies?

LS: Sellim yedeki²³², thank you.

Farida: Earlier today I made cabbage. I boiled it and then added to it olive oil, fresh lemon juice, and garlic. My partner is not a fan of meat so I make cabbages, eggplants, and really with olive oil, lemon, salt, and garlic, you can make any vegetable, roasted or leafy, delicious. You must try. What will you write about this?

It did not occur to me until several meetings had passed that Farida was exactly who I was searching for. Every time I saw her, she was working her land, picking olives and wheat, pickling eggplants, rolling dough, preparing hot meals for guests from Italy or the Netherlands (she is registered as a homestay for tourists through her church and women's group) in addition to managing household finances and attending English-speaking classes. Farida is a helpless busybody who spoke with a pedantic resolve that reminded me of my own mother. She is practical, audacious, brilliant, and unintentionally hilarious. She rarely smiled and even when she laughed, her lips never abandoned the frown firmly planted on her face. In time, I learned that Farida's frankness and sarcastic sense of humor masked a deep anguish as the landscapes, terraces, and fruit trees all around her were being disappeared and replaced:

There is an area in Beita Jala called al-Makhoor. It was filled with olives. An area that is high and mountainous. There was a man who had a house there that he made into a restaurant. It's was a kookh²³³. People would go and dine there. It's a very calm and quiet place. One day they came and with their bulldozers, they destroyed the kookh. Oh Lila, I tell you, one takes a meal there and oh, how beautiful this was. I went there once, with my daughter and her boys—they invited us there for dinner. A wildly beautiful place. And now, they took it. Until now, they go with their bulldozers. Of course they wanted her, you know. She's on top of a hill staring at Jerusalem! They came and they took her! They took control over it and it has vanished for us. The olives, the figs, the grapes, the apples, the apricots. Something that'll make you mad with its beauty.

²³² This is an expression of gratitude that literally translates to "may peace be brought to your hands."

²³³ an old house built of clay or wood

In this quote, Farida recalls a time of abundance and life, when olives, figs, grapes, apples, and apricots filled a peaceful hilltop now replaced by the local bypass road for Jews only. Her memory is connected to the fruits and trees that decorated this place—a place where families ate their meals far away from the smog and density of Palestinian cities like Bethlehem, Ramallah, al-Khalil (Hebron) and Nablus. “Betjennin”²³⁴ she tells me, addressing the hilltop as a wildly beautiful feminine who gazed directly into the eyes of Jerusalem like lovers. From the standpoint of these women, the vanishing landscapes are equated to a story of vanished love. The notion that “they took it” and “of course they wanted her” reflects a gendered language of penetration as a ‘man taking a woman’ by force. This can also be read as a subversive statement against masculinity—against violence, taking, militarized force, and penetration. In her description, Farida implicates me, a Palestinian woman, telling me that I too would be mad by al-Makhoor’s beauty suggesting a particular kind of affect between native women and the landscapes. These calm and abundant spaces are sites of love and sharing meals, before they are desired as objects by a colonial masculinity. Interestingly, the notion that the hilltop was a fertile place of apricots, figs, and olives counters the hegemonic Zionist narrative of a barren, unlovable landscape. In fact, Farida’s words paint an image of lovers violently separated from one another and forbidden from seeing each other as the beautiful hilltop can no longer gaze into the eyes of her Jerusalem, who is also figured as beautiful, lovely, sacred, and desirable.

²³⁴ This is a colloquial Arabic word that literally translates to “she maddens,” usually referring to something or someone beautiful and lovely.

When I asked Farida to introduce herself, her words reveal the mundane forms of vanishment that impact the lives of Palestinian women daily:

My name is Farida Musleh from Bait Sahour. I've reared a home. I have 2 boys and 2 girls. I was born here and have been in Beit Sahour all my life. My mother and father are from Beit Sahour too. My husband is a laborer who works in construction. I am sixty years old. My oldest son Atallah works in the olive wood industry. He makes candles, rosaries, vases and many things. His work space is here behind our house. Beit Sahour is known for its olive woodworks. My husband is Jerius. For two years and four months he has been prohibited from a permit to Israel for work. Why? We don't know. Even though he's an old man and has had a permit before, nothing. So until now he has no work.

A cursory listen (or read) of this quote may not hear what is spoken beyond a story of a down-and-out homemaker, with a son who creates Christian-themed olive wood figurines, and an unemployed husband who cannot work in Israel because the state refuses to grant him a permit for unknown reasons. However, a deeper reading reveals the mundane forms of violence woven into this description, one that hints at the intricate processes of vanishment that impact the everyday lives of Palestinians living in the West Bank. Among them are the ways in which Israel has banned West Bank residents from entry into areas conquered in 1948 (Israel proper, or 'the Jewish state') through a regime of permits. In addition, Palestinians in the West Bank are forced to carry their identity cards at all times which determine where they are allowed to live, eat, walk, and travel. These permit regimes, along with the checkpoints, movement restrictions, and apartheid wall collectively contribute to the shrinking of Palestine for those living in West Bank towns like Beit Sahour. Farida's goes on to discuss this draconian permit regime system, and the way it has impacted life in other ways:

The occupation has ruined our life so much. It has stolen the land we love. We cannot go to Jerusalem, our city. We cannot go to visit her or pray in

her churches. Every encounter with her requires a permit. We get a permit during Christmas and the big Muslim holidays—so maybe 2 or 3 times a year we can visit. It's just based on Israel. But why would I go visit and pray in the beautiful city without my partner? And if you were ever imprisoned by them for whatever reason, resistance or on the basis of their suspicions or whatever—you know because we are Palestinian, they take our men and boys all the time—there is no way you can get a permit.

This quote is significant in many ways. The reference to Jerusalem as “our city” suggests a collective, affective relationship that transcends the physical barriers and draconian permit regimes that are imposed on Palestinians residing in the West Bank. Though Farida had not visited Jerusalem in six years, she still relayed to “her” like a familiar friend. In this way, memory reconstitutes Palestinian geography in a way that refigures Palestine as still coherent despite the walls, checkpoints, and movement restrictions. Moreover, the use of the words “land we love”, “our men and boys” and “Christmas and the Muslim Holidays” creates the sense that Farida speaks to a united Palestinian people irrespective of religious preference—one that disrupts the constant portrayal of the “Middle East conflict” as a result of religious antagonisms.

Farida’s daughter-in-law is Yasmeen, who is married to Farida’s second son Hanna. Yasmeen has sharp cheekbones and a no-fuss personality. She is very beautiful in her simplicity. Though she is more stylish than Farida and wears contemporary clothing—unlike Aziza who dons the traditional Palestinian *thoub*²³⁵—Yasmeen dresses casually and wears no makeup. Unlike Farida who did not pursue education after high school, and Aziza who is illiterate, Yasmeen is formally educated. She studied Politics at Bethlehem University, earning her Bachelor’s degree there. She would like to return to obtain her Master’s degree but has not found time between working and her two small

²³⁵ A *thoub* is an ankle-length garment, usually with long sleeves, with stitching patterns representing the village in Palestine a woman comes from.

children. She lives with her husband, Hanna in a flat next door to Farida, and visits her mother-in-law often to get pickled eggplants and jams that Farida learned to prepare by hand from Aziza. Her children love their grandmother's sweet cactus, currant jams, and molasses. Yasmeen, too, is concerned about water:

Israel controls our water. In the settlements, there is running water 24 hours a day. Instead, we have to buy water every couple of weeks. There are areas in the West Bank where water supply is out of reach, where they only get water every month or so. We try to use water very sparingly because we are afraid that a supply will be cut off and God only knows how long it will be before we have water again. In the summer times, this is the worst. There is so much traffic over water. The summers are so hot that you must shower more frequently. This of course makes more laundry to wash. So we turn the water on drop by drop, and we are always arranging our lives, our dishwashing and our washes in a way that conserves the little precious water we have. I count the drops.

Farida chimes in:

The settlers often contaminate the well water. We hear stories about the water poisoned with chemicals and pesticides. The tanks that the water comes in are contaminated too and there have been so many incidents of kidney failures. But the West Bank is like Eden with water flowing beneath the ground. Our water, and Israel takes it for the settlers. On top of taking our land and water from us, they dump their sewage on Palestinian villages.

Yasmeen and Farida are right to be concerned about water disappearing in Beit Sahour. In 1967, the year Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, water resources were brought exclusively under Israeli control. Since then, Palestinians have been denied access to an adequate share of water according to the World Health Organization²³⁶, and have been severely restricted in their ability to develop their water resources. Palestinians who attempt to build a rainwater cistern in their fields are issued with a demolition order by Israeli authorities due to “a lack of a building permit.”

²³⁶ <http://www.who.int/en/>

According to UNOCHA, the practice of demolishing Palestinian wells and water reserves in the West Bank has intensified in recent years, with over 200 structures demolished between 2009 and 2011²³⁷. Permits are nearly impossible to obtain. The Palestinian Water Authority which functions within the capacity of the U.S.-backed Palestinian Authority (PWA), supplies water to Palestinian cities and villages in the West Bank at inflated costs due to the dwindling supply²³⁸. Moreover, the PWA is largely dependent on water purchase from the Israeli company Mecerot. However, Mecerot's water supply comes from the Palestinian territories, as Farida stated. In fact, Israel claims up to 89% of an underground aquifer that is largely located in the West Bank, giving Palestinians only access to the remaining 11%²³⁹.

Aziza has just returned from collecting olives from the trees around her house. An elderly woman of eighty-five years, she is narrowly framed and petite. She speaks slowly and softly unlike Farida's high pitched voice and Yasmeen's loud tenor. She lives in a small studio-size flat adjacent to Farida and Jerius's larger house. She has a broad smile and wears a wrap around her hair, as fellaheen women often do. Her face is golden, wrinkled and charming, with laugh lines permanently pinching the skin besides her eyes. Unlike Yasmeen and Farida who are stern in their demeanor, Aziza is light-hearted, lovely, and full of energy. She has gold studs in her ears and gold bangles that add jingle to her swagger.

²³⁷ Source: UNOCHA.

²³⁸ It is important to note that generally, the water quality is considerably worse in the Gaza strip when compared to the West Bank. About a third to half of the delivered water in the Palestinian territories is lost in the distribution network. The lasting blockade of the Gaza Strip and the Gaza War have caused severe damage to the infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. For more information on the water crisis in Gaza, the author recommends a 9/3/3009 UN report titled "Gaza water crisis prompts UN call for immediate opening of crossings".

²³⁹ <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/westbank-water-restrictions-israel.html>

Aziza: Ahlan wa Sahlan! I was picking olives. Praise God! The land is good today. Don't you love olives, Lila?

LS: I love olives very much.

Aziza: Every day I pick a little. I am not young anymore but I am still spirited. But the Jews have taken so much of our trees. There is hardly anything left. Wallahi²⁴⁰, our very eyes they've taken from us!

In Palestinian (and more broadly, Arab) culture, eyes are symbolic of life. They are considered the most valuable part of humanity; in fact in metaphorical language, the eyes and the heart are considered interchangeable. Aziza's exclamation that "our very eyes they have taken from us" suggests that along with Palestinian lands, Israel has also stolen Palestinian life. This sentiment was immediately apparent when Farida and Aziza shared a most profoundly disturbing death in their family by an Israeli settler in 1991, during First Intifada:

Aziza: My dear girl let me tell you, during the First Intifada, the shelling was so severe, we hid in the staircase. Six granddaughters from my oldest son and four granddaughters from my youngest and I slept together on the staircase. We were paralyzed, terrified of moving, only moving to boil water to make a cup of tea for the children. The shots fired above our heads. Do you see the two shots through the side there? They went right through the wall and went straight to the bed here. You see? The bullets shot right through our home.

Farida: In 1991 it was the Gulf War and the First Intifada together so Israel imposed a harsher curfew. All of the West Bank was imprisoned in their houses and we were prohibited from turning on the lights. The curfew was suffocating us. At the time all of the neighbors had gathered at Jerius's brother's home to watch television. Jerius's nephew Salam became hungry and asked his mother to prepare him a sandwich. He was ten at the time and as he waited for his mother, he stood by the door. One settler crossed the bypass road and began shooting. He must have seen light flickering from the television. The settler shot at the window and a bullet hit Salam right in his head. He died immediately. The young men of the uprising took the boy's body and hid it. They refused to surrender his body to the Israeli military. If anyone is considered a martyr for Palestine, the military wants their body, but they take the kidneys of our young martyrs. They return a hollow body and say, 'okay you may bury now'. My

²⁴⁰ Arabic expression that literally translates into "With God"; in a sentence, "Wallahi" means "honest to God" or "With God as my witness".

husband went to get the body so that we could finally have a proper burial for him. He carried the Salam's dead body all the way back as it was dripping with blood. Why do you think my husband's hair is so white? Israel discovered this and immediately demanded the body from us to perform an investigation, they said. We agreed to give Salam to them if they promised that one of our village doctors could accompany them. They finally agreed. We waited first for 5 hours, then 10, then a day. Finally, 31 hours passed and they gave us Salam's corpse. He had been undressed and his clothes replaced with a loose sheet and then thrown in a plastic garbage bag. We were halfway toward the church, when the Israeli military stopped us and said, 'Turn around. You cannot bury the boy during a curfew.' The next night they said, 'you may bury the boy but only 20 people are to attend'. They had barricaded the Orthodox Church and numbered us as we entered: "1-2-3" all the way to 20. They surrounded us with military jeeps and armed soldiers. They did not even let us ring the bell of grief—which indicates that there is dead among us. They refused. We could not pray in loud voices. When we went to the cemetery, we found our young men hiding in the graves waiting for us so that they could be part of the ritual.

Farida's memory of the First Intifada reveals many forms of vanishing: Salam's body is vanished by the settler through his death; Salam's body vanishes by Israel in order for the state to conduct its 'investigations'; the church's bell is silenced by the army, vanishing Palestinian alerts to a death; the resistance hides Salam's body to strategically vanish him in order to avoid Israel taking his organs—yet another form of material vanishment; the clothing on Salam's back are vanished and he is dumped in a garbage bag; the women and young children hide in the staircase to feign vanishment from Israelis to avoid corporeal death; the young Palestinian boys vanish into open graves to wait until they can grieve with Salam's family...the list is never ending. Like Aziza's eyes, Salam's body is taken, indicating that Palestinian humanity is subject to multiple forms of vanishment at the whim of the colonial state.

During my conversations with these Palestinian women, I felt that there was an ongoing resistance to vanishment through the conjuring of memory. These moments of

‘anti-vanishment’ hovered around the olive and the olive tree, which provided the direct link between Palestinian bodies and the land, anchoring the women to Palestine through cultivation, taste, and pride. When I ask Aziza to describe the experience of harvesting her olives, her response reveals memories of love and nurture, responsibility and familial joy:

There is nothing more beautiful than the harvesting of my olives. I pick each one like it is a precious jewel. And I speak to these trees as though they are my children and my beloved. I love the olive tree and she loves those who give to her. Don't you know, the more you give the land, the more the land gives back. I used to also harvest as a young girl as my family had a plot of land with olive trees. We all harvested together, the old and the young. My father loved the land very much. He used to plant sweet cucumbers, garbanzo beans, squash...the land gave to him because he was very generous with the land. He loved the land so much. Before the land brought us great pleasure and people would sit outside and enjoy one another, but today the people have become distracted by their outings and their television and computers.

For Aziza, the olive represents a labor of love, one that she inherited from her father one hundred years before. Again, the olive tree is represented as an abundant feminine, one that is generous and loving in return to those who provide her with proper care. Of course, the ability to provide for the olive has been limited by the ongoing conditions of vanishment; however, there is another story of loss woven into the quote above: the notion that the simple life that once sustained her father and that she finds sacred have been complicated by the emerging desires of youth who are pursuing a different form of pleasure, one that Aziza views as a distraction from the joys of cultivating land. She continues:

Life was simpler than the life of today. Say it was time for supper, and we placed on the table a plate of salad, two rounds of fresh bread, and a plate of olives. In my time, they would see the meal before them and say "Praise God!" Today, a cup of tea and pickled olives will not do for the youth.

Before me, the women place olives they have pickled. These are last year's olives. They have been marinating all year in saltwater, lemon, and chili peppers. They show me the process of preparation, detailing each step as though it were a precious code, with each of the women building on the last. I walk through the garden behind the house where green and black olives are piled high—Aziza's work. They also show me cauliflower, parsley, sweet cucumbers, wheat and grain. Aziza and Farida tell me of their culinary creations with pride and joy:

Farida: We live a life of fellaheen. It is enough to eat clean bread and clean food. You can taste the earth in these pickled eggplants—there are no chemicals whatsoever in them. I will pay the price of the water to cultivate and nurture them, just so I can eat something that is not sprayed with pesticides and chemicals.

Aziza: Before there weren't individual kitchens like today. Everyone in the neighborhood had to share the same oven (ein taboun). A woman had to roll her dough and take it to bake. And before the shepherds would let their sheep graze and they would feed on grass under the sun. Natural foods. Now, things are different and they impact the flavor of meat.

Farida: The sheep and goats feed on manufactured foods. Before, a butcher would not kill for meat every day. It is not like today where one goes to the store and purchases meat for one or two weeks and keeps it in a freezer. My mother would take okra and grapeleaves, stick a needle attached to thread through them, and hang them inside the house. When the time came to cook them, she would boil the leaves in hot water, and they would become nice and delicate, ready for her to stuff them with spiced rice and meat. How delicious our land is that feeds us from her bounty!

....

Farida: My mother gave me these olives here. Look Lila what I've done with them. They are lovely. I have stuffed the olives with carrots, walnuts, with chili peppers and soaked the stuffed olives in saltwater. These olives are pickled olives, you see? But I add something delicious to the center that gives them crunch and spice. I have a machine that takes out the seeds. And then I cut the carrots very finely, and then I crush the walnuts, and add the red hot chili peppers. I also make pickled eggplants, and jellies of all kinds.

Aziza: I make zaatar of thyme I collect from around the house. I sell it too to people in the village. After I collect the thyme, dry it, and grind it until it is very fine and I add to the crushed thyme, toasted wheat.

Farida: Do you see how delicious fresh food from the earth is? To make the bread, I plant the wheat, I clean it, I remove the weeds, and then I grind the wheat. [goes for a moment a returns with a bag of flour]. Run your fingers, feel how soft it is. It is wheat flour. This is 100% health. Now we mix this flour with white flour to balance the flavor because whole wheat doesn't rise well. It sticks together. I mix them and add to it yeast, salt and water. I bake them in a wooden oven I have in the back of my house. My mother-in-law taught me how to do all of this and it is from her that I inherited these ovens. We eat from this wheat bread because it tastes right to eat something that was picked from the earth with our hands.

Aziza: The zaatar I make is from toasted wheat with dried dill. We dry the herbs and grind them and add the spices that are specifically for the zaatar: sumac, coriander, salt... to give that flavor.

Farida: [continues placing plates of foods and fresh bread before me] Please take your supper here with me. I will make tea. The eggplant I pickled with chili, garlic, lemon and saltwater. You can drizzle olive oil over it. Taste this with the bread, Lila!

In this exchange, the process of preparation, cooking, cultivating and harvesting can be read as personal narratives that detail an intimate relationship between Palestinian women and the land. All of the dishes that were prepared had stories that involved the nurture and care of the lands that was met with their careful hands. The foods that were made from the earth were considered to sustain Palestinian bodies in ways that modern, processed foods, and foods stored in a freezer cannot. In this way, the land of Palestine literally sustains the bodies of Palestinian people. Wheat, grain, and produce picked from the earth are not only tastier, but also healthier. As Farida says earlier, Palestinian bodies *call for the land*. At the same time, the ways in which Palestinian bodies are sustained is not limited to notions about indigenous cultivation processes being better for the health. There is a deeper story being told about vanishment. Through the cultivation, harvesting, and cooking of foods taken directly from the earth, Palestinian identity and culture are

being preserved. In this way, these foods are ways of resisting vanishment. Palestinian women become agents through their knowledge of the earth, and interrupt the ongoing processes of vanishment through the assertion that their intrinsic being—their pleasure, health, identity—are part of the land.

The grief that these women express over the ways in which food taste and quality have regressed is also significant. While they might indeed be disappointed that their youth are now concerned with electronics and unimpressed by the simplicity of a plate of olives and hearty breads, a deeper read reveals that this grief is much more about vanishment. As land vanishes for Palestinians, the opportunities to experience abundance, pleasure, and sustenance from the earth have become stolen from them. In this exchange, these women are expressing their anxieties about their children becoming more distant from the land. Indeed, both Aziza and Farida seem to ask: *if the olive sustains the Palestinian body, and the youth do not learn to cultivate, what will happen when their bodies yearn for the fruits of the earth they have been disappeared from?* While it is true that smart phones and social media have taken the attention Aziza's great grandchildren, Israeli settler-colonialism has forced Palestinians from their lands, preventing them from cultivating and harvesting the foods that their bodies call for. For young people to lose this attachment contributes to the process of vanishment. The sense of pending vanishment was palpable and not only to me. During this exchange between Farida and Aziza, Yasmeen was relatively quiet, pausing only to taste as I did the delicious wheat breads, seasoned cabbage, stuffed pickled eggplants, apricot jams and zaatars before us. She listened attentively as I did, both of us letting the irreversible damage sink in, weighing heavily on our hearts. We ate as though the land was disappearing before us,

much to the pleasure of Aziza and Farida who enjoyed watching us delight in their homegrown labor.

As Farida had mentioned, the various parts of the olive tree were consumed in order to sustain Palestinian bodies. She told me that no Palestinian home was complete without olive oil, which was a central ingredient in many Palestinian dishes. Olive oil is also used for hair and skin, as a lubricant, a natural insecticide, and as the central ingredient for *sabooneh Nablussieh* or the famous soap from the West Bank city of Nablus which is said to be superior in quality but also gentle enough on the skin. Pickled olives were a condiment that accompanied every meal. Some people had only a plate of olives and fresh whole breads for their breakfasts, and for many Palestinians this was satisfactory. Olive pits are used to make prayer beads that are used by both Palestinian Christians and Muslims and can be found in shops all over Beit Sahour. *Jift*, the remains of the olive after the production of oil, is recycled for energy source and used to heat furnaces in the winter.

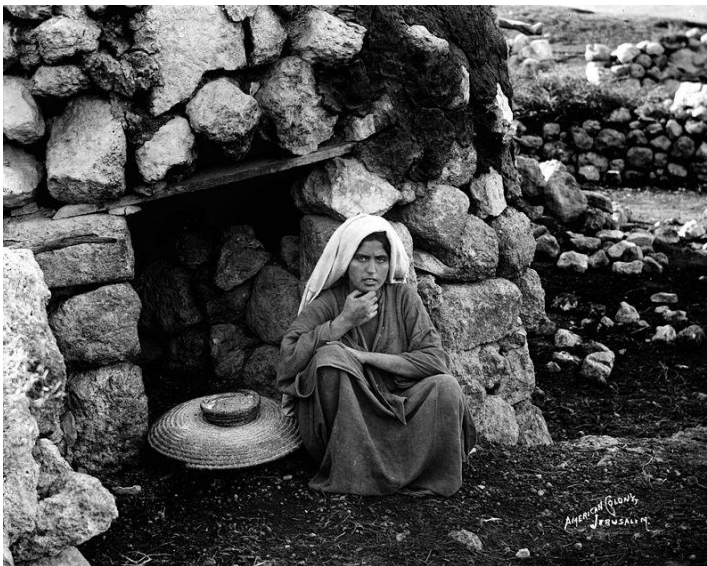


Figure 33: Village oven or “ein taboun” in Palestine, 1898-1914. Photo Credit: American Colony, Jerusalem.

Yasmeen: You will find olive oil in every Palestinian pantry. Don't you like msakhan?

The Palestinian national dish is *Msakhan* is an Arabic meaning 'reheated' derived from the word *sakhan*, 'to heat'. Aziza, Farida, and Yasmeen tell me that the dish as we know it today is a derivative from an older recipe from the town of Qalqilia in the northern part of the West bank in which day-old *taboun*²⁴¹ bread was moistened with olive oil. Over time, the bread was flavored with sumac and onions grilled in olive oil. Now it consists of roasted chicken baked with onions, sumac, allspice, and saffron atop *taboun* bread—which is prepared in a traditional oven (see figure 7). I found it remarkable that these Palestinian women were able to recall the recipe off-hand as well as its place of origin and how it developed over time.

During times of crisis, both Aziza and Farida recall that the olive tree was a site of nurture and protection. During the 1948 war, for example, Aziza recalls that upon hearing gunshots and bombings and stories of massacres at Deir Yassin²⁴², many women took their children and retreated into the olive groves, hiding among the trees. Soon, the olive groves were filled with a sea of people from all over Palestine attempting to hide from the European Jews who were depopulating Palestinian villages one by one:

²⁴¹ *Taboun* is a flatbread wrap traditionally baked in a *Taboun* oven (called *ein taboun*). It is sold as street food, stuffed with hummus, falafel, cheeses, or olive oil and zaatar. It is made out of chickpea flour, and through the cooking methods it creates a light "wheat flour style" texture.

²⁴² Early in the morning of Friday, April 9, 1948, commandos headed by Menachem Begin, and the Stern Gang attacked Deir Yassin, a village with about 750 Palestinian residents. It was several weeks before the end of the British Mandate. By noon over 100 people, half of them women and children, had been systematically murdered. Twenty-five male villagers were loaded into trucks, paraded through Jerusalem, and then taken to a stone quarry and shot to death. A final body count of 254 was reported by *The New York Times* on April 13, a day after they were finally buried. Palestinians were stunned and started to flee for their lives. Of about 144 houses, 10 were dynamited. The cemetery was later bulldozed and, like hundreds of other Palestinian villages to follow, Deir Yassin was wiped off the map. By September, Orthodox Jewish immigrants from Poland, Rumania, and Slovakia were settled there.

Aziza: When the Jews came in 1948, I was pregnant with Jerius, Farida's husband. I remember it clearly. We ran into the woods. There was a woods belonging to my father-in-law, may he rest in peace, and we ran among the trees to hide from the Jews. My oldest daughter was one year and eight months old at the time. The world was running, escaping, afraid. A sea of people were trying to escape from wherever the shots were coming from, seeking protection among the olive trees. You could see a mother of six wrapped around her, running in terror, leaving their homes behind hoping to find shelter among trees with the Jews shooting directly at them. I was very afraid because there were stories about the Jews humiliating the girls. From Deir Yassin, we heard stories of women who were pregnant and [the Jews] cut their bellies with knives.

Aziza's is a gendered memory in many ways. Firstly, the notion that the land, which Aziza and Farida both described as having an intimate connection with indigenous women, became a site of nurture during colonial invasion is itself a gendered narrative. In this case, the trees become a maternal figure, wrapping and shielding Palestinian women and their children in her branches from the armed men that are attempting to penetrate her. Aziza's fear of being hypervisible as a pregnant woman during also complicates her experience as a colonial subject. She describes feeling particularly vulnerable as she had heard about the mechanisms of torture in Deir Yassin that were targeting women who were pregnant. As a Palestinian woman bearing indigenous offspring, her body represented the demographic threat against the Jewish nation that was being imposed. As a result, Aziza felt that both her life and the life of her child would be endangered in the most torturous of ways. The women had a similar story to share about the war of 1967:

Aziza: During the 1967 war, the Jews raided here and threatened us with a massacre. We were expecting another Deir Yassin here in Beit Sahour. We fled from our homes to people who live further away from the city that were relatives of ours. On the edge of Beit Sahour, they had a grove and we arranged ourselves there, not knowing if we would make it back alive. My youngest child was 2-years-old. I held him in my arms with a basket of bread, took my children and ran to the olives. They were shooting above our heads and bombs were exploding all over. We took to the trees to hide

only to find it packed with people, women, children. We sat among them, on dirt and rocks, with roaches and rats crawling around. The children began to cry—they needed milk. They needed their supper. Many children, crying, wailing. I found two round onions planted amid the earth at the edge of the woods, and cut them up and fed the children onions and bread, bite by bite. Among us was Fatima, we called her Um Khader, may she rest, who insisted on returning to her house despite the bombing because she had a cow and wanted to quench the children's thirst of their milk because they were crying and she knew milk would comfort them. She came to her home find a bomb had exploded in her yard splitting her cow right in half. We had warned her, saying "Don't find yourself amid the rubble Um Khader, it is not worth your life". She saw her home destroyed and though the bombs exploded from every direction she could not stay at the empty house. She attempted to milk the dead cow for any milk that remained in its breasts, and returned to us saying, "Come women, boil this milk and feed your infants."

There was a long pause as the women both began to tear up. Yasmeen warned them to dry their tears lest their salt should ruin their breads. Both women managed a smile. They continued:

Aziza: In the ruins of war, there wasn't a tomato to pick or a sweet cucumber to moisten the bread. We searched among ourselves and found a container of rice and boiled it and my father-in-law found a bit of olive oil and we gave each child a bit. Hours later, we heard that the Jews had raided Beit Sahour just around midnight. There was terror among us—what will they do to us?

Farida: At the time, I was a girl of 14 or 15 years old. We had hid in the mountains. It was a Thursday when we returned, and I remember shrieking at the top of my lungs, "how did our village fall?!" "How did we lose our village?!" We screamed and screamed and screamed until there was no air in our lungs.

Aziza: May God not repeat that day for anyone.

Farida: We couldn't believe it. Among the olive groves on Monday, I remember it clearly. My father and I saw an image I could never forget. Between the olives, there were people everywhere. My father told me, "Daughter, there are many children among them. Go inside and make tea in a large pot." Whatever bread we had, we placed before them with the tea and olives, olive oil with zaatar. Whatever we had, we fed them. Where they went after? No one knows.

During the six-day war of 1967, the West Bank was occupied by Israel (along with the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, East Jerusalem, and Sinai Peninsula). As a West Bank village, Beit Sahour was targeted and many of its residents fled on foot to Jordan. Some of them made it and many did not. In popular memory, there is a story of a woman who hears the Jewish raids approaching, and grabs a bundle thinking it is her baby and runs, only to find once she had reached safety that it was no more than a stuffed pillow.

In these exchanges, Aziza once again describes retreating to the olives for safety. Only this time, she did not find scattered families attempting to escape the Palestinian lands conquered in 1948; instead she finds a swarm of people squeezed between rocks, with rats and roaches scurrying about, and children crying everywhere, starving. The scene is chaotic. The olive trees' branches were not enough to sustain the swarm of West Bank residents who were running amid bullets and bombs with their children, evacuating their homes in the dead of the night. Like her recollection of 1948, 1967 revolves around food and groves. The difference is that during this moment of crisis, abundance and fertility are replaced with scarcity and hopelessness. Um Khader, a village midwife, runs frantically, as death hovers over her head, hoping to quench the thirst and spirits of the wailing babies hiding with their shaken mothers amid the limbs of the olive tree. She returns only to find her cow freshly split by an Israeli bomb. The image of Um Khader desperately and frantically attempting to obtain milk from the breasts of a lifeless, blood-soaked creature is at its core a gendered configuration of death. The cow, a symbol of fertility, abundance, nurture, femininity, power, and earthliness, is pulverized by the Israeli war machine. Instead of milk, she oozes blood, her torn flesh symbolic of the carnage and mutiny surrounding her pulseless body.

Aziza's recollection that during times of war, there isn't a tomato or sweet cucumber to sweeten dry bread is as symbolically powerful as it is devastating. This memory reveals the abundant pastures of Shepherd's Field and its surrounding groves to have transformed into spaces of death. Where once the giving earth provided fresh fruits and tall corn husks that nourished the insides of Palestinian bodies, now there is only death and pending vanishment in its place. In these ways, food becomes a way to articulate pain and loss during times of war. Moreover, these Palestinian's memories are shaped by their positionalities as women, mothers, and daughters—further elucidating the ways in which memory is gendered. During the 1967 war, for example, Farida was called upon by her father to boil tea for a sea of children that they found among the olive trees, famished and with no place to go. Aziza and Um Khader were left to contend with crying children and infants who needed milk and supper. Aziza retreats to the earth only to find two round onions, which she peels and distributes along with crumbs of bread to the swarm of empty stomachs around her. Here, Aziza, Um Khader and Farida experience the war as women and maternal figures, nurturing the lost and hungry children around them.

The ways in which Aziza's voice became privileged is also significant. As an elder in the village who has witnessed the ongoing vanishment of the Palestine from 1947 to 1967 to the current erection of the apartheid wall, bypass road, settlements, and other infrastructures of vanishment, Aziza's voice filled the room. She became the teller of history. Importantly, her position as a Palestinian woman also figured into the ways in which she was able to exercise particular forms of agency, slipping "beneath the radar" in order to protect young Palestinian men, whose positionality constructed them as

hypervisible to the Israeli military. Aziza's powerful maternity figured into these moments of agency:

Once I was walking and saw five Jordanian soldiers sitting, hiding. They were starving and very young. All around us here was shelling. When the boys saw me, they asked me, "what are you doing here, aunt?" and I responded, "I am on my way to my father-in-law's house. He is an old man". They asked "do you have any food with you? We haven't eaten in days." and I told them no. They said "we have nothing." When I approached my in-laws' house, I saw that they had abandoned the house because of the bombing and retreated to the hills. I collected bread, olives and tomatoes and walked a long way back to the boys. They were surprised to see me and asked me, "Good woman, why have you returned?" and I told them, "You are no different than my own children and how could I live my children hungry?" I knew the land well, and showed them where they could hide and rest to eat. I warned them that Israeli tanks were nearby so they should hide, but if an approaching car was headed to Jordan they should immediately board and escape. A pickup truck came but I saw the men were hesitant. I was puzzled. As I walked away, I saw a trail of blood following the pickup. The pickup moved, and the blood spilled. It carried the remains of the dead. The trail of blood seemed to follow me everywhere. There was death all around.

During the relay of their memories of these heightened moments of violence, Farida and Aziza's revealed multiple levels of consciousness from their vantage point; they were aware of the ways in which they were expected to behave and applied that knowledge to their revolutionary consciousness in order to participate in moments of transgression. In other words, these Palestinian women played on social and colonial expectations in order to fall beneath Israel's radar. This can be read as a direct counteraction to Nadia Abdo's findings in which Israeli settler-colonialism preyed on Palestinian women's vulnerable positions as objects of patriarchal relations and family honor. Here, women are actually using Israel's assumptions about Palestinian women's positionality in order to subversively exercise agency. It is through these normative gender performances—ones

that are deemed appropriate by colonial patriarchy—that these women are actually able to participate in the resistance:

Aziza: Once during the Second Intifada, Israel had planted a checkpoint and curfew right outside my door. At sunrise, I had gone to buy groceries and returned only to find that two men were being confronted by the Israeli military. They had thrust them against the wall and were beating them to death. I went over to them shouting to them, “Where the hell have you been, you stupid boys?! I have been looking for you, you goodfor nothings!” The Israeli looked at me. My knees shook and I was quivering. I didn’t know the boys! I told the Israelis, “these were my children, and I need them to help me with my groceries and they must be quick because they have school”. The soldier was puzzled and the boys broke free from his grasp. I brought them here to my doorstep and had them sit. They told me they were on their way to university when they were approached by the Israelis. I told them perhaps they should forget about university for a day, and I fixed them a cup of hot tea. If I hadn’t been there, they would have died that day.

Interestingly, in these memories of subversive revolt, these women also reconstitute food sites from their quotidian configuration as sites of feminized, domestic labor, and reveal it to be a site of transgressive possibilities. In Aziza’s memory of the second Intifada, she uses her position as a women performing the common, feminized chores of buying food (appropriate gender work) in order to confront the Israeli military. She also uses her position as a racialized maternal subject to her advantage by asserting that the boys are her children and that they must help her “quick because they have school.” Again this gender performance works to her advantage during this moment of crisis as she is able to stop the boys from being beaten to death, and fix them a cup of tea to revive them on their way to university. Moreover, the women’s memories of revolt almost always revolved around saving young boys. This can be young boys are hypervisible to the Israeli military, or it can be a counter-hegemonic narrative that figure Palestinian women, not men, as the saviors of the lands.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I contextualize food sites within the ongoing processes of indigenous vanishment. In this context, popular Palestinian dishes become more than comfort food—they become part of an anticolonial *sumud* (or “steadfastness”) that resists ideological and cultural vanishment through the production and maintenance of Palestinian cuisine which is inherently connected to the land. For these women, gendered memory anchors their bodies back to Palestine, where the figure of Palestinian maternity offers sustenance and protection, nurture and healing, life and revival.

In my studies, writing and activism around Palestine, my aim was always survival—epistemological, cultural and material—against the ongoing vanishment of Palestine. At various moments, I felt the breath of pending disappearance on my neck, which seemed to hover over me like a hungry vulture. However, what has become particularly evident to me during my conversations with Palestinian women is the ways in which settler-colonialism is never complete because of Palestinian insistence on life. In this chapter I aimed to highlight Palestinian life as a way to counteract the snarling conclusiveness that native women’s bodies are dormant, raped or disappeared. Native women have never passively received settler-colonialism. In this chapter, I “returned” both literally and metaphorically to Palestine through sites of food preparation where Palestinian women cultivate, eat, celebrate, and memorialize the land in their fields and kitchens. In a sense, I am writing against myself—against the vanishment I have theorized—by instead going to Palestinian kitchens and groves where I have been reassured by Palestinian women, that everything is not lost—that life remains even when

things are rapidly and tragically falling away. As such, I illuminate the power of Palestinian subaltern experiences to construct alternative history and knowledges through the transmission of memory.

Epilogue: “To exist is to resist”

For centuries, Palestinian farmers have made their living from olive cultivation and olive oil production. Eighty percent of cultivated land in the West Bank and Gaza is planted with olive trees²⁴³. In the West Bank alone, some 100,000 families are dependent on olive sales²⁴⁴. Today, the olive harvest provides Palestinian farmers with anywhere between 25 to 50 percent of their annual income depending on the season, and as the economic crisis worsens, the harvest provides for many their basic means of survival²⁴⁵. There are an estimated nine million olive trees in the occupied Palestinian territories, which have the potential to produce around 43,000 metric tons of oil²⁴⁶. However, this is subject to the policies of the Israeli state as well as the extralegal measures to annihilate Palestinian lands by Jewish settlers and the military. Despite these conditions, every year following the first rainfall, families convene to participate in the labor-intensive process of harvesting, which requires thousands of participants and almost a month of daily work. More than half of the Palestinian population partakes in the olive harvest with extended families and their children spending weeks in fields and groves. After the laborious harvest is completed, farmers send their fresh olives to olive presses to extract oil. This must be done quickly to retain the exceptional quality of oil. As Palestine continues to vanish, these ancient practices of cultivating and harvesting land have begun to disappear.

²⁴³ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “The Olive Harvest in the West Bank and Gaza,” October 2006

²⁴⁴ Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ), “Olive Harvest in Palestine. Another Season, Another Anguish,” November 2004.

²⁴⁵ Cnaan Fair Trade, www.olivecoop.com/Canaan.html.

²⁴⁶ <http://electronicintifada.net/content/olive-harvest-west-bank-and-gaza/2893>

According to Patrick Wolfe, settler colonialism destroys to replace²⁴⁷. In this dissertation project, I have argued that ‘replacement’ includes epistemological, ecological, cultural and historical forms—what I have collectively termed *vanishment*. In order to shed light on the complex manifestations of vanishment, I have theorized consumption as a figurative, material and ideological process of ingesting, chewing, decimating, and visualizing Palestine and Palestinians in stomachs, kitchens, silver screens, and lands. These practices of consumption both enable and obscure the systemic structures of vanishment. In Palestine, systems of vanishment occur through popular imagination in film and television, the transformation and erasure of characteristically Palestinian landscapes, neoliberal fair trade market circulation of olive products, and Western consumption practices that superficially accept and even celebrate Palestine but only as a depoliticized additive to exotic flavors. In turn, Palestinians have utilized strategic essentialism in order to become marginally visible within global markets, and have also memorialized land through food practices in an effort to survive their cultures and identities. In this dissertation, I have resisted the urge to reproduce the epistemological assumption of the vanishing native by focusing on the olive, its trees, its fruits, and its dishes, to remind the reader that vanishment, like other forms of power, is deeply unstable, and never complete. As the popular adage in Palestine goes, “to exist is to resist”.

What my research data makes clear is that modern, disciplinary forms of knowledge production prove inadequate in ‘seeing’ the elusive nature of vanishment, particularly as it is experienced by native peoples. The multiple and simultaneous

²⁴⁷ <http://ipk-bonn.de/downloads/SettlerColonialismAndTheEliminationOfTheNative.pdf>

processes of vanishment require analyses beyond the dominant forms of sociological traditions which tend to privilege observable patterns of violence and injustice. Instead, in this dissertation, I turn to interdisciplinary frameworks, drawing primarily from post/colonial studies, cultural studies, ethnic studies, and food studies in order to reckon with the social, cultural, and political structures of replacement, erasure, and disappearance. These processes exceed the bounds of statistical data and other simplistic forms of patterning social life because vanishment is by definition invisible. The mountaintops that once contained orchards and groves that sustained Palestinian life, and where Palestinians would retreat to escape an Israeli raid, are now replaced by settler-colonies. If limited to traditions of observability within the social sciences, the vanishing of native peoples and landscapes would be deemed a ‘social fact,’ further contributing to the epistemological erasure of native subjectivities.

Implicit within my methodological and theoretical framing in this dissertation, then, is the blunt assertion that sociology must come to terms with its hauntings—that is, the “ghostly matters” that only appear when we acknowledge the absent-present violences of social life that occur in the most mundane moments of everyday life (Gordon 2008). Through multi-sited, in-depth ethnography that spans over six years, cultural analyses of visual and material texts, as well as through the rich reading of the various discursive and material technologies that allow for Palestine to become a delicious commodity for a conscientious Western consumer, I have opened a conversation for indigenous scholars, sociologists, and cultural and food studies theorists about how culture and materiality intersect to produce the conditions of vanishment that have everyday consequences for the lives for native, as well as other subaltern populations. In

her landmark essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?”²⁴⁸ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak identifies the “subaltern” as those individuals and communities in the most extreme positions of marginalization who are stripped from having their voices heard or of becoming visible through self-representation due to the multiple logics of power that render them unspeakable subjects. What I have found in composing this dissertation is that the subaltern cannot speak in direct opposition to the structures of elimination that stifle her existence; however, there are whisperings of her voice, and for me, these seemed to rustle through the silvery leaves of the olive tree.

As part of my political and methodological intervention, I use critical autoethnography in which I center my subjectivity, history and experiences as a Palestinian woman residing in the United States, who has affective and familial attachments to the West Bank. Autoethnography is a qualitative research methodology that involves self-reflection embedded within a writing process that grounds the researcher’s personal experience to the broader cultural, political, and social meanings and power processes that shape them. Autoethnography is “associated with narrative inquiry and autobiography” (Maréchal, 2010: 43) in that it foregrounds experience and story as a meaning making enterprise. Maréchal argues that “narrative inquiry can provoke identification, feelings, emotions, and dialogue” (45). The increased tendency to anchor autoethnography and narrativity into qualitative research practices points to the growing concern of how the dominant forms of academic writing informs the types of claims made as well as the ways in which scholarship can, and often does, reproduce hierarchical performances of power. Here I am directly referencing the words of Laurel

²⁴⁸ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1985. “Can the subaltern speak?” *Wedge* 7/8 (Winter/Spring): 120-30.

Richardson who states, "I consider writing as a method of inquiry, a way of finding out about a topic...form and content are inseparable" (2000: 923).

I first encountered the Palestinian olive in the U.S. while accumulating dissertation data in December 2011 at a boutique in the San Francisco Bay Area. Dove and Olive Works is somewhat removed from the charming yet congested center of San Mateo City on S Boulevard. Indeed, despite the remarkably large banner boasting "Organic Olive Oil from Palestine," one could easily miss the various edible novelties that the shop imports from around the world, as well as the books, toys, and trinkets that are on display outside, ostensibly to seduce passersby. The banner stretches high above the shop, straddling the divide it shares with the second-floor residential units. Despite its humble size, the shop is fully stocked with colorful toys, multicultural books, and trinkets depicting peace signs and other signifiers of human amity. I found Dove and Olive Works through a simple Yelp search and was instantly mystified by its excited reviews. What was particularly striking to me was that the content of the reviews existed in a curiously apolitical realm, one that was engulfed in enchantment and flavorfulness. For example, Shirley K from Santa Clara writes:

Visited Dove and Olive Works first time to look for gifts for holidays. This store has a variety of lovely and fun items for all ages. We purchased organic, fair trade olive oil from Palestine, games, organic tea from Africa, and DVD... Altogether a most satisfying experience.

Here, the reviewer's conflation of "olive oil from Palestine" with "games," "organic tea from Africa," and "DVD" as items she discovered at a "lovely and fun" store seemed counter-intuitive to me. The taken-for-granted manner in which Palestine (and the entire continent of Africa!) appears as a site that a holiday shopper would purchase unique and

exotic gifts was contrary to my suspicion that anything Palestinian could be digestible in the United States. My uncle's unresolved case, the countless interrogations I have endured at the hands of Israel, ducking tear gas grenades in Bil'in, learning about Israel raiding al-Khalil (where my family is from) monthly, and many other moments of terror and trauma sit uncannily beside these declarations of pleasure.

Janet G from Redwood City, California Yelp's a review that suggests some political incentive:

... Dove and Olive Works has Olive Oil tasting everyday! This is the best olive oil I've ever tasted. They import it from Palestine, it's all organic and Free Trade. The people there are very passionate and friendly.

While Janet G.'s emphasis on olive oil flavors once more depoliticizes the context from which the olive oil appears from, as well as the product itself. Like Shirley K. before her, Janet G. uses particular buzz words (i.e. "fair trade" and "organic") to justify the significance of the product. That the product is "from Palestine" is yet another descriptor for the object to be consumed for its tastefulness, indeed the "best" Janet G. has ever had. The review concludes with a note about customer service at the shop moving fluidly between ideals of fair trade and organic food consumption, to service par excellence that is necessary for a successful capitalist market. Erin D. from Santa Cruz, California offers additional notes about the customer service at Dove and Olive Works:

Great selection of conscientious children's books, some adult books, amazing olive oils and gift ideas, free cup of tea when you walk in! Oh, and they're INCREDIBLY dog-friendly and the staff is super friendly and helpful as well.

Erin D.'s enthusiastic remark about the selection of books and amazing gift ideas again emphasize a consumability of products that are promised to have authentic value. On the

same token, Erin D. jumps from the “conscientious” items for sale to the Arabic ritual of serving a guest tea disguised as an added bonus for walk-in customers. In this way, Arabic traditions are made accessible to the enthusiastic consumer, who is not only buying fair trade and organic products on display, but also culture, authenticity and rituals. That Palestine can be made into consumable goods for purchase and the emphasis on “dog-friendly” and “super-friendly” staff seemed so jarring, almost eerie to me.

And yet, the rituals that are conjured should seem familiar! Indeed, boiling hot water for coffee or tea was done almost immediately once company set foot in my family’s home. It wasn’t that the rituals felt so contrived that bothered me most, either. There was something about the consumption of Palestine that seemed contrary to my family’s history. Knowing that the personal narratives of people of color is always entrenched in a web of power relations that condition our experiences, and also that food and culture are not depoliticized spaces or products of mechanical labor production, there seemed to be an untold story within the colorful jars and bottles that lined the shelves around me. These subjective knowledges were further irritated by the unsettling notion that Palestine could be placed on any U.S. table or pantry with such ease and welcome reception. That Palestine can be bottled and sold to the salivating tongues of Western consumers is not limited to charming shops in upper-middle class, predominantly white neighborhoods, however. Today, the Palestine Online Store²⁴⁹ also sells certified organic and fair trade Palestinian olive oil online. Their website entices shoppers to enjoy a “taste” of Palestine. Here, economic sustainability objectives are enmeshed within an appeal to the palate: “Enjoy the traditional Palestinian olive oil and herbs, from the land

²⁴⁹ <http://palestineonlinestore.com/>

of Palestine, from the hands of Palestinian farmers, to your table.” The enjoyment of Palestine is presented as the consumption of its fertility, through the purchase and ingestion of its land’s fruits. Further, Palestine Online invites buyers to experience tenderness and sentimentality: “Feel the warmth of Palestine, while at the same time supporting Palestinian farmers in their struggle to keep their lands.”²⁵⁰

What these Yelp reviews and advertisements problematically suggest is that the Western palate can become the site that liberates the native through the practices of benevolent eating. In her article “The ‘We Win Even When We Lose’ Syndrome” Yen Espiritu argues, “cast in the mainstream media as “innocent” and “benevolent,” the United States and its warriors are positioned as friends and rescuers who are committed to ensuring the well-being of nonwhites around the world.”²⁵¹ Within these racialized and gendered forms of consumption and representation, food emerges as a site where Palestine can be saved from ongoing colonial conquest.

These emergent trends reflect the elusive forms of vanishment that characterize this moment of neoliberal advanced capital. In the context I write about here, neoliberalism must be understood alongside its partner in crime, multiculturalism, which enables a discourse of consumption as liberatory, further masking the ongoing mechanisms of vanishment. Multiculturalism has a long usage history beginning in the 1970s when it named grassroots movements in education for community based racial reconstruction to its current deployment as a policy rubric for business, government, and education. In the context of settler-colonial conquest, neoliberal multiculturalism is configured as a racial project and ideology that efforts to secure consent for neoliberal

²⁵⁰ <http://palestineonlinestore.com/>

²⁵¹ https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v058/58.2espiritu.html

policy and agendas within the United States and around the globe in such a way that superficially celebrates difference, while at the same time contributing to ongoing colonial conquest. Perhaps the most cogent example of the ways in which celebrations of native cultures often co-reside with the colonial conquest comes from Adria Imada's compelling book *Aloha America* (2012) in which she analyzes the role of hula in legitimating U.S. imperial ambitions in Hawai'i. Hula performers began touring throughout the continental United States and Europe in the late nineteenth century, creating "hula circuits" that introduced hula, and Hawaiians, to U.S. cultural consumers. This encounter established an "imagined intimacy" constituted by a powerful fantasy that enabled Americans to possess their colonial relationship to Hawai'i physically and symbolically. At the same time, I have argued in this dissertation that native peoples do not (and never have) passively receive conquest, and have found ways to exercise some form of agency even in the face of pending vanishment. In her book, Imada argues that Hawaiian women have strategically used their position as racialized, gendered and colonized subjects in order to challenge U.S. imperial conquest. At vaudeville theaters, international expositions, commercial nightclubs, and military bases, Hawaiian women acted as ambassadors of aloha, enabling Americans to imagine Hawai'i as feminine and benign, and the relation between colonizer and colonized as mutually desired. Meanwhile, in the early years of American imperialism in the Pacific, touring hula performers incorporated veiled critiques of U.S. expansionism into their productions. In this way, native feminist scholars like Imada remind us that native subjects are not dormant bodies that are acted upon, but, rather are actors who negotiate vanishment through practices of survival that often slip beneath the radar.

In this dissertation, I have followed the lead of Adria Imada, Andrea Smith and others by attempting to highlight life in order to resist epistemological vanishment as well as the popular conception that the native has vanished. It is a political assertion that We Exist and We Sustain. These forms of everyday resistance are not merely relegated to theories, but are put into practice by Palestinian women who negotiate their position as multiply effaced subjects of colonialism and patriarchy to transmit native histories and to reassert their attachment to Palestinian lands. Circling around the olive, Palestinian women's memories reconstitute her as one who acts and who resists social and epistemological death. Rather than falling within Western liberal assumptions of oppressed Middle Eastern women, the Palestinian woman is instead positioned as the one who saves Palestine despite the simultaneous hegemonies and structures of power that are said to cage her.

Final Words about Writing, Space and Place

A proper analysis of vanishment cannot be done without attention to the broader social and political contexts that condition the possibility for settler-colonialism. I have suggested that Israel and the U.S. are intimately connected through a mutually reinforcing web of colonial and ideological histories and legacies of violence. However, these global connections do not end there. In 1948, the year that Israel was created, the pro-apartheid National Party was elected to power in South Africa and was modeled in large part by Canada's genocide of its native population and obtained ideological support from the nascent Israeli state. In 1951, the South African apartheid regime began the forced expulsion of over three million black African inhabitants of the land into reserves known

as “Bantustans” modeled on Canada’s reservation system for First Nations people. Supporters of South African apartheid justified their policies by pointing to Israel as an example; Hendrik Verwoerd, Prime Minister of South Africa, said in 1961: “Israel, like South Africa, is an apartheid state.”²⁵² Indeed, South Africa and Israel had diplomatic relations during this period; they shared military strategies and the Israeli Defense Forces provided training to the apartheid South African regime, for example.

While the apartheid regime of South Africa has been arguably dismantled, racist regimes, settler-colonialism, imperialism, and other violent structures are bound together since September 11, 2001 through Orientalist logics of “us” versus “them”. The hegemonic discourse of the war on terror has informed these intersectional power relations. The figure of “terrorists”—what Nouri Gana calls the “uncanny breed of embittered global vampires thirsty for blood and vengeance, envious of freedom and democracy, rejectionists of progress and Western civilization”²⁵³—has arisen as a global threat to the universe. The discourse of the war on terror works as a means to identify the self through the referent abject—an enemy who must always be destroyed and whose condemnation works to discipline and regulate bodies across local, national, and global landscapes.

A lucid example of the intersection of neoliberalism, global power relations, and the intersections of racialized violence happens to come from the very place where I composed this dissertation: San Diego, California. Israel is heavily invested in the structures and practices of democratic power, from its diverse arsenal of mechanisms of

²⁵² <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/feb/06/southafrica.israel>

²⁵³ “Reel Violence” in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 2008 Volume 28, Number 1: 20-37.

social control deployed against Palestinians to its vanguard role in the global homeland security economy (Collins 201). The political discourse that ensued after September 11, 2001 invented by the U.S. and then circulated as the global rule of thumb included such themes as “security” and “fear” in order to legitimize a military occupation and normalize the settler-colonial project of Zionism in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The discourse of security and risk, as well as assumptions about the innate characteristics (violent, terroristic, radical, extremist) of Palestinians have become institutionalized through the Patriot Act, and have utilized Israeli technologies to buffer the U.S.-Mexico border, with added surveillance and violence, particularly since the Narcoinsurgency campaign. Between the years of 2010 and 2012, the U.S. Department of Homeland security was responsible for eighteen deaths on the Mexican side of the U.S.-Mexico border. In at least eight of these cases, border patrol agents claimed that ‘transgressors’ were “throwing rocks” at U.S. officers (although in almost all cases, they were killed on the south side of the border). For example, on October 11, 2013, the American Civil Liberties Union reported that sixteen-year old Jose Antonio Elena Rodriguez was walking near the U.S.-Mexico border in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico to meet his brother for a late-night snack when he was fatally shot by U.S. Border Patrol agents²⁵⁴. An autopsy later showed the body of the teenager had been riddled with ten bullets that had entered his back and head. Mexican officials also said it seemed there were two agents who shot at least fourteen times. The U.S. government has yet to issue a public explanation of what happened, or to release stationary video footage, except to allege that he was part of a group throwing rocks at Border Patrol agents who were up on a hill.

²⁵⁴<https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights-human-rights/why-us-border-patrol-shooting-rock-throwing-teenagers>

This representation of teens transgressing borders and falling to their death bears an uncanny resonance to the image of, for example, Fares Odeh—a thirteen-year-old boy who was shot in the neck by Israeli forces as he crouched to pick up a stone to hurl at an oncoming Israeli tank during a siege on Gaza on November 8, 2010. The now iconic image of Odeh with a stone in his hand facing-off with a military tank has become one spray-painted on the walls along the U.S.-Mexico border.



Figure 34: Fares Odeh from Gaza, age 13, throws a stone at an advancing Israeli tank sent to disperse demonstrators with live ammunition. Nine days later, as Fares was throwing stones at another Israeli tank, he was shot in the neck by an Israeli sharpshooter and killed. Photo credit: Laurent Rebours of the Associated Press, 2000.

Over 55,000 people have been killed since Mexico's 'Narcoinsurgency' program began in 2006 which has become top priority for the U.S. military, homeland security forces and the Mexican state. Both the U.S.-Mexico border and the apartheid wall in Palestine are being built and monitored by Israeli companies such as Magal and Elbit Systems. Palestine serves as a testing ground for Israeli companies' surveillance technologies particularly along the apartheid wall and at checkpoints and barriers. Indeed,

Israel has served companies interested in high-tech surveillance practices. Companies around the world benefit from the ability to test wall-related surveillance, detection, and scanning technologies on a captive population such as the Palestinians whose life stories I share in this dissertation. This is a highly lucrative business that has made Israeli companies a leader in the “homeland security” technologies worldwide, and Israeli high-tech firms are contracted globally. For example, the Israeli company Elbit and has been used to provide “intrusion detection systems” for the U.S.-Mexico border²⁵⁵. In 2008, Elbit won a \$22.5 million contract with Mexico's Air Force for surveillance missions on the southern side of the border²⁵⁶. Mexico's Federal Police in 2009 contracted another Israeli firm, Aeronautics Defense Systems (ADS) for an additional \$22.3 million. In Kashmir, Magal sensors and cameras were deployed in 2004 on the fence along India's Line of Control. In 2009, Magal won an order by the United States for \$1 million to supply a security system for a major United States international border crossing²⁵⁷. In 2006, Magal received an order for approximately \$2.4 million to supply intrusion detection systems and video surveillance equipment for correctional facilities in Mexico.

In these multiple and complex ways, traces of Palestine are all around us. Stolen Kumeyaay land and bones. Youth throwing rocks at the border. Crawford's mahogany tree in Toni Morrison's novella *Home*. Our crumbling education system and growing military budget. The exponential incarceration of bodies of color. Policies to erect, maintain and uphold borders. Indeed, the seething-presence of a Palestine that is said to be gone, replaced, evacuated, left for dead reminds me what is at stake in forgetting. In

²⁵⁵ <https://www.elbitsystems.com/elbitmain/Security>

²⁵⁶ http://www.airforce-technology.com/news/industry_news_archive.html

²⁵⁷ <https://www.elbitsystems.com/elbitmain/Security>

the struggle for social justice, for myself and many others whose personal and intellectual goal has been to memorialize what is forgotten in our work, memory is part of our existence, and to exist is to resist.

References

Introduction

Alternative Information Group. *Palestine and the Palestinians, A Guidebook: 2nd Edition*. N. p., 2008. Print.

Benjamin, Walter, Hannah Arendt. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Trans. Harry Zohn. English Language edition. New York: Schocken, 1969. Print.

Coombes, Annie. "Memory and History in Settler Colonialism." *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa* (2006): 1–12. Print.

Darian-Smith, Eve, and Peter Fitzpatrick. *Laws of the Postcolonial*. University of Michigan Press, 1999. Print.

Fields, Gary. "Landscaping Palestine: Reflections of Enclosure in a Historical Mirror." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42.01 (2010): 63–82. Print.

Gordon, Avery F., and Janice Radway. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. U of Minnesota Press, 2008. *Google Scholar*. Web. 26 June 2014.

ICAHN. "The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions Web Homepage." N. p., 2014. Web. 26 June 2014. <<http://www.icahd.org/>>.

Lloyd, David. "The Taboo on Boycotting Israel Has Been Broken." *The Electronic Intifada*. N. p., 26 Nov. 2013. Web. 26 June 2014. <<http://electronicintifada.net/content/taboo-boycotting-israel-has-been-broken/12949>>.

Maybury-Lewis, David. *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups, and the State*. Allyn and Bacon Boston, MA, 1997. Print.

McAlister, Melani. *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945*. University of California Press, 2005. Print.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. Routledge, 1995. Print.

Morrison, Toni. *Home*. Random House LLC, 2012. Print.

OCHA. "OCHA Olive Harvest FactSheet." Oct. 2012. <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/document-preview.aspx?doc_id=133368349>.

Razack, Sherene. "A Hole in the Wall; a Rose at a Checkpoint: The Spatiality of Colonial Encounters in Occupied Palestine." *Journal of Critical Race Inquiry* 1.1 (2010).

Said, Edward W. "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims." *Social Text* 1 (1979): 7. *CrossRef*. Web. 26 June 2014.

Shafir, Gershon. *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914*. University of California Press, 1996. Print.

Shehadeh, Raja. *Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape*. Simon and Schuster, 2008. *Google Scholar*. Web. 26 June 2014.

Tompkins, Kyla Wazana. *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century*. NYU Press, 2012. *Google Scholar*. Web. 26 June 2014.

Veracini, Lorenzo. *Settler Colonialism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Web. 26 June 2014.

Weibel, Catherine. "Palestinian Olive Oil Profits in the West Bank Could Double If Israeli Restrictions Ended." 15 Oct. 2010. <<http://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressrelease/2010-10-15/palestinian-olive-oil-profits-west-bank-could-double-if-israeli-re>>.

Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8.4 (2006): 387–409. Print.

Chapter 1

Abu-Assad, Hany. *Paradise Now*. Warner Independent Pictures, 2005. Film.

Allen, Lori. "Paradise Now's Understated Power." *Middle East Research and Information Project* Jan. 2006. <<http://www.merip.org/mero/interventions/paradise-knows-understated-power>>.

"Anthony Bourdain Admits That He Would Eat A Human, Offers Instructions For Cooking Unicorn." *Huffington Post*. N. p., 19 May 2012. Web. 16 June 2014.

Bourdain, Anthony. *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2000. Print.

Bronstein, Phoebe. "Man-Made Martyrs in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Disturbing Manufactured Martyrdom in Paradise Now." *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media* Summer 2012.

Brooks, Xan. "'We Have No Film Industry Because We Have No Country.'" *The Guardian* 11 Apr. 2006. *The Guardian*. Web. 15 June 2014. <<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/apr/12/israelandthepalestinians>>.

Cameron, James. *True Lies*. 20th Century Fox and Universal Studios, 1994. Film.

Chediak, Joyce. “‘Paradise Now’—a Palestinian View of Suicide Bombings.” *Workers World* 29 Jan. 2006. <<http://www.workers.org/2006/world/paradise-now-0202/>>.

Davis, Nick. “Paradise Now, Syria.” *Nick’s Flick Picks*. <<http://www.nicksflickpicks.com/parasyr.html>>.

Earp, Jeremy, and Sut Jhally. *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. Media Education Foundation, 2006. Film.

Fisher, Max. “Anthony Bourdain Explains the Israel-Palestine Conflict through Food.” *The Washington Post* 18 Sept. 2013. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/09/18/anthony-bourdain-explains-the-israel-palestine-conflict-through-food/>>.

Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Random House LLC, 1980. Print.

Fox, Eytan. *Yossi & Jagger*. N. p., 2002. Film.

Frankenheimer, John. *Black Sunday*. American International Pictures, 1977. Film.

Gana, Nouri. “Reel Violence: Paradise Now and the Collapse of the Spectacle.” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 28.1 (2008): 20–37. Print.

Glaister, Dan. “‘It Was a Joke I Was Even Nominated.’” *The Guardian* 19 Jan. 2006. *The Guardian*. Web. 15 June 2014. <<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/jan/20/israelandthepalestinians.comment>>.

Hall, Stuart. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Vol. 2. Sage, 1997. Print.

Hofstein, Avner. “Oscar Nominee: People Hate Israelis for a Reason.” *Ynetnews* 2 Mar. 2006. <<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3223216,00.html>>.

Holden, Stephen. “Terrorists Facing Their Moment of Truth.” *The New York Times* 28 Oct. 2005. *NYTimes.com*. Web. 15 June 2014. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/28/movies/28para.html>>.

Jamal, Amaney A., and Nadine Christine Naber. *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*. Syracuse University Press, 2008. Print.

“Jerusalem.” *Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown, Season 2*. Prod. Zero Point Zero Production Inc. CNN. 15 Sept. 2013. Television.

Johnston, Sheila. "Film: I Risked My Life to Make This Movie." *The Telegraph* 7 Apr. 2006. Web. 10 Apr. 2013. < <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/3651426/I-risked-my-life-to-make-this-movie.html>>.

Kane, Alex. "Celebrity Foodie Anthony Bourdain's Trip to Palestine Highlights Gaza Blockade, Racist Settlers." *Mondoweiss*. N. p., 16 Sept. 2013. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://mondoweiss.net/2013/09/celebrity-foodie-anthony-bourdains-trip-to-palestine-highlights-gaza-blockade-racist-settlers.html>>.

McAlister, Melani. *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945*. University of California Press, 2005. Print.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Random House LLC, 1979. Print.

"Season Two of CNN Original Series 'Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown' Begins Sept. 15." Web. 16 June 2014. < <http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2013/05/01/season-two-of-cnn-original-series-anthony-bourdain-parts-unknown-launches-sept-15/>>.

Shaheen, Jack. *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies A People Transcript*. 2006. Transcript. < http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/412/transcript_412.pdf>.

Stotsky, Steven. "Anthony Bourdain's 'Parts Unknown - Jerusalem' Serves up Palestinian Propaganda." *Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America* 20 Sept. 2013. < http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=3&x_outlet=14&x_article=2550>.

Tadiar, Neferti X. M. "The War To Be Human / Becoming Human in a Time of War." *Revista Estudos Feministas* Vol. 9, No. 2 (2001): 360-366. Print.

Zahr, Amer. "Anthony Bourdain, Will You Marry Me?" *The Civil Arab*. N. p., 16 Sept. 2013. Web. 16 June 2014. < <http://www.civilarab.com/anthony-bourdain-will-you-marry-me/>>.

Zayid, Maysoon. "Watching Anthony Bourdain in Palestine." *The Daily Beast*. N. p., 19 Sept. 2013. Web. 16 June 2014. < <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/09/19/watching-anthony-bourdain-in-palestine.html>>.

Chapter 2

Al-Monitor. "World's Largest Fair-Trade Olive Oil Supplier Has Origins in Jenin - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East." *Al-Monitor*. N. p., 2014. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulseen/business/2014/02/canaan-fair-trade-palestinian-venture-olive-oil-israel.html>>.

Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem. “Status of the Environment.” 2007. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.arij.org/>>.

“BKLYN Larder: Brooklyn Cheese & Provisions, Local & Sustainable, Made Fresh Daily Menu, Gift Boxes.” *BKLYN Larder*. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.bklynlarder.com/>>.

“Canaan Fair Trade - Burqin.” *Delicacies from Palestine, The Land of Milk and Honey*. N. p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.canaanusa.com/burqin.php>>.

DAI. “DAI - an International Development Company.” N. p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://dai.com/>>.

Daskara. “Daskara | Palaestina Prima Extra Virgin Olive Oil.” N. p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://daskara.com/>>.

Dr. Bronner. “Dr. Bronner’s Magic Soaps.” *Dr. Bronner’s Magic “All-One!”* N. p., 2014. Web. 16 June 2014. <<https://www.drbronner.com/>>.

Equal Exchange. “Fair Trade.” *Equal Exchange: Fairly Traded*. N. p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.equalexchange.coop/fair-trade>>.

Fairtrade UK. “The Fairtrade Foundation.” N. p., 2011. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>>.

Hass, Amira. “It’s Not the Olive Trees.” *Haaretz.com* 11 Jan. 2006. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/it-s-not-the-olive-trees-1.62013>>.

HLOO. “Holy Land Olive Oil.” N. p., 2003. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.holylandoliveoil.com/>>.

Hong, Grace Kyungwon, and Roderick A. Ferguson. *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*. Duke University Press, 2011. Print.

IFC. “International Finance Corporation World Bank Group.” N. p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014. <http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/corp_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/home>.

Iverson, Duncan. *Postcolonial Liberalism*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Print.

Jones&Bones. “Jones & Bones: Gift - Gourmet - Garden.” *JonesandBones.com - Gift Gourmet Garden*. N. p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://jonesandbones.com/>>.

Kane, Alex. "6 Things You Buy That Help Support Israeli Brutality | AlterNet." *AlterNet* 3 Nov. 2013. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.alternet.org/world/companies-and-consumer-products-boosting-israels-brutal-occupation>>.

Kelly, Kimberley, and Thomas F. Homer-Dixon. *Environmental Scarcity and Violent Conflict: The Case of Gaza*. American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1995. Print.

Kuokkanen, Rauna. "Indigenous Knowledge." *Globalization & Autonomy Glossary -- Indigenous Knowledge*. 2 Feb. 2002.

Larner, Wendy. "Neoliberalism?" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21.5 (2003): 509–512. Print.

Lawrence, Emily. "Fair Trade Helps Palestinian Farmers Stay on Their Land." *The Electronic Intifada*. N. p., 11 Mar. 2013. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://electronicintifada.net/content/fair-trade-helps-palestinian-farmers-stay-their-land/12262>>.

Long, Joanna Claire. "(En)planting Israel: Jewish National Fund Forestry and the Naturalisation of Zionism." (2005): n. pag. *circle.ubc.ca*. Web. 16 June 2014.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Capital: Volume 1*. Penguin, 1990. Print.

Melamed, Jodi. "Reading Tehran in Lolita: Making Racialized and Gendered Difference Work for Neoliberal Multiculturalism." *Strange affinities: the gender and sexual politics of comparative racialization* (2011): n. pag. Print.

Meneley, Anne. "A Tale of Two Itineraries: The Production, Consumption and Circulation of Tuscan and Palestinian Olive Oil." *Department of Anthropology, Trent University* (2008): Web. 16 June 2014.

Meneley, Anne. "Time in a Bottle: The Uneasy Circulation of Palestinian Olive Oil." *Middle East Report* (2008): 18–23. Print.

MOA. "Ministry Of Agriculture: Occupied Palestine." N. p., 2010. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.moa.gov.ps/>>.

My Beloved Olive: Palestinian Farmers On Their Land. Cont. Charlotte Kates. N. p., 2012. Film. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uc3BcB0CT9g&feature=youtube_gdata_player>.

Nettlin, Sonia. "Palestine's Olive Oil in North America." *North American Fair Trade for Peace in the Middle East*. N. p., 5 Feb. 2006. Web. 16 June 2014.

<<http://www.chicagofairtrade.org/more-about-joomla/fair-trade-in-conflict-zones/135-north-american-fair-trade-for-peace-in-the-middle-east.html>>.

Occupied Palestine. "Armed Settlers Harass the Villagers of Qusra, a Village South East of Nablus." *Occupied Palestine*. 14 June 2011. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com/2011/06/14/armed-settlers-harass-the-villagers-of-qusra-a-village-south-east-of-nablus/>>.

OCHA. "OCHA | Coordination Saves Lives." *UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*. N. p., 2014. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://unocha.org/>>.

Oxfam International. "The Road to Olive Farming: Challenges to Developing the Economy of Olive Oil in the West Bank." 15 Oct. 2012. <<http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/road-olive-farming>>.

Palestinians' Olive Trees Destroyed. COnT. SocialTV. N. p., 2011. Film. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7-mE-ta1lw&feature=youtube_gdata_player>.

Page, Christine. "A History of Conspicuous Consumption", in *SV - Meaning, Measure, and Morality of Materialism*, eds. Floyd W. Rudmin and Marsha Richins, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, (1992): 82-87.

Postero, Nancy Grey. *Now We Are Citizens: Indigenous Politics in Postmulticultural Bolivia*. Stanford University Press, 2007. *Google Scholar*. Web. 17 June 2014.

Qumsiyeh, Mazin. "Palestinian Olives." *Sabbah Report*. N. p., 20 Oct. 2009. Web. 17 June 2014.

Redfern, Andy, and Paul Snedker. *Creating Market Opportunities for Small Enterprises: Experiences of the Fair Trade Movement*. ILO Geneva, 2002. *Google Scholar*. Web. 16 June 2014.

Rockridge Market Hall. "Welcome to Rockridge Market Hall." *Rockridge Market Hall: Everything You Need Under One Roof*. N. p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.rockridgemarkethall.com/>>.

Rosen, Steven J. "Kuwait Expels Thousands of Palestinians." *Middle East Quarterly* (2012): n. pag. Web. 16 June 2014.

Sindyanna. "Solidarity With Our Japanese Partners." *Sindyanna*. N. p., 15 Mar. 2011. Web. 16 June 2014. <http://sindyanna.com/solidarity_with_japan/>.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988): n. pag. *Google Scholar*. Web. 16 June 2014.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. Print.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Nationalism and the Imagination*. London ; New York: Seagull Books, 2010. Print.

Swyngedouw, Erik. "The Political Economy and Political Ecology of the Hydro-Social Cycle." *Journal of Contemporary Water Research & Education* 142.1 (2009): 56–60. Print.

Tadiar, Neferti X. M. "Life-Times of Becoming Human." *Occasion: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities* V. 3 (2012): n. pag. Web. 16 June 2014.

Tamari, Salim. "Building Other People's Homes: The Palestinian Peasant's Household and Work in Israel." *Journal of Palestine Studies* (1981): 31–66. Print.

The Rogers Collection. "The Rogers Collection - Extraordinary Food of Distinctive Quality." *The Rogers Collection*. N. p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.therogerscollection.com/>>.

Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Oxford University Press, 1899. Print.

Weiss, Philip. "Ancient Olive Trees, Stolen from Palestinian Lands, Now Decorate Israeli Settlements." *Mondoweiss*. N. p., 13 Aug. 2012. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://mondoweiss.net/2012/08/ancient-olive-trees-stolen-from-palestinian-lands-now-decorate-israeli-settlement.html>>.

West, Patrick. *Conspicuous Compassion: Why Sometimes It Really Is Cruel To Be Kind*. Civitas, Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2004. Print.

"WFTO - What is Fair Trade?" *World Fair Trade Organization*. N. p., 7 Nov. 2009. Web. 16 June 2014. <http://www.wfto.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1&Itemid=13>.

Yara. "Yitzhar Settlers Violently Crash Burin Wedding, Military Watches." *International Solidarity Movement* 6 Sept. 2011. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://palsolidarity.org/2011/09/yitzhar-settlers-violently-crash-burin-wedding-military-watches/>>.

Zehle, Soenke. "Notes on Cross-Border Environmental Justice Education." N. p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014.

Chapter 3

Abu Safieh, Yousef. "The Radical Transformation of Palestine's Environment." *Al Jazeera* 2 May 2012. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/04/201242811593745665.html>>

Affairs, EUCom Public. "Austere Challenge 2012 | EUCom, Stronger Together." N. p., n.d. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://www.eucom.mil/key-activities/exercises-and-operations/austere-challenge-2012>>.

Alexander, M. Jacqui, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. *Genealogies, Legacies, Movements*. na, 2001. Print.

AP. "Austere Challenge 2012: U.S. General Martin Dempsey In Israel To Oversee Military Drill." *Huffington Post*. N. p., 28 Oct. 2012. Web. 17 June 2014. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/28/austere-challenge-2012-dempsey-israel_n_2035481.html>.

B'Tselem. "Background on the Jordan Valley." *B'Tselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories*. N. p., 18 May 2011. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://www.btselem.org/water>>.

B'Tselem. "Background: Water Crisis - Water Consumption in Israel, The West Bank, and the Gaza Strip." *B'Tselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories*. N. p., 1 Jan. 2011. Web. 17 June 2014. <http://www.btselem.org/jordan_valley>.

Benjamin, Jesse. "Orwell's Green Patrol and the Relentless Racialized Illogic of Ethnic Cleansing in the Name of Environmentalism." (2011): Web. 17 June 2014.

Blumenthal, Max. "The Carmel Wildfire Is Burning All Illusions in Israel." *International Jews Anti-Zionist Network eBook Greenwashing Apartheid* 15 May 2011: 43–47. Print. <<http://electronicintifada.net/content/carmel-wildfire-burning-all-illusions-israel/9130>>.

BNA. "Brave New Alps." N. p., 2014. Web. 17 June 2014. <<https://www.google.com/maps/ms?msa=0&msid=214680117698843238394.0004e48586b03d8f1bf63&ie=UTF8&t=k&ll=48.77418,9.024067&spn=0.11313,0.219555&z=13&output=embed>>.

Bowman, Glenn. "About A Wall." *The Electronic Intifada* 9 July 2004. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://electronicintifada.net/content/about-wall/5141>>.

Braverman, Irus. *Planted Flags: Trees, Land, and Law in Israel/Palestine*. Cambridge University Press, 2009. Print.

Braverman, Irus. "Uprooting Identities: The Regulation of Olive Trees in the Occupied West Bank." *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 32.2 (2009): 237–264. Print.

Cahill, Cathleen D. *Federal Fathers and Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869-1933*. 1 edition. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011. Print.

Crosby, Alfred W. *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*. 2 edition. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Print.

Fields, Gary. "Ex-Communicated: Historical Reflections on Enclosure Landscapes in Palestine." *Radical History Review* 2010.108 (2010): 139–153. Print.

Fields, Gary. "Landscaping Palestine: Reflections of Enclosure in a Historical Mirror." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42.01 (2010): 63–82. Print.

Gordon, Avery F., and Janice Radway. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. U of Minnesota Press, 2008. *Google Scholar*. Web. 17 June 2014.

Guha, Ramachandra, and Joan Martínez Alier. *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South*. London: Routledge, 1997. Print.

Hazineh, Hiyam, and Roubina Bassous-Ghattas. "Beyond the Green Scene of Palestine." *Cornerstone: A Publication by Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center* 4.61 The Land Is Groaning... (2011).

HebrewPodcasts. "Trees of Israel." *Hebrew Podcasts*. N. p., n.d. Web. 17 June 2014. <<https://www.hebrewpodcasts.com/treesofisrael.html>>.

Homer-Dixon, Thomas, and Jessica Blitt. *Ecoviolence: Links among Environment, Population, and Security*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998. *Google Scholar*. Web. 17 June 2014.

Hooks, Gregory, and Chad L. Smith. "The Treadmill of Destruction: National Sacrifice Areas and Native Americans." *American Sociological Review* 69.4 (2004): 558–575. Print.

International Jews Anti-Zionist Network. "Jewish National Fund - Colonizing Palestine Since 1901: Greenwashing Apartheid: The Jewish National Fund's Environmental Cover Up." *JNF eBook Vol 4* (2011): 152. Print.

JNF. "Jewish National Fund | Plant Trees in Israel." *Jewish National Fund: Your Voice in Israel*. N. p., n.d. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://www.jnf.org/>>.

Kestler-D'Amours, Jillian. "Sudanese Face Expulsion; Minister Declares Israel 'Belongs to White Man.'" *The Electronic Intifada* 12 June 2012. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://electronicintifada.net/content/sudanese-face-expulsion-minister-declares-israel-belongs-white-man/11394>>.

Leendertz, Lia. "The Tortoise Garden." *The Guardian* 4 Mar. 2009. *The Guardian*. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/gardening-blog/2009/mar/04/gardens1>>.

McCarthy, Rory. "The Hills Are Alive." *The Guardian* 24 Aug. 2007. *The Guardian*. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/aug/25/israel>>.

Moraga, Cherrie, and Gloria Anzaldúa. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. 2nd edition. New York: Kitchen Table/Women of Color Press, 1984. Print.

Morgensen, Scott Lauria. "Theorising Gender, Sexuality and Settler Colonialism: An Introduction." *Settler Colonial Studies* 2.2 (2012): 2–22. Print.

Nuseibeh, Siham. "Water Apartheid: The French Report That Reveals It All." *Muftah* 18 Jan. 2012. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://muftah.org/water-apartheid-the-french-report-that-reveals-it-all/>>.

Obiora, L. Amede. "Symbolic Episodes in the Quest for Environmental Justice." *Human Rights Quarterly* 21.2 (1999): 464–512. Print.

Pellow, David N. *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*. The MIT Press, 2007. Print.

Pellow, David N., and Lisa Sun-Hee Park. *The Silicon Valley of Dreams: Environmental Injustice, Immigrant Workers, and the High-Tech Global Economy*. NYU Press, 2002. *Google Scholar*. Web. 17 June 2014.

Petras, James. "Palestine: The Political Ecology of Disaster." *The James Petras Website* 4 Apr. 2007. Web. 31 Mar. 2007. <<http://petras.lahaine.org/?p=1698>>.

Qumsieh, Violet. "The Environmental Impact of Jewish Settlements in the West Bank." *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 1998. <<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=427>>.

Schlosberg, David. "Reconceiving Environmental Justice: Global Movements and Political Theories." *Environmental politics* 13.3 (2004): 517–540. Print.

Schwartz, Sharona. "No Joke: Israel to Dig Up Obama's Gift Tree He Planted in Jerusalem." *The Blaze*. N. p., 20 Mar. 2013. Web. 17 June 2014.

<<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/03/20/no-joke-israels-agriculture-ministry-digs-up-obamas-gift-tree-hours-after-he-plants-it/>>.

Sharif, Rana. "Bodies, Buses, and Permits: Palestinians Navigating Care." *Critical Legal Thinking* Vol 4.No 1 (2014): n. pag. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://criticallegalthinking.com/2014/05/13/bodies-buses-permits-palestinians-navigating-care/>>.

Shehadeh, Raja. *Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape*. Simon and Schuster, 2008. *Google Scholar*. Web. 17 June 2014.

Silliman, Stephen W. "Social and Physical Landscapes of Contact." *North American Archaeology*, Blackwell, Malden, MA (2005): 273–296. Print.

Smith, Andrea. "American Studies without America: Native Feminisms and the Nation-State." *American Quarterly* 60.2 (2008): 309–315. Print.

Sze, Julie. "From Environmental Justice Literature to the Literature of Environmental Justice." *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, & Pedagogy* (2002): 163–180. Print.

UNOCHA. "HUMANITARIAN FACT SHEET ON THE JORDAN VALLEY AND DEAD SEA AREA." Feb. 2012. <http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_jordan_valley_factSheet_february_2012_english.pdf>.

Weller-Polak, Dana. "Israel Enacts Law Allowing Authorities to Detain Illegal Migrants for up to 3 Years - National." *Haaretz.com* 3 June 2012. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/israel-enacts-law-allowing-authorities-to-detain-illegal-migrants-for-up-to-3-years-1.434127>>.

Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8.4 (2006): 387–409. Print.

Zehle, Soenke. "Notes on Cross-Border Environmental Justice Education." N. p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014.

Chapter 4

Abdalla, Jihan. "Israel Denies Palestinians Equal Water Access - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East." *Al-Monitor*. N. p., 8 Apr. 2013. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulseen/originals/2013/04/westbank-water-restrictions-israel.html>>.

Abu-Rish, Ziad. "Resistance and Revolution as Lived Daily Experience: An Interview with Leila Khaled (Part 3)." *Jadaliyya* 26 Sept. 2011. Web. 17 June 2014.

<<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/2720/resistance-and-revolution-as-lived-daily-experience>>.

Abunimah, Ali. "Hummus and Falafel Are Already 'Israeli.' Now They're Coming for Palestine's Olive Oil Too." *The Electronic Intifada* 16 Jan. 2012. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/hummus-and-falafel-are-already-israeli-now-theyre-coming-palestines-olive-oil-too>>.

Abunimah, Ali. *The Battle for Justice in Palestine*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2014. Print.

Addameer Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association, 2010. *Palestinian Women Political Prisoners: Systematic Forms of Political and Gender-Based State Violence*. Addameer Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association, 2010. Print.

Allen, John S. *The Omnivorous Mind: Our Evolving Relationship with Food*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012. Print.

ARIJ. "Beit Sahour City Profile." 2010. <http://vprofile.arij.org/bethlehem/pdfs/VP/Beit%20Sahour_cp_en.pdf>.

BCPRIGHTS. "Support Human Rights in Israel/Palestine: Please Don't Buy Sabra Hummus!" 2010. <<http://www.phillybds.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Sabra+info+sheet.pdf>>.

Benvenisti, Meron, and Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta. *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948*. New Ed edition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. Print.

El-Haddad, Laila and Maggie Schmitt. *The Gaza Kitchen: A Palestinian Culinary Journey*. Charlottesville, Va: Just World Books, 2013. Print.

Goodman, David, and E. Melanie DuPuis. "Knowing Food and Growing Food: Beyond the Production–consumption Debate in the Sociology of Agriculture." *Sociologia ruralis* 42.1 (2002): 5–22. Print.

Gradstein, Linda. "'Symbolic' Garden Brings Arrest Of Arab." *Sun Sentinel* 12 June 1988. Web. 17 June 2014. <http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1988-06-12/news/8802040204_1_palestinians-west-bank-eggplants>.

Hammami, Rema. "Gender, Nakbe and Nation; Palestinian Women's Presence and Absence in the Narration of 1948 Memories." *Review of Women's Studies* 2 (2004): 26–41. Print.

“I Made the Ring from a Bullet and the Pin of a Hand Grenade.” *The Guardian* 25 Jan. 2001. *The Guardian*. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/jan/26/israel>>.

Kassem, Fatma. *Palestinian Women: Narrative Histories and Gendered Memory*. London ; New York: Zed Books, 2011. Print.

Masalha, Nur. *The Politics of Denial: Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem*. Pluto Pr, 2003. Print.

Mikdash, Maya. “What Is Settler Colonialism?” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 37.2 (2013): 23–34. Print.

Miller, Elhanan. “Chefs Clash over Obama’s Menu.” *The Times of Israel*. N. p., 17 Mar. 2013. Web. 17 June 2014. < <http://www.timesofisrael.com/chefs-clash-over-obamas-menu/>>.

Morgensen, Scott L. “Unsettling Settler Desires.” (2009): n. pag. Print.

Mueller, Tom. *Extra Virginity: The Sublime and Scandalous World of Olive Oil*. 1 edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013. Print.

Mustafa, Sufian. “Food and Recipies: Msakhan.” *Palestine-Family.net*. N. p., 27 Mar. 2008. Web. 17 June 2014. < <http://www.palestine-family.net/index.php?nav=6-23&cid=10&did=4618>>.

Palestinian Conference. “The Struggle of Palestinian Women.” Sept. 1975. <<http://www.palestinianconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/PLO-PalestinianWomen.pdf>>.

Palestinian Conference .“Women’s Struggle in Occupied Palestine.” Mar. 1984. <<http://www.palestinianconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/WomensStruggle-DemocraticPal-Mar1984.pdf>>.

Peled-Elhanan, Nurit. *Palestine in Israeli School Books: Ideology and Propaganda in Education*. Vol. 82. IB Tauris, 2012. *Google Scholar*. Web. 17 June 2014.

PFN. “Arab Educational Institute, Moral Stories from Palestine.” *Palestine-Family.net*. N. p., 2006. Web. 17 June 2014. < <http://palestine-family.net/index.php?nav=5-206&cid=496-253&did=336>>.

Shaheen, Blanche. “Feast in the Middle East.” *Feast in the Middle East* 23 Jan. 2012. Web. 17 June 2014. < <http://feastinthemiddleeast.wordpress.com/>>.

Sherwood, Harriet. "Academic Claims Israeli School Textbooks Contain Bias." *The Guardian* 6 Aug. 2011. *The Guardian*. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/aug/07/israeli-school-racism-claim>>.

Slocum, Rachel. "Race in the Study of Food." *Progress in Human Geography* 35.3 (2011): 303–327. Print.

Swann, Jennifer, and Sarah Fenske. "The Actors Gang Saves Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Resurrects Play as NOH8 Fundraiser." *LA Weekly*. N. p., 6 June 2014. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://www.laweekly.com/informer/2014/06/06/the-actors-gang-saves-cat-on-a-hot-tin-roof-resurrects-play-as-noh8-fundraiser>>.

The Daily Curreant. "Bachmann: 'We Must Ban Falafel' in School Lunches." *The Daily Curreant*. N. p., 28 Sept. 2012. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://dailycurreant.com/2012/09/28/bachmann-we-ban-falafel-school-lunches/>>.

Vlazna, Vacy. "Why Boycott Strauss?" *The Palestine Chronicle* 11 Mar. 2012: n. pag. Print. <http://palestinechronicle.com/old/view_article_details.php?id=19155>.

Weber, Katherine. "Michele Bachmann's 'Falafel Is a Gateway Food' Satire Mistaken for Real." *Christian Post*. N. p., 2 Oct. 2012. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://global.christianpost.com/news/michele-bachmanns-falafel-is-a-gateway-food-satire-mistaken-for-real-82559/>>.

White, Ben. "Beit Sahour: A Microcosm of Israeli Colonization." *The Electronic Intifada* 19 Apr. 2010. Web. 17 June 2014. <<http://electronicintifada.net/content/beit-sahour-microcosm-israeli-colonization/8790>>.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. *Gender and Nation*. 1 edition. London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1997. Print.

Epilogue

Airforce-Technology. "Defence Industry News Archive - Airforce Technology." N. p., 2014. Web. 26 June 2014. <http://www.airforce-technology.com/news/industry_news_archive.html>.

ARIJ. "Olive Harvest in Palestine. Another Season, Another Anguish." *Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem* Nov. 2004: n. pag. Print.

CanaanUSA. "Canaan Fair Trade - Burqin." *Delicacies from Palestine, The Land of Milk and Honey*. N. p., n.d. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://www.canaanusa.com/burqin.php>>.

Elbit. "Elbit Homeland Security Systems Web Page." N. p., 2014. Web. 26 June 2014. <<https://www.elbitsystems.com/elbitmain/Security>>.

Espiritu, Yen Le. "The 'We-Win-Even-When-We-Lose' Syndrome: U.S. Press Coverage of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the 'Fall of Saigon.'" *American Quarterly* 58.2 (2006): 329–352. *Project MUSE*. Web. 26 June 2014. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v058/58.2espiritu.html>.

Gana, Nouri. "Reel Violence: Paradise Now and the Collapse of the Spectacle." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 28.1 (2008): 20–37. Print.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1985): 120–30. Print.

Gordon, Avery F., and Janice Radway. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. 2nd edition. Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2008. Print.

Imada, Adria. *Aloha America: Hula Circuits Through the U.S. Empire*. Duke University Press, 2012. Print.

Maréchal, Garance. "Autoethnography." *Encyclopedia of case study research* 2 (2010): 43–45. Print.

McGreal, Chris. "Worlds Apart." *The Guardian* 5 Feb. 2006. *The Guardian*. Web. 26 June 2014. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/feb/06/southafrica.israel>>.

POS. "Palestine Online Store." *Palestine Online Store*. N. p., n.d. Web. 26 June 2014. <<http://palestineonlinestore.com>>.

Richardson, Laurel. "Evaluating Ethnography." *Qualitative inquiry* 6.2 (2000): 253–255. Print.

United Nations. "The Olive Harvest in the West Bank and Gaza." *The Electronic Intifada*. N. p., 4 Nov. 2006. Web. 26 June 2014. <<http://electronicintifada.net/content/olive-harvest-west-bank-and-gaza/2893>>.

UNOCHA. "The Olive Harvest in the West Bank and Gaza." Oct. 2006. <<http://electronicintifada.net/content/olive-harvest-west-bank-and-gaza/2893>>.

Vicki B. Gaubeca. "Why Is U.S. Border Patrol Shooting Rock-Throwing Teenagers?" *American Civil Liberties Union*. N. p., 13 Mar. 2014. Web. 26 June 2014. <<https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights-human-rights/why-us-border-patrol-shooting-rock-throwing-teenagers>>.

Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8.4 (2006): 387–409. Print.