

**Venturing into a Vanishing Space:**  
**Representations of Palestine in Jewish-American and Arab Novels**

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## Abstract

This study explores the literary representation of Palestine by Jewish American and Arab novelists within the emergent geopolitics of settler colonialism, thus challenging the notion that Palestine presents a unique situation that largely defies comparative approaches. It illustrates how postcolonial theory proves necessary but insufficient to engage the cultural and political specificities of the Palestinian situation, both as fictional representation and as otherwise knowable history. Here, recent developments in theorising settler colonialism provide a useful starting point. Drawing on the work of Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, with its revisionary challenge to postcolonial theory in relation to the need to distinguish between settler colonialism and metropole colonialism, this thesis argues that the case of Palestine problematizes the settler colonial paradigm. Overlaps and entanglements between the supposedly distinct forms of colonialism on the ground complicate the discreteness of the settler model. Hence, the focus on Jewish-American novel serves to suggest that the Zionist settler enterprise is inseparable from American imperialism, and therefore challenges conceptualizations of a purely settler phenomenon in Palestine.

The study draws together New Historicism and postcolonialism, suggesting that engagement with the intersection of these two approaches is both valid and timely. The New Historicist return to history proves central to appraisal of the forms of power that continue to condition the authority accorded to a particular version of events, and to the evaluation of the writer's responsibility to reality as well as the measure of truth embedded even in most fictionalized versions of history. Accordingly, the structure of the thesis identifies key historical moments in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, juxtaposing Jewish-American renditions of the Zionist settler project

with Arab counter-narratives. The emphasis in the thesis on historicising rhetorical appropriations and restoring a Palestinian version of events challenges the perception transfer of settler narratives, which, to the privilege of settlers' self-origination, has long relegated Palestinian people, land, and narratives to the peripheries of history and postcolonial debates.

The first three chapters focus on three signal events: the 1948 *nakba*, the 1967 war, and the 1980s uprising. The first chapter compares and contrasts two versions of the 1948 events as represented in Leon Uris's *The Haj* (1984) and Elias Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* (1998; trans. 2005). Drawing on the revisionary work of the Israeli new historians, together with Palestinian commentators, the chapter explores the 1948 Palestinian exodus in terms of settlers' violence and logic of elimination, which Uris's narrative conceals behind a Western civilizational discourse. Against Uris's legitimation of the master Zionist narrative, Khoury's novel suggests an instance of 'writing back,' narrating the unspoken and replacing the monologism of the official line with the multiplicity of oral history.

The second chapter extends this cross-cultural research to the 1967 war, suggesting the centrality of this event to paradigmatic shifts in Palestinian historical experience and self-representation as well as in the Jewish American writer's relation to the state of Israel. Literary representations of 1967 Palestine, including Edward Said's *Out of Place: A Memoir* (2000), Halim Barakat's *Six Days* (1961; trans. 1990) and *Days of Dust* (1969; trans. 1986), Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* (1976; trans. 2003), and Saul Bellow's *Mr Sammler's Planet* (1970) and *To Jerusalem and Back: A Personal Account* (1976), articulate liminality, ambivalence, and the enabling of new possibilities and fresh perspectives. Each of these writers reveals a shared concern for the politics of the local in order to escape the burdens of diasporic existence, attempting to redefine what seems to be a borderless and geographically vague existence.

While post-1967 narratives affirm the rise of a new focus for Palestinian writers, the third chapter shows how the greater visibility of Palestinians in the

aftermath of the 1980s uprising finds literary form in US fiction. Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock: A Confession* (1993) illustrates the cultural limits that restrict a dialogic engagement with the emerging heteroglossia in US media following the appearance of a Palestinian voice and an anti-Zionist stance. However, this failed dialogism reveals how silence and dissimulation become forms of expression, unveiling the dynamics that manipulate the space permitted for Palestinians in Jewish American fiction.

Recovering Palestinian literature from the margins of postcolonial studies, the final chapter charts ways of representing Palestinian (post)coloniality by drawing on the temporal and spatial specifications conceptualised in Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope. Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks* (2008) and Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2011) reinvent the traditions of walking and returning, previously manipulated in Zionist settler narratives, in order to articulate a political protest against settler colonialism and assert the legitimacy of the Palestinians' claim to the land. Although focusing on the Palestinian case, this study seeks to open up the postcolonial to the historical and rhetorical specificities of the literature emerging from contemporary settler colonial situations, and the possible enactment of postcolonial passages in not-yet-postcolonial contexts.

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## Introduction

The Palestinians found themselves wrestling not just militarily but also rhetorically with one of the more print-obsessed nations on the planet, a people of both The Book and the books [sic].

(Adina Hoffman, 'Recollecting the Palestinian Past' 54)

Since the late nineteenth century, what we might call the Zionist rhetorical conquest has justified the Palestinians' political and military defeat while thwarting Palestinian self-representation. This rhetoric constitutes a formative part of a 'structure' that, according to Patrick Wolfe, is integral to any settler colonial project. In settler colonial formations, Wolfe maintains, 'invasion is a structure not an event,'<sup>1</sup> with ideologically tainted narratives as its most treasured ammunition. In a recent article, Wolfe shifted focus away from the Australian settler locale and revisited the Palestinian *nakba* in order to dismantle the singularity of the Palestinian situation and reveal the 'preaccumulation,' that characterises Zionist settler colonialism.<sup>2</sup> Wolfe introduces the concept of 'preaccumulation' to describe two interrelated features pertinent to the Zionist settler project in Palestine. First, it points to the complex Eurocolonial historical endowment of Jewish settlers—the cumulative legacy of European ideological, economic and cultural attributes. Second, settler 'preaccumulation,' which enabled the *nakba* in 1948, describes the structural continuity that links some historical preconditions including 'the ethnically exclusive strategy known as the Conquest of Labour' with the eventual expulsion of Palestinians.<sup>3</sup> The creation of this structure usually starts long before political or military action, and continues to play a powerful role in the survival of the settler project for years afterwards. My study extends this conception of a historical Eurocolonial 'preaccumulation' to the ongoing

‘accumulation’ of imperial and colonial ideologies and practices, which complicate the case of non-metropolitan settler colonialism in Palestine.

Recent theorizations of settler colonialism, by Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, have challenged ‘an oddly monolithic, and surprisingly unexamined, notion of colonialism,’ which has shaped the postcolonial interpretive paradigm.<sup>4</sup> Their revisionary work emphasizes the analytical and structural distinction of settler colonialism from the metropole colonialism of postcolonial studies. This thesis problematizes the abstract nature of the settler colonial paradigm, advanced by Wolfe and Veracini, which obscures the actual overlaps and entanglements between the supposedly distinct forms of colonialism. The interplay of coalitions of imperial and colonial forms on the ground, highlighted by what Bashir Abu-Manneh has termed the ‘imperialism-colonialism’ paradigm in relation to the US-Israel alliance, unsettles the discreteness of the Zionist project.<sup>5</sup> The focus here on the Jewish-American legitimization of the Zionist master narrative serves to suggest that the Zionist settler project is inseparable from the interplay of Western centres of power.

Within the emergent settler colonial discourse, this thesis examines the dynamics of the relation between fiction, history, and politics, which continue to shape narratives of Palestine. Literary (mis)representations of Palestine have been frequently evoked and severely manipulated at crucial moments in the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.<sup>6</sup> A telling example illustrating this contention is the constant allusion to Mark Twain’s *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) by Israeli leaders, who often cite parts of the book in their official speeches. In October 1991, for instance, Yitzhak Shamir, then Israeli Prime Minister, in his address to the Madrid Peace Conference, quoted parts from Twain replete with images of Palestine as a barren and empty land.<sup>7</sup> On a different occasion, a *Haaretz* report, revealing that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu intended to offer US President Barack Obama a copy of Twain’s book during their first meeting in Washington, received the attention of newspaper commentators including Robert Mackey of the *New York Times*, Jeff Steverns Guntzel of the



*UTNE Reader*, and Mohammad Ali Saleh of the Arabic newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat*.<sup>8</sup> While Guntzel points out the coded message of the gift, Mackey puts Netanyahu's choice of this particular text in the context of other attempts, illustrating the value of Twain's representation of Ottoman Palestine to the Zionist settler colonial project. These earlier attempts include a Hebrew translation of selected chapters from Twain's book, published as a separate volume entitled *Pleasure Excursion to the Holy Land* (1972); and Netanyahu's stitching together of long fragments from Twain's description of the aridity of Palestinian lands into his book, *A Durable Peace: Israel and Its Place Among the Nations* (1993). Saleh, in *Asharq Al-Awsat*, takes the argument further by anticipating an increase in sales of Twain's book and, consequently, a wider circulation of its literary misrepresentation of Palestine among the US reading public. Questions such as *why Twain's book in particular, why at that particular moment; and why to that particular recipient*, are pertinent to a New Historicist discussion, one that examines the negotiation of text and context and explores the complex relationship between literature, history and politics. This study investigates this triangular relation with a particular focus on the representations of Palestine in Jewish American novels within the frame of settler colonialism.

The general mode of this thesis, with its emphasis on the interrelatedness of textuality and historicity and its scepticism of a monological authoritative narrative, draws on New Historicism, which also informs the chrono-historical design and the comparative approach of the study.<sup>9</sup> Measuring fictional accounts alongside the otherwise knowable historical events, my thesis examines how Palestine as a geopolitical space is given literary form by Jewish American and Arab novelists. The novels selected for study engage with representations of Palestine and Palestinians through major historical events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the 1948 War, the 1967 War, and the 1980s *intifada*. Each chapter is a comparative study that focuses on one of these

historical encounters and explores the politics and poetics of representation shaping two competing narratives across the settler colonial divide.

For New Historicists, the notion of representation is central to the understanding of the relation between the literary and the historical. This centrality is reflected in choosing 'Representations' as a title for the journal that would voice their thoughts. In the introduction to *Practicing New Historicism* (2000), Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt state:

After considerable debate, we settled on representation as the central problem in which all of us ... were engaged. It was tempting then to call the proposed journal 'Representation,' but the uneasiness some of us felt with theoretical abstraction, our scepticism about the will to construct a unified theory, led us to adopt the plural.<sup>10</sup>

The plural form of the journal title signifies the New Historicists' interest in the necessary multiplicity of representations and the plurality of interpretations as well as their scepticism regarding a master narrative of history. Brook Thomas insists, 'representation is structurally dependent on misrepresentation. Since by definition representation can never be full, all acts of representation produce an "other" that is marginalised or excluded.'<sup>11</sup> This contention is particularly true in the case of representing Palestine. Edward Said ceaselessly urges us to pay attention to 'representation' as 'an issue lurking near the question of Palestine,' emphasising the comparability of Zionism and Orientalism in their reliance on discursive constructions:

Zionism always undertakes to speak for Palestine and the Palestinians; this has always meant a blocking operation, by which the Palestinian cannot be heard from (or represent himself) directly on the world stage. Just as the expert Orientalist believed that only he could speak ... for the natives and primitive societies that he had studied—his *presence* denoting their *absence*—so too the Zionists spoke to the world on behalf of the Palestinians.<sup>12</sup>

The Zionist settler project in many ways is built on the negation of Palestine and the Palestinians, as evinced by the myth of a land without people for a

people without land. Palestine, Said stresses, has been represented either as an empty land or as 'a place where a relatively advanced (because European) incoming population of Jews has performed miracles of construction and civilising and has fought brilliantly successful technical wars' against the 'uncivilized Arab natives.'<sup>13</sup> Zionist discourse, accordingly, represents Palestine and the Palestinians either as sheer absence or as distorted presence. The New Historicists' assumption that literary representations 'do not occupy a space free from political pressures' underlies their recognition of the 'responsibility to redress past political inequities by giving representation to those previously excluded.'<sup>14</sup> This sceptical New Historicist gaze provides a useful prism through which representations of Palestine can be approached. This study aims to redress the balance by giving voice to the marginalised and often excluded narratives of Arab writers. The representations of the otherwise knowable history of Modern Palestine in American best sellers will be read contrapuntally with those of Arab novelists in their attempts to write back,<sup>15</sup> re-asserting their Palestinian history and re-narrating their memory.

According to Greenblatt, the relationship between history and literature is one of negotiation: the literary work is both product and producer of history. '[T]he work of art,' writes Greenblatt, 'is the product of a negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society.'<sup>16</sup> Louis Montrose contends that 'the newer historical criticism is new in its refusal of unproblematic distinctions between "literature" and "history," between "text" and "context"; new in resisting a prevalent tendency to posit and privilege a unified and autonomous individual—whether an author or a work—to be set against a social or literary background.'<sup>17</sup> With utmost accuracy and precision, Montrose calls attention to the new historicist's 'reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of history.'<sup>18</sup> Literary works reflect and refract the historical discourses which are in circulation at the time of their production and, in the process, reveal the politics and the cultural

dynamics that determine what qualifies as an authoritative narrative in a given society.

Within the particular context of the question of Palestine, the 1980s not only witnessed the emergence of New Historicism but also the rise of Israeli new historians who have turned to the long suppressed, yet newly declassified archives to reassess and rewrite the history of the 1948 War. It is important here to note the collision between 'New Historicism' — a literary historical method inspired by Foucault and pioneered by Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Montrose and other English literature professors in the 1980s — and the Israeli 'new historians' who worked through the declassified Israeli archives in the same period and demythologised the origins of the state, notably Simha Flaban, Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, and Ilan Pappé. If New Historicism is '*new* in its refusal of unproblematized distinctions between "literature" and "history," between "text" and "context,"'<sup>19</sup> the Israeli new history is new in its turn to silenced, blocked, and marginalised sources to construct a new historical narrative. Sharing a sceptical perspective, both groups reacted against accepted wisdom and master narratives. New Historicism shifts focus away from the historical canon to literature and even to previously dismissed minor literary texts in order to foreground and probe marginalised voices for an insight into history. In the same vein, the Israeli new historians considered the suppressed stories of the newly declassified archives for a new understanding of the history of 1948.

This thesis proposes a useful theoretical intervention by combining New Historicist and postcolonial approaches. The materialist turn of the New Historicists, often identified in their interest in historicising aesthetic expressions in particularly defined contexts, enables the 'rerouting' of the postcolonial frame, often critiqued for its universalising tendencies. The New Historicist concern for the 'negotiation,' 'circulation,' and 'exchange' of narratives provides an interpretative paradigm that can usefully relate 'the unsettling circulation of materials and discourses' to forms of power in a given society which foregrounds and gives authority to a particular narrative whilst

simultaneously obscure and undermine alternative discourses and possibilities.<sup>20</sup>

Back in 1990, Robert Young has criticised the New Historicists' lack of a clear theorization of the interplay of power and history, claiming that cultural materialists are more Foucauldian than 'the more fastidious,' and 'the more strictly academic new historians, whose own politics remain more carefully hidden.'<sup>21</sup> New Historicism, Young insists, remains concerned mainly with the 'charting of the circulating relations between aesthetic and other forms of production,' which seems irrelevant to a 'modern concept of literature' and 'works best in those historical periods, such as the Renaissance.'<sup>22</sup> The combining of a new historicist methodology with a postcolonial frame aims to revitalize the two critical practices and reveal, contrary to Young's observation, the relevance of New Historicism to modern postcolonial literatures and current settler debates, while affirming the possibility of charting a 'relational' literary history of Palestine,<sup>23</sup> one that relates a hegemonic Jewish-American version of Palestine to a counter-history from Arab and Palestinian perspectives.

If New Historicism emerges in response to the isolation of aesthetic artefacts by more formalist critical practices and to the ethical responsibility of literary criticism, it is high time for postcolonialists, given the intellectuals' relentless concerns with current, even mounting, political disputes in many postcolonial contexts, to engage with the possibilities entailed in the New Historicist 'return to history.' This return is central to the appraisal of the forms of power that continue to condition the authority accorded to a particular version of events, and to the evaluation of the writer's responsibility to reality and the measure of truth embedded even in most fictionalized versions of history.

From a New Historicist perspective, the writing of a relational literary history of Palestine entails a return to the history of the US-Israeli coalition of power that has shaped the Arab-Israeli conflict. Bashir Abu-Manneh has

recently conceptualized the relation between the United States and Israel in terms of 'imperialism-colonialism' paradigm.<sup>24</sup> Since 1967, Abu-Manneh argues, 'the United States has been Israel's single most important ally,' 'allowing,' 'encouraging,' and 'aiding' Israeli expansionism over more Palestinian territories.<sup>25</sup> Without the diplomatic, political, and economic support of the US, Israel would be 'a pariah state.'<sup>26</sup> In addition to these forms of support explained by Abu-Manneh, the rhetorical legitimization of the Zionist settler enterprise remains central, yet uncharted. This thesis makes an original turn to the literary production of Jewish-American novelists, exploring the agency of their textual representations in the rhetorical grounding of the Zionist settler project.

While studies, by Anna Bernard and others, have shown concern for the narration of the nation in Israeli and Palestinian literatures, only minimal scholarly attention has been paid to the instrumental agency of the Jewish American novel in representing Palestine as a settler locale in ways that legitimate the Zionist enterprise. The particular focus on the work of Jewish-American, rather than Israeli, novelists in the legitimization of Zionist settler colonialism problematizes Veracini's abstract theorisation of the settler model as construing a version not only discrete from but antithetical to metropole colonialism. Novels by Leon Uris (1924-2003), Saul Bellow (1915-2005), Philip Roth (born 1933) and others have established a subgenre—the Jewish-American novel—that, I will argue, has circulated a version of history, which supported the Zionist rhetorical conquest.

So the use of the term 'Jewish-American novel' here should not be misunderstood as implementing ethnic ethos. I use the term for its categorical distinction from the wider US cultural production and furthermore for its usefulness in clarifying the divide that separates the 'absent presence,' as Lorenzo Veracini has termed it, of the metropolitan centre of the settler society and the colonised Palestinian. When it comes to narratives and representations, Veracini emphasises that:

Even when indigenous and settler agencies are the only ones left contending on the ground, there is always an absent presence, metropolitan or otherwise, that contributes to shaping the settler colonial situation.<sup>27</sup>

My study, then, examines the 'absent presence' of the Jewish-American novel in perpetuating particular constructs about Palestine in order to justify Zionist settler colonialism. This rhetoric of the absent present agency sets the scene for an original turn to the Jewish-American novel as providing useful material to reveal contrapuntal readings with counter-histories and counter-narratives by 'present absentees' – the name given by Israel to Palestinians – and unprivileged Arab novels.

The notion of 'Jewish-American literature' is well established in the *Norton Anthology* (2001) and among US academia, and it is commonly used by literary critics including Irving Howe (1977), Ted Solotaroff (1992), and Andrew Furman (1997).<sup>28</sup> The cultural impact of this body of literature, I argue, reaches a far wider public than a corpus of Israeli literature, written mainly in Hebrew. First, the language barrier, which might limit the access of an English reading public to Israeli texts, is eliminated in the case of Jewish-American novels written in English. Second, for those anti-Zionist readers, both Arabs and Euro-Americans, who might be sceptical of reading an Israeli writer, would not have the same degree of distrust when they choose to read a novel by Bellow or Roth, not to mention Uris. The impact of these novels, with their successful print history, in shaping Western public understanding of crucial events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is worth opening up to dialogical interaction with Palestinian counter-narratives.

The twentieth century has witnessed 'a surge of Jewish American fiction' dealing with 'the new, practically inescapable subject' of Palestine.<sup>29</sup> Before the 1948 war, American writers generally paid little attention to Palestine: Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad* (1873) and Herman Melville's *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land* (1876), along with a number of missionaries'

travelogues on the Holy Land constitute the legacy of American writers to Western readership.<sup>30</sup> During the autumn of 1948, Zelda Popkin (1898-1983) visited Palestine and in 1951 published *Quiet Street*, the first Jewish-American novel about the 1948 War. Seven years later, Leon Uris published *Exodus* (1958), the most popular American novel addressing the subject of Palestine. Uris later revisited this topic in *The Haj* (1984). Pointing out the role of the 1967 War in reviving Western writers' interest in Palestine as a subject, Edward Said writes that 'during the decade after 1967 a great many well-known personalities visited Israel, and in the case of the writers among them, wrote their impressions.'<sup>31</sup> Like Uris, Saul Bellow and Philip Roth also visited the land of Palestine and wrote about it. While Uris represents pre-1967 Palestine, Bellow and Roth represent post-1967 and post-1987 Palestine respectively. This dissertation will examine Uris's *The Haj* (1984), Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970) and *To Jerusalem and Back: A Personal Account* (1976), and Roth's *Operation Shylock: A Confession* (1993), exploring how these texts negotiate with their respective contexts.

In the case of the American writers selected for study here, the politics of commission looms high in their endeavour to report on, write about, or represent Palestine. There is clear evidence that Uris was commissioned to write *Exodus*. Bellow was commissioned to write reports from the battlefield of the June War to the *Newsday* magazine. Roth, or at least the fictive protagonist of *Operation Shylock* who bears the name of the real-life novelist, is commissioned by a Mossad agent for an operation, and then advised to write a book, with little 'fictionalization.' Whether by way of commission or otherwise, Jewish American novels have engaged in the politics of representing Palestine. For example, Uris's *Exodus* was published shortly after the tripartite incursion on Egypt in 1952, while *The Haj* appeared after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the Sabra and Shatila massacres. Bellow's *Mr Sammler's Planet* and *To Jerusalem and Back* echo two visits to Israel, first during the 1967 war and again in 1975. In *Operation Shylock*, Roth reacts to the increasing visibility of the



Palestinian population in the aftermath of the first *intifada*. Reading these novels in relation to the political and historical discourses that circulated at the time of their publication illuminate the negotiation between text and context.

If Edward Said and others have uncovered the instrumentality of the European novel in perpetuating colonialist discourses, this project aspires to reveal a similar agency in the Jewish American novel in creating and sustaining particular structures of feeling to legitimate Zionist settler colonialism. These novels fashion Palestine in biblical history, reiterate the victimisation and expulsion of the Jews from Europe, propagate the foundational myths of Zionism, and articulate Israeli official narratives while obscuring and undermining the narrative of the colonised Palestinians.

Although this was not immediate, Palestinian writers have understood the importance of fiction writing to their anti-colonial struggle. Ghassan Kanafani (1936-1972), a Palestinian novelist, has realized the organic relation between the writing of novels and the emergence of his political awareness and commitment:

My political position springs from my being a novelist. In so far as I am concerned, politics and the novel are an indivisible case and I can categorically state that I became politically committed because I am a novelist, not the opposite. I started writing the story of my Palestinian life before I formed a clear political position or joined any organization.<sup>32</sup>

For Kanafani, as for many Palestinian writers, the writing of the novel with its inherent dialogics is necessarily linked to politicised discourses. The politically engaged novelist began to write back in the very medium that Zionist settler colonialism manipulated to articulate its rhetorical structures. In 1902, almost half a century before the establishment of the Israeli state, the father of political Zionism Theodore Herzl wrote his novel *Altenu land*. Herzl found in the novel a useful medium to articulate the rhetoric and the vision of a Jewish state on the land of Palestine. Thus, in the particular context of Palestine, exploring the issues at stake in novel writing, particularly structures of silence, permission

and commission to narrate, archives, and oral history, has become increasingly imperative.

Available scholarship either addresses Palestinian self-representation or the engagement with Israel in the Jewish American imagination. In the 1990s, US universities produced a body of scholarship exploring the increasing tendency among Jewish American writers to engage with Israel in their literary works. Andrew Furman's *Israel Through the Jewish-American Imagination* (1997) surveys Jewish American literature on Israel from 1928 to 1993 with particular focus on the impact of the establishment of a Jewish state on forging the identity of the Jewish American writer. Bringing together the work of eight Jewish-American writers, Furman analyses how Israel has been imagined and represented, with particular emphasis on the three relational phases between the Jewish American community and Israel: the pre-Zionist, Zionist, and post-Zionist phases. Furman concludes that the literary engagement with Israel has contributed to both the forging of the Jewish American identity and the recovery of Jewish American literature from the margin. Jewish American literature, writes Furman, needed a renaissance and 'the recent Jewish American literature on Israel heralds in this renaissance.'<sup>33</sup> A considerable gap can be identified in studies that open up the border and read these works contrapuntally with Palestinian and Arab narratives. This study seeks to bridge that gap.

My thesis differs from Furman's study in many ways. While Furman's study is informed by a pre-Zionist, Zionist and post-Zionist structure, this thesis draws on a New Historicist framework which enables a fuller understanding of the issues at stake in representing Palestine by relating these literary representations to three important moments in modern Palestinian history. Here, the comparative approach, which brings into focus the production of Arab novelists in their attempts to reconstruct the Palestinian past, restores the perspective of the Palestinian subaltern whose counter-narrative and self-representation is in danger of being marginalised.

However, this is not the first study seeking to frame Palestinian literature in postcolonial debates. Anna Ball's most recent book, *Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Feminist Perspective* (2012), ventures into the 'fraught territory' of Palestinian self-representation. Taking a postcolonial feminist perspective, Ball's comparative study of Palestinian literature and film reveals a rich polyphony that highlights the plurality, rather than singularity, of the Palestinian national narrative. This polyphony, Ball suggests, invites divergent perspectives on, and approaches to, questions of Palestinian identity and politics. By bringing together Jewish American and Arab authors, my study offers further experimentation with approaches to questions of the representation of Palestine, at the intersections of the postcolonial and settler colonial paradigms. A specifically feminist perspective is, however, beyond the scope of my thesis.

However, Ball's comparative study of Palestinian literature and film is modelled on a similar approach adopted in Kamal Abdel-Malek's *The Rhetoric of Violence* (2005), which explores Arab-Jewish encounters as depicted in Palestinian literature and film. His reading of the literary texts draws on Victor Turner's concept of liminality. Analyzing selected novels, short stories, poems, and films, Abdel-Malek argues that Palestinians, separated from both homeland and community, find permanent residence in the liminal phase where they either face death, the ultimate separation, or live permanently in borderlines.

The following sections map out connections and disjunctions related to the place of Palestine in settler colonial studies; to the place of Palestine in postcolonial debates; and to the spatial and temporal specificities of Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope as a useful paradigm for a nuanced postcolonial discourse to address the particular condition of the Palestinian experience.

## **Palestine and Settler Colonialism**

Recent research, pioneered by the Australian scholars Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, has called attention to settler colonialism as a discrete field of inquiry. In its practice and language, settler colonialism is structurally and analytically distinguishable from 'metropole colonialism,' the basic context around which postcolonial theories have developed.<sup>34</sup> The major difference between the two modes, as theorised by Wolfe and Veracini, lies in their different attitudes to the land. On the institutional level, while metropole colonialism is premised on the maximal extraction of labour and natural resources from the land, settler colonial formations are based on territorial aims; settlers invade not to seize control of the labour and resources of the land then return, but to stay in the land and build a (state) sovereignty. Settler colonial projects are, therefore, essentially defined by processes whereby an exogenous collective replaces an indigenous one in the settler locale. Integral to this territorial perspective is the concept of transfer in settler colonialism. In order to build settlements, the land must be emptied of its natives in both textuality and reality. 'The discourse of settler colonialism,' as Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington have argued, 'describes how, fortified by modernizing narratives and ideology, a population from the metropole moves to occupy a territory and fashion a new society in a space conceptualized as vacant and free: as available for the taking.'<sup>35</sup> Whilst the economy of metropole colonies is based on the master-slave structure and the necessary labour force of the natives for the maximal extraction of the land's resources, '[s]ettler colonies were (are) premised on the elimination of the native societies.'<sup>36</sup> Classic settler colonialism, as Veracini has noted, requires 'the prior extermination or expulsion of a majority of the indigenous population, followed by the demographic 'swamping' of these territories by settlers from the metropole and/or a variety of other locales.'<sup>37</sup> Veracini discusses instances of settler formations such as New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Canada, and Algeria where his argument on the distinct formations of settler colonialism holds true.

If Veracini's assumption that the settler eliminationist logic has superseded the metropole master-slave model holds true in many settler locales, it seems more problematic in the case of Palestine than elsewhere. How can we describe the relationship between a majority of settlers and a second-class, present absentee minority of Arab Israelis in Tel Aviv; between a minority of settlers and a majority of Palestinians in Ramallah; or between an absent presence of settlers and a forgotten majority of Palestinians in Gaza? More questions can still be raised with respect to the relation between settlers and indigenes in the Golan Heights. Despite Nur Masalha's succinct arguments affirming that the ideology of transfer continued to shape Zionist thought and practice from the 1948 events through the 1967 conflict and beyond, the facts on the ground reveal intricate overlaps that render a clear categorization of a purely settler paradigm in Palestine impossible.<sup>38</sup>

A second crucial distinction between metropole and settler colonialism relates to the colonisers' relation to the land at the population level and the perpetuation or otherwise of their foreignness to the colonized zone. As Veracini has noted,

While a colonial society is successful only if the separation between colonizer and colonized is retained, a settler colonial project is ultimately successful only when it extinguishes itself- that is, when the settlers cease to be defined as such and become 'natives', and their position become normalized.<sup>39</sup>

One essential strategy to achieve this normalization of the settlers in the land is through the 'tam[ing] of a landscape once perceived as intractably alien.'<sup>40</sup> Two processes are simultaneously at work here; first, the settlers establish a claim to the land; second, the landscape is usually drastically transformed, rendering it familiar to the settler, but alien to its native inhabitants. In most cases, the settler finds a useful agent in archaeological discourse and the politics of representation to advance ideologically loaded narratives in order to legitimate their claims to the land.

Another vital consideration in the differentiation between metropole and settler colonial formations involves the economic conditions of the settler locale. A settler collective tends to establish an economy characterised by settlers' monopolisation of labour and the absence of indigenous workers.<sup>41</sup> A telling example can be found in the Kibbutz, the formative unit of the Zionist settler project in the land of historic Palestine, whose agricultural economy depends solely on Ashkenazi Jews. Neither Arabs nor Oriental Jews were permitted any role or even presence inside these 'pure settlement colonies,' as Gershon Shafir has described them.<sup>42</sup> However, this exclusionary ethnic constitution of the settlers' economy is central to the affirmation of their sovereign entitlement. In this case, they can develop and improve the land and consequently they are worthy of ruling it.

However, the maximal extraction and investment of local labour and resources from the West Bank in the economy of Israel proper complicates the Zionist settler paradigm. Nablus and Ramallah, among other West Bank cities, serve as capitalist markets for settlers' products. In the 'classic' settler colonial model, the eliminationist logic underlying settler colonialism influences both the economy and the discursive construction of subjectivity in such a way as to render the dialectical representation of colonial contexts irrelevant. The settlers' conceptual disavowal and actual violence relegate the indigenes to invisibility and non-existence. Drawing the defining borders separating settlers from non-settler alterities, Veracini explains a triangular relationship connecting a settler collective on the one hand, to indigenous and exogenous others: '[a] relational system comprising three elements complicates that bilateral opposition between colonizer and colonized that is paradigmatic in the interpretive categories developed by colonial studies.'<sup>43</sup> If we apply this triangular model to Palestine, how can we describe the position of a Jewish-American community, which economically supports and rhetorically lends authority to the master Zionist narrative? Shall we consider this third collectivity an exogenous alterity or a metropolitan centre?

While Veracini takes Wolfe's argument of the discreteness of settler colonialism further by structuring its dialectical opposition to metropole colonialism around the four themes of population, sovereignty, consciousness, and narrative, Gabriel Piterberg theorises a comparative settler colonial framework in relation to the five clusters of: the environmental and geopolitical properties of the contested territory; the demographic (im)balance of settlers and indigenes; land, labour, and their interplay in the settler locale; the centrality of race in the settlers' entitlement to sovereignty; and the triangular relationship between settlers, indigenous population and the metropole.<sup>44</sup>

Rejecting the thought that Palestine poses an exceptional case, a group of scholars have nevertheless called attention to comparative settler colonialism as a useful framework for thinking about Palestine. In doing so, the Palestinian situation, which has long been treated as peculiar and uncharacteristic of a particular colonial modality, has been opened up to valuable comparisons with other settler colonial locales including Algeria, South Africa, and Australia.<sup>45</sup> For instance, Piterberg extends comparative settler colonialism to the literature emerging from settler context, suggesting the possible comparability of settler narratives from Palestine and Algeria. His comparative study of the literary representations of the French settler colony in Algeria by Albert Camus on the one hand, and the Israeli settler colony in Palestine by S. Yizhar and Amos Oz on the other, reveals comparable settler colonial tropes, without discounting the historical specificity of individual settler cases. Drawing on Gershon Shafir's taxonomy of settler colonialism, which is based on various land-labour formations, Piterberg contends that while Camus's and Yizhar's novels are to be understood in the context of the (ethnic) plantation colony, Oz's 'Nomad and Viper' exemplifies a pure settlement colony.<sup>46</sup> Piterberg rigorously expresses concern for the problematic place of settler colonialism in postcolonial paradigms. He argues:

The comparative study of settler societies is not at all a subaltern studies project. It does not seek to salvage and reassert the voices of the

dispossessed victims of settler colonialism, nor does it adhere to a post-colonial methodology or register. In fact, most of these works' chief subject matter is the settlers themselves, rather than the metropolises or the indigenous peoples.<sup>47</sup>

Responding to Piterberg's concerns, my study explores the possibility of reading settler societies from a postcolonial perspective that takes the dynamics of the US metropole into account in formulating constructs about settlers and indigenes.

However, to suggest that exploring Zionism within a settler colonial framework is a relatively recent endeavour is inaccurate. There is clear evidence that a comparable perspective was advanced as early as 1965 by the Palestinian writer Fayez Sayegh in *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine*.<sup>48</sup> Understanding why this outlook was discarded and remained undeveloped is inseparable from understanding the centrality of the settler's ideological structure, which is sustained by both the construction of hegemonic narratives and the omission and exclusion of counter-hegemonic narratives. Saree Makdisi, in a study of what he has termed 'soft core,' romantic or 'postcolonial' Zionism, offers a critical re-reading of the Israeli novelist Amos Oz. For Makdisi, Oz's literary representations of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict not only deny the settler colonial ideology underpinning Zionism, but also gloss over the extent to which the policy of displacement or forced expulsion had been carefully planned over the previous decades. His essay is an impassioned argument for settler colonialism as a useful perspective from which the destruction of Palestine must be examined, not simply in terms of physical but also of rhetorical displacement.<sup>49</sup>

Central to the manufacturing of the Zionist ideological 'structure' is the advancing of one narrative and the blotting out of all others, particularly those of the indigenous population—the Palestinians, in this context. 'In a settler-colonial context,' Wolfe warns,



the question of who speaks goes beyond liberal concerns with equity, dialogue or access to the academy. Claims to authority over indigenous discourse made from within the settler-colonial academy necessarily participate in the continuing usurpation of indigenous space.<sup>50</sup>

A conspicuous silence shrouds Palestinian history in the years that followed the *nakba*, which is considered the defining moment in the Palestinians' shared past and collective memory.<sup>51</sup> The story of the catastrophic expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians from their land went largely unheard. Surveying the works produced in the immediate aftermath of the *nakba* reveals the paucity and belatedness of historical records and literary representations by Palestinian writers. Ahmad Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod have interpreted the total silence on the *nakba* within the frame of traumatic memory, suggesting 'a case of delayed memory syndrome.' In the immediate aftermath of 1948, Palestinian writers were collectively so traumatised that they fell into a chosen amnesia to escape the horrors of their reality. A second possible interpretation offered by Sa'di and Abu-Lughod is based on the fact that the *nakba* is so entrenched in the present that writers have been unable to enjoy a detached perspective from which the past can be seen.<sup>52</sup> In line with this argument, I suggest that Arab and Palestinian writers were in a state of transition, waiting for the quick return to the homeland as promised by their leaders. For those writers, displacement was a temporary state that should not be recorded. As their memories avoided remembering, their pens resisted commemorating. Hamid Dabashi explains how the silence of Palestinian cinema on the *nakba* reiterates the danger of remembering and the 'unrepresentability' of the *nakba*. Instead, they were struggling to forget:<sup>53</sup>

The absence of any thorough cinematic treatment of al-Nakba, the foundational trauma of the Palestinian struggle, seems related to its unrepresentability. To represent the Palestinian tragedy and trauma is to relive it and to give credence to its permanence, which most directors avoid.<sup>54</sup>

While the 1967 defeat and later the 1993 Oslo Accords brought more political defeat and frustration, they empowered Palestinian writers, whose disillusionment was translated into forceful rhetoric and a proliferation of memories and recollections. Those writers, who eventually broke silence, challenged 'the architecture of erasure,' as Saree Makdisi has termed it, by reconstructing a shared past around which their national history had been woven.<sup>55</sup>

The 'epoch of silence,' as Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi have described it, that spans the period between 1948 and 1967, is marked by the lack of a detailed Palestinian narrative of the *nakba*.<sup>56</sup> The literary representations of Ghassan Kanafani, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, and Emile Habibi, according to the Lebanese novelist Elias Khoury, have dealt only partially with the historical catastrophe. What is missing, Khoury insists, is 'the experience of being uprooted, the banishment and the crime, the absence,'<sup>57</sup>—a gap that he undertook to bridge. A detailed narration of the Palestinian *nakba* remained unwritten until 1998, when Khoury (born 1948) wrote an epic narrative of the Palestinian question, beginning with the massive exodus of the Palestinians from their land after their defeat in 1948. Khoury's fictional rendition, *Gate of the Sun* (1998; trans. 2005), articulates history from below with particular emphasis on the transfer of Palestinians from the rural landscapes of Northern Galilee.

Besides these internal causes, 'assassins of memory'—to use Said's words—have played major roles as external forces in limiting Palestinian access to narrating and to publishing.<sup>58</sup> Exploring the relationship between invention, memory, and geography, Said argues that the Palestinian memory has been colonised and silenced by the colonizer's invention of a settler narrative based on the particular geography of Palestine:

For years and years an assiduous campaign to maintain a frozen version of Israel's heroic narrative of repatriation and justice obliterated any possibility of a Palestinian narrative, in large part because certain key components of the Israeli story stressed certain geographical characteristics of Palestine itself ... Perhaps the greatest battle

Palestinians have waged as a people has been over the right to a remembered presence and, with that presence, the right to possess and reclaim a historical reality, at least since the Zionist movement began its encroachments on the land. A similar battle has been fought by all colonized people whose past and present were dominated by outside powers who had first conquered the land and then rewrote history as to appear in that history as the true owners of that land.<sup>59</sup>

This architecture of erasure has been sustained by various tactics and strategies. Controlling the archives in order to control memory is one example. The institutionalisation of memory through control of the archives, as Aleida Assman argues, ‘involves three main aspects: selection, conservation, and accessibility,’<sup>60</sup> from which Palestinian oral history and memory have been completely eliminated. Recently, clear evidence has revealed large-scale looting of books and documents from Palestinian houses and libraries by Israeli settlers during the 1948 events — the looting of books, documents, and newspapers from Omar Saleh Al Barghouti’s house in Jerusalem is only one example<sup>61</sup> — as a means to monopolise memory and the narration of history. Furthermore, the rise of the Israeli new historians with, their revisionist narratives of the events of 1948, provide evidence of the Israeli control of archives, determining not only what and when to declassify, but also who can access declassified materials, and who can write a revisionist history. As a settler project, Zionism has been invented and maintained by historical and rhetorical structures. Edward Said understood ‘how the historic position of Jews in European history silenced all attempts by Palestinians to narrate our own story, and how the predicament of Palestinian people as “victims of the victims” of Europe conditioned the West’s refusal of support or sympathy.’<sup>62</sup> His exploration of measures taken by Israelis to impede the rise of a Palestinian narrative—including what Said has termed the ‘permission to narrate’—as well as the complicity of the West with these measures, further illuminates the calculated and systematic suppression of Palestinian memory. Despite Said’s work, the marginalisation of Palestine in

postcolonial studies further extends the protracted emergence of a Palestinian narrative.

### **Palestine and the Postcolonial**

Palestine has been largely ignored in postcolonial theory. Except for Edward Said's substantial contributions, and the work of a group of scholars including Joseph Massad, Ella Shohat, Patrick Williams, Anna Bernard, and Anna Ball, postcolonial debates have tended to marginalise the problems raised by the Palestinian context. Palestine, as Anna Ball has observed, 'remains largely 'off-limits' in the realm of the postcolonial.'<sup>63</sup> For Patrick Williams, 'this absence is remarkably difficult to understand (How can we *not* be working on Palestine?)'<sup>64</sup> This seemingly incomprehensible absence can be explained in relation to three conditions that contribute to the challenging position of Palestine in postcolonial debates. First, as a settler locale, Palestine does not fit nicely into the modes and tropes explored by postcolonial theorists, whose arguments have been informed by cases of metropole colonialism. 'For all the homage paid to heterogeneity and difference,' Patrick Wolfe insists, 'the bulk of "post"-colonial theorizing is disabled by an oddly monolithic, and surprisingly unexamined, notion of colonialism.'<sup>65</sup> According to Wolfe, one reason why postcolonial theory has paid little attention to settler colonial formations

consists in the historical accident (or is it?) that the native founders of the post-colonial canon came from franchise or dependent—as opposed to settler or creole—colonies. This gave these guerrilla theoreticians the advantage of speaking to an oppressed majority, on whose labor a colonizing minority was vulnerably dependent ... But what if the colonizers are not dependent on native labor?—indeed, what if the natives themselves have been reduced to a small minority whose survival can hardly be seen to furnish the colonizing society with more than a remission from ideological embarrassment?<sup>66</sup>

A second factor contributing to the marginalisation of Palestinian literature in postcolonial debates is the sustained efforts of Zionist intellectuals to distance

themselves from the legacy of European capitalist colonialism, maintaining the perception of Zionism as a postcolonial endeavour. Questioning ‘the value of ... postcolonial theory’ as an ‘explanatory paradigm for acquiring empirically evidenced knowledge on the phenomenon of Zionism,’ Gideon Shimoni observes that ‘unlike every known case of colonialism, Zionist settlement in Palestine neither emanated from, nor acted in the interests of, a state or metropolitan centre outside of Palestine.’<sup>67</sup> The main arguments advanced by the various essays in *Postcolonial Theory and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2008)—where Shimoni’s study appears—are based on a conceptualisation of Zionism either as a postcolonial movement or as a deviant form of ‘colonization without colonialism.’<sup>68</sup> The general stance of the collection is revealed in its title, which reflects reluctance to use the word ‘Palestinian’ instead of ‘Arab.’ The effect of this framework can be said to interrogate and marginalise the legitimacy of Palestinian resistance in ways understood by postcolonial theorists in situations analogous to those of India or Africa, which feature a clearer linearity of colonial and postcolonial phases —except, of course, in cases like South Africa.

In her introduction to *Postcolonial Theory and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, Donna Robinson Divine goes so far as to criticise the marginalisation of Zionism in postcolonial studies. Despite her claim that Said’s legacy in postcolonial studies ‘demands that postcolonialism champion the Palestinian cause,’<sup>69</sup> available scholarship reveals, as Anna Bernard has suggested, that ‘Palestine’s position in the institutionalized form of Postcolonial literary studies is a kin to the infamous Israeli legal category of the “present absentee.”’<sup>70</sup> While Gideon Shimoni contends that ‘postcolonial theory can contribute only marginally to comprehension of the Middle Eastern Arab-Jewish conflict, and even less to prospects for a solution,’<sup>71</sup> my study suggests that Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope, with its celebration of multiplicity and temporal-spatial specificity, provides a useful paradigm for a nuanced postcolonial perspective on the question of Palestine.

A third reason for the absence of Palestinian literature from postcolonial studies is the continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. This thesis offers a postcolonial reading of Palestinian literature, inspired by Williams' suggestion to '[view] the "postcolonial" not as an achieved condition, but as an "anticipatory" discourse.'<sup>72</sup> '[A]s postcolonialists,' writes Williams, suggesting an ethical responsibility with respect to the subject of Palestine, 'we are faced with, and are not analysing — with occasional honourable exceptions — the worst example of colonialism in the modern world. Time to reroute.'<sup>73</sup>

In 2002, the Arab critic Wail Hassan remarked on and expressed concerns about the apparent marginalisation of Arab literature in postcolonial studies, whose theorists have paid considerable attention to African, Indian, and Caribbean literatures. Hassan suggested the anti-colonial spirit voiced in the poetry of the Arab Nahda [revival] intellectuals in the mid-nineteenth century and their successors as viable material to nuance postcolonial debates.<sup>74</sup> Those poets, according to Hassan, appropriated European literary paradigms, forms and styles to serve their own anti-colonial ends. 'The current impasse in postcolonial studies,' Hassan concludes, 'may therefore be overcome by opening the field to comparative literary studies and to comparative critical methodologies that rigorously interrogate the limits of postcolonial theory's founding discourses,'<sup>75</sup> suggesting Arabic literature, philosophy, and cultural memory as useful material for a fresh perspective from which postcolonial debates might be revisited.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, the Egyptian Tahiya Abdul-Nassir has reacted to what she describes as the exclusion of Anglophone Arab literature from *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) — the first major account of a wide range of postcolonial texts — by offering a postcolonial reading of Yasmin Zahran's *A Beggar at Damascus Gate* (1995). Her study reveals the anti-colonial implications of the exilic Palestinian author's preference for using a hybrid language that combines English and Arabic as the medium of narration in the novel. In line with the efforts by Hassan and Abdul-Nassir, my thesis recovers Palestinian literature from the margins of postcolonial debates by exploring counter-

narratives and postcolonial formulations in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks* (2008) and Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2011).<sup>77</sup>

A group of scholars including Anne McClintock (1992), Ella Shohat (1992) and Joseph Massad (2000) has shown concerns for the limitations of the postcolonial in theorising Palestine. McClintock links the Palestinian situation in the Occupied Territories and the colonial experience of Northern Ireland as two cases whose historical specificities, where 'there may be nothing "post" about colonialism at all,' challenge postcolonial theories.<sup>78</sup> Drawing attention to crucial geopolitical distinctions and continuities of imperial powers, she indicates the need for '[m]ore complex terms and analyses' in order to conceptualise the 'complexities that cannot be served under the single rubric "post-colonialism."' <sup>79</sup> Following this line of argument, Ella Shohat explains the problematic ambiguity of post-colonialism in relation to its failure to distinguish between different forms of colonial and imperial dominations. The obscurity of temporal and spatial specificities in the 'postcolonial condition' or 'post-coloniality' leads Shohat to wonder: 'what time frame would apply for ... Palestinian writers for example, like Sahar Khalifeh and Mahmoud Darwish, who write contemporaneously with "post-colonial" writers?' pondering if one should 'suggest that they are *pre-"postcolonial"*'<sup>80</sup> In response to these concerns, Shohat calls for the necessary contextualisation of postcolonial critiques in the historical, geopolitical, and cultural particularities of distinct postcolonial contexts and literatures. With particular focus on the Palestinian context, Joseph Massad addresses the specific spatial and temporal peculiarities presented by a settler colonial formation in Palestine. Massad points out how the term postcolonial is rendered particularly ambivalent in relation to the Palestinian context by the fact that the Zionist settler colonialism has constructed itself as a postcolonial formation, one that he wryly describes as a 'postcolonial colony.'<sup>81</sup>

Between Shohat's 'pre-postcolonial' and Massad's 'postcolonial colony,' the need for 'rerouting' postcolonial theory has become increasingly imperative in order to negotiate the (post)coloniality of Palestinian literature. Palestine

challenges postcolonial frames, since it represents a settler colonial context, unlike classical colonial forms, where postcolonial formulations seem to have developed under an on-going settler occupation. The peculiarity of this condition suggests useful material to Veracini's call for studies 'to focus on the possibility of post-settler colonial futures in a not-yet post-settler colonial world.'<sup>82</sup> In addressing the historical, temporal, and geographical specificities of Palestinian postcoloniality, this study will engage with Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the literary chronotope to develop a conceptual framework for analysing the representation of the post-1967 Palestinian national space. While Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia have been widely studied and utilized by postcolonial theorists, his conceptualisation of the literary chronotope has not received equal attention in postcolonial studies.

This thesis explores the chronotope as a useful analytical tool to understand the negotiation between time-space as represented in Palestinian narratives and the various socio-historical contexts that produce them. Bakhtin's chronotope refers to 'the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature.'<sup>83</sup> 'In the literary artistic chronotope,' Bakhtin elaborates, 'spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history.'<sup>84</sup> Focusing on literature written by Palestinians about Palestine, I will explore two chronotopes, namely walking and returning, as movements in Palestinian time and space. Through the chronotopes of walking and returning, Palestinian writers articulate ventures into Palestinian history and geography simultaneously. The historical and geographical specifications of this chronotopic analysis suggest ways of rerouting the postcolonial to understand Palestine as a settler colonial context, and also to understand the postcolonial formations produced by Palestinian literature under occupation.



In the course of appraising representations of Palestine, I will shift focus away from strictly literary frameworks to useful negotiations between literature, history, and media coverage. A comparative study as such will seek material in different sources—Arab historical accounts, Israeli new history, and US media reports—for insights into the discourses circulating at the times when the novels under study in this thesis were being written. Within the frame of settler colonialism, the thesis explores the relation between the writing of fiction, history, and politics. The chrono-historical design of the chapters allows me to explore the negotiation of text and context across three crucial moments in the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: the 1948 war, the 1967 war, and the 1980s *intifada*. I will draw on history and media coverage for useful comparisons of the representations of otherwise knowable historical events in Arab and American novels, highlighting what the novelists include in as well as what they leave out from their textual canvas. Investigating the historical contents of the selected novels is not to verify or dispute their mimetic reliability, but rather, to reveal what lies in the border between the spoken and the unspoken; between the literary and the historical.

Following Patrick Williams's conceptualisation of the postcolonial as an anticipatory discourse rather than an achieved condition, and Lorenzo Veracini's emphasis on the possibility of postcolonial formulations in a not-yet-(post)settler locale, my thesis aims to respond to the challenges raised by the Palestinian context and place Palestinian literature within postcolonial debates. I adopt Bakhtin's chronotope as a useful prism from which the historical and geographical specificities of Palestinian (post)coloniality can be usefully approached.

This thesis considers writers whose work is rarely discussed together, offering new readings of Jewish American and Arab fiction on Palestine. The first three chapters focus on three signal events: the 1948 *nakba*, the 1967 war, and the 1980s uprising. The first chapter offers a comparative study of 1948 Palestine as represented in Leon Uris's *The Haj* and Elias Khoury's *Gate of the*

*Sun*. Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and monologism prove useful for unpacking the interrelation between imaginary representations, historical narratives, and politics. The comparison focuses on commission vs. permission to narrate and monological vs. dialogical narratives. Examining structures of silence, belated narratives, and the inaccessibility of archives as issues at stake in Arab representations of the 1948 *nakba*, the chapter reveals how politics influences the dissemination of one narrative and the blotting out of another.

The second chapter extends this cross-cultural research to the 1967 conflict, exploring selected narratives by Edward Said, Sahar Khalifeh, Halim Barakat, and Saul Bellow in order to reveal the centrality of 1967 to paradigmatic shifts in Palestinians' experience and self-representation. I show that post-1967 literature articulates liminality and ambivalence, thereby enabling new possibilities and fresh perspectives. Each of these writers reveals a shared concern for the politics of the local in order to escape the burdens of diasporic existence and redefine what seems to be a borderless and geographically vague existence.

While post-1967 narratives affirm the rise of a new focus for Palestinian writers and their local experience, the third chapter explores how the greater visibility of Palestinians in the aftermath of the 1980s uprising finds literary form in US fiction. It investigates Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock* and reveals how cultural limits restrict a dialogical interaction with the emerging heteroglossia of a Palestinian voice and an anti-Zionist discourse. However, this failed dialogism reveals that despite their greater visibility in the media, the space permitted for a Palestinian voice in Jewish-American fiction has remained constricted and contained.

Responding to the relative marginalisation of Palestinian literature in postcolonial studies, the final chapter charts ways of representing Palestinian (post)coloniality. While the emergent geopolitics of settler colonialism proves useful for understanding the comparability of Palestine to other settler contexts, the historical specificities of this settler case are best approached through the

space/time sensitivities of the chronotope. Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the chronotope proves useful in analysing how the two Palestinian writers Raja Shehadeh and Susan Abulhawa reinvent the two chronotopes of walking and returning, previously manipulated by settlers' narratives, to assert the legitimacy of their counter-narratives. Although focusing on the Palestinian case, this study seeks to open up the postcolonial to the historical and rhetorical specificities of the literature emerging from settler colonial situations, and the possible enactment of postcolonial passages in not-yet-postcolonial contexts.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Wellington, 1999) 2.
- <sup>2</sup> Patrick Wolfe, 'Purchase by Other Means: The Palestine Nakba and Zionism's Conquest of Economics,' *Past Is Present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine*, spec. issue of *Settler Colonial Studies* 2.1 (2012): 139. Wolfe introduces the concept of 'preaccumulation' to characterise the complex Eurocolonial historical endowment that settlers imported with them (133).
- <sup>3</sup> Wolfe, 'Purchase by Other Means' 133.
- <sup>4</sup> Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism* 1.
- <sup>5</sup> Bashir Abu-Manneh, 'Israel in the US Empire,' *Terror and the Postcolonial*, ed. Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Morton (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 235.
- <sup>6</sup> Barbara Parmenter points out the archaeological and the ethnographic as two perspectives from which nineteenth-century Western travellers perceived Palestine. According to the 'archaeological' vision, the true Palestine lays buried beneath the rubble of the contemporary scene. The ethnographic view, however, presents the landscape and its inhabitants as picturesque examples of biblical stories and events. Palestine is, thus, either a buried archaeology or a timeless and changeless biblical landscape. See Barbara McKean Parmenter, *Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1994).
- <sup>7</sup> Nur Masalha, 'The 1967 Palestinian Exodus,' *The Palestine Exodus 1948-1998*, ed. Ghada Karmi and Eugene Cotran (Reading: Ithaca, 1999) 67.
- <sup>8</sup> Jeff Severns Guntzel, 'Netanyahu to Obama: You'll Love this Book About Arab Savages,' *Utne Reader* 19 May 2009; Robert Mackey, 'Netanyahu's Embrace of Mark Twain,' *New York Times* 20 May 2009; Mohammad Ali Saleh, 'Min Mark Twain Ila Obama' [From Mark Twain to Obama], *Asharq Al-Awsat* 29 May 2009.
- <sup>9</sup> The 1980s witnessed the emergence of New Historicism as a literary critical practice among a group of literary scholars at the University of California, Berkley, under the auspices of Stephen Greenblatt. New Historicism is, in essence, a reaction against the conception of the text as an autonomous entity, as had been practiced by certain forms of literary studies from the New Criticism through deconstruction. Simultaneously, Cultural Materialism, the British version of this movement, was developed by Jonathan Dollimore and Allan Sinfield at the University of Sussex.
- <sup>10</sup> Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, eds., *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000) 4.
- <sup>11</sup> Brook Thomas, 'The New Historicism and Other Old-fashioned Topics,' *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veesser (London: Routledge, 1989) 184.

- <sup>12</sup> Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1992) 39.
- <sup>13</sup> Said, *The Question of Palestine* 8.
- <sup>14</sup> Thomas 185.
- <sup>15</sup> This phrase is taken from the title of Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002).
- <sup>16</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, 'Towards a Poetics of Culture,' *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veeseer (London: Routledge, 1989) 12.
- <sup>17</sup> Louis Montrose, 'Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture,' *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veeseer (London: Routledge, 1989) 20.
- <sup>18</sup> Montrose 20.
- <sup>19</sup> Montrose 18.
- <sup>20</sup> Greenblatt, 'Towards a Poetics of Culture' 13.
- <sup>21</sup> Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1996) 89, 90.
- <sup>22</sup> Young 88.
- <sup>23</sup> Gabriel Piterberg endorses the notion of a 'relational history,' as opposed to comparative history, in relation to the overlapping experiences of indigenes and settlers in Palestine. See Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism* 67.
- <sup>24</sup> Abu-Manneh 235.
- <sup>25</sup> Abu-Manneh 240, 241.
- <sup>26</sup> Abu-Manneh 243.
- <sup>27</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2010) 24.
- <sup>28</sup> See Irving Howe, 'Introduction,' *Jewish-American Stories*, ed. Irving Howe (New York: Mentor-New American Library, 1977), Ted Solotaroff and Nessa Rapoport, eds. *Writing Our Way Home: Contemporary Stories by American Jewish Writers* (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), and Andrew Furman, *Israel Through the Jewish-American Imagination: A Survey of Jewish-American Literature on Israel, 1928-1995* (New York: SUNY P, 1997).
- <sup>29</sup> Andrew Furman, 'A New "Other" Emerges in American Jewish Literature: Philip Roth's Israel Fiction,' *Philip Roth*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2003) 148.

<sup>30</sup> Examples of these travel accounts include Orson Hyde's *A Voice from Jerusalem* (Liverpool: P.P. Pratt, 1842); William F. Lynch's *Narrative of the United States' Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea* (1849); William C. Prime's *Tent Life in the Holy Land* (1857); William McClure Thomson's *The Land and the Book* (1859); and William C. Bryant's *Letters of A Traveller* (1859). Examples of scholarship on American travel writing about the Holy Land include Hilton Obenzinger's *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) and Brian Yothers' *The Romance of the Holy Land in American Travel Writing, 1790-1876* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> Said, *The Question of Palestine* 40.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Stephan Wild, *Ghassan Kanafani: The Life of a Palestinian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975) 13.

<sup>33</sup> Andrew Furman, *Israel Through the Jewish-American Imagination: A Survey of Jewish-American Literature on Israel, 1928-1995* (New York: SUNY, 1997) 197.

<sup>34</sup> For further discussion of settler colonial forms as distinguishable from colonial ones, see Tracey Banivanua-Mar and Penelope Edmonds, eds., *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2010); Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington, eds., *Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2011); and Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*. In 2011, in response to the rising interest in this field, a new scholarly journal entitled *Settler Colonial Studies* emerged from Australia, a canonical settler locale, as a vehicle for the work of scholars who share this concern.

<sup>35</sup> Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington, eds., *Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture* (London: Palgrave, 2011) 1.

<sup>36</sup> Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism* 2.

<sup>37</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, 'The Other Shift: Settler Colonialism, Israel, and the Occupation,' *Journal of Palestine Studies* 42.2 (2013): 27.

<sup>38</sup> Nur Masalha has explored transfer as typical of Zionist historical practice before and after 1948. For more information on Masalha's exploration of transfer, see *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of 'Transfer' in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948* (Washington DC: Institute for Palestine studies, 1992); *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (London: Zed Books 2012); 'The 1967 Palestinian Exodus,' in *The Palestinian Exodus, 1948-1998*, ed. Ghada Karmi and Eugene Cotran (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1999).

<sup>39</sup> Veracini, 'The Other Shift' 28.

<sup>40</sup> Veracini, 'The Other Shift' 28.

<sup>41</sup> Veracini, *Settler Colonialism* 49.

- <sup>42</sup> Gershon Shafir, 'Zionism and Colonialism: A Comparative Approach,' *The Israel/Palestine Question: Rewriting Histories*, ed. Ilan Pappé (London: Routledge, 1999) 76.
- <sup>43</sup> Veracini, *Settler Colonialism* 18.
- <sup>44</sup> Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (London: Verso, 2008).
- <sup>45</sup> For a comparative study of Israeli and Australian settler societies, see Lorenzo Veracini's 'Founding Violence and Settler Societies: Rewriting History in Israel and Australia' in *Israel and Settler Society* (London: Pluto Books, 2006) 64-86 ; for a comparative study of Israeli and French settler colonial literature, see the second chapter, 'The Zionist Colonization of Palestine in the Comparative Context of Settler Colonialism,' in Gabriel Piterberg's *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (London: Verso, 2008) 51-92, which was expanded and republished in 'Literature of Settler Societies: Albert Camus, S. Yizhar and Amos Oz,' *Settler Colonial Studies* 2.1 (2011): 1-52; on Palestine and Canada, see Mike Krebs and Dana M. Olwan's 'From Jerusalem to the Grand River, Our Struggles are One: Challenging Canadian and Israeli Settler Colonialism,' *Calling Out Gender and Sexuality in Settler Societies*, spec. issue of *Settler Colonial Studies* 2.2 (2012): 138-164.
- <sup>46</sup> Piterberg, 'Literature of Settler Societies' 40.
- <sup>47</sup> Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism* 57.
- <sup>48</sup> Fayez Sayegh, *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine* (Beirut: Research Centre PLO, 1965).
- <sup>49</sup> Saree Makdisi, 'Zionism Then and Now,' *Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity, and Culture*, ed. Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2011) 237-256.
- <sup>50</sup> Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism* 3.
- <sup>51</sup> See Nur Masalha, *The Palestinian Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (London: Zed Books, 2012).
- <sup>52</sup> Lila Abu-Lughod and Ahmad H. Sa'di, 'Introduction: The Claims of Memory,' *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, ed. Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod (New York: Columbia UP, 2007) 10.
- <sup>53</sup> Hamid Dabashi, 'Introduction,' *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema*, ed. Hamid Dabashi (London: Verso, 2006) 34.
- <sup>54</sup> Dabashi 34.
- <sup>55</sup> Saree Makdisi, 'The Architecture of Erasure,' *Critical Inquiry* 36 (2010): 519-559.
- <sup>56</sup> Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi, *Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma, and Memory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008) 18.

- <sup>57</sup> Elias Khoury, 'Interview by Zakia Aqra,' *CEMMIS, Centre for Mediterranean, Middle East, and Islamic Studies*, U of Peloponnese, n.d.
- <sup>58</sup> Edward W. Said, 'Invention, Memory, and Place,' *Critical Inquiry*, 26.2 (2000): 183.
- <sup>59</sup> Said, 'Invention, Memory, and Place' 184.
- <sup>60</sup> Aleida Assman, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011) 329.
- <sup>61</sup> Dalia Hatuga, 'Israel's "Great Book Robbery" Unravelled,' *AlJazeera* 29 Jan. 2013.
- <sup>62</sup> Joseph Massad, 'The Intellectual Life of Edward Said,' *Journal of Palestine Studies* 33.3 (2004): 13.
- <sup>63</sup> Anna Ball, *Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Perspective* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012) 4.
- <sup>64</sup> Patrick Williams, "'Outlines of a better world": Rerouting Postcolonialism,' *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New directions for the new millennium*, ed. Janet Wilson, Cristina Sandru and Sarah Lawson Welsh (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010) 91.
- <sup>65</sup> Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism* 1.
- <sup>66</sup> Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism* 1.
- <sup>67</sup> Gideon Shimoni, 'Postcolonial Theory and the History of Zionism,' *Postcolonial Theory and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, ed. Philip Carl Salzman and Donna Robinson Divine (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008) 188.
- <sup>68</sup> Shimoni 188.
- <sup>69</sup> Donna Robinson Divine, 'Introduction,' *Postcolonial Theory and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, ed. Philip Carl Salzman and Donna Robinson Divine (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008) 5. Divine argues that Joseph Massad is 'essentializing and misrepresenting Zionism,' replicating and falling into 'the methodological flaws' of his mentor, Edward Said (4). The book's basic argument re-iterates discourses that consider Zionism a postcolonial movement and contends that a postcolonial paradigm is not applicable to the Palestinian context.
- <sup>70</sup> Anna Bernard, 'Palestine and Postcolonial Studies,' paper delivered to the School of Advance Studies London Debates (13-15 May 2010) 1. An updated version of the essay appears in the introductory chapter of Anna Bernard's most recent book, *Rhetorics of Belonging: Nation, Narration, and Israel/Palestine*, which offers comparative readings of the work of Israeli and Palestinian writers including Edward Said, Amos Oz, Mourid Barghouti, Orly Castel-Bloom, Sahar Khalifeh, and Anton Shammas (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2013).
- <sup>71</sup> Shimoni 192.



72 Williams 93.

73 Williams 91. Williams adds: 'within the postcolonial domain, one of the slowly emerging archives is that of Palestinian film. That it is not usually analysed in terms of postcolonialism is part of a larger problem, not cinematic this time, but resulting from the general absence of the question of Palestine from the postcolonial agenda. This absence is remarkably difficult to understand (How can we *not* be working on Palestine?) other than perhaps as one convincing postcolonial scholars that they are not in fact witnessing a particularly brutal, if belated, form of colonialism.'(91)

74 See Wail Hassan, 'Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature: Horizons of Application,' *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 33.1 (2002): 45-64. The pioneers of the Nahda movement are the Egyptian Rifa'a al-Tahtawi and his disciples, who were among the first educational missions sent to France by Muhammad Ali in the late 1820s in the wake of the short-lived French occupation of Egypt. Upon their return, those Arab intellectuals 'saw their task as one of borrowing selectively from Europe while at the same time preserving Arab cultural identity' (57). This hybrid approach is manifested in their restoration of classical Arabic poetry as a medium of political mobilization. Among those neoclassical poets are the Egyptian Ahmed Shawqi and Hafiz Ibrahim, the Iraqi Ma'ruf al-Rusafi and Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri, and the Palestinian Ibrahim Tugan. Hassan has criticized the absence of the colonial context as a parameter in the classification of Arabic literature into periods, since critics have unquestionably borrowed from European periodization. A telling example, Hassan notes, is how Naguib Mahfouz's novels were classified according to periods inspired by those of European fiction; namely historical, realistic, modernist, and postmodernist, thus marginalizing the colonial context of his literary works.

75 Hassan 60.

76 Saree Makdisi, "'Postcolonial' Literature in a Neocolonial World: Modern Arabic Culture and the End of Modernity,' *Boundary 2* 22.1 (1995): 55-115. Makdisi reads the works of Arab novelists, notably Naguib Mahfouz, AlTayyb Saleh, Ghassan Kanafani and Emile Habibi, as breaking free from both Islamic traditionalism and Eurocentric modernism (like that adopted by Nahda advocates) and moving towards a hybrid mode pointing only to the historical present. These modernist texts challenge and redefine modernity as 'an undesirable present condition rather than as an ambiguous future one.' According to Makdisi 'what such an Arab modernism offers instead of either (Eurocentric) modernization or (Islamic) traditionalism is an insistence on the historical present and on the need to confront problems in and for the present, rather than by the endless invocation of impossible and temporal alternatives ("posts" or "pasts")' (105).

77 Abulhawa's novel was first published in 2006 under the title *The Scar of David* (Summerland: Journey), then republished by Bloomsbury as *Mornings in Jenin* (2010); the paperback edition, from which I have cited, appeared in 2011.

78 Anne McClintock, 'The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post-Colonialism,"' *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 87.

<sup>79</sup> McClintock 91.

<sup>80</sup> Ella Shohat, 'Notes on the "Post-Colonial,"' *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 104. Emphasis added.

<sup>81</sup> Joseph Massad, 'The 'Post-Colonial' Colony: Time, Space, and Bodies in Palestine/Israel,' in *The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks (London: Duke University Press, 2000) 340.

<sup>82</sup> Veracini, *Settler Colonialism* 95.

<sup>83</sup> M. M. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel,' *The Dialogic Imagination*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: U of Texas P, 2008) 84.

<sup>84</sup> Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope' 84.

## Chapter 1

### Palestine 1948: 'The Land is Mine'<sup>1</sup>

Palestine, unlike classical European metropole colonial formations in India and Africa, presents an intractably unprecedented situation and largely defies the comparative approaches of postcolonial critique. However, recent research on comparative settler colonialism, developed by Patrick Wolfe, Lorenzo Veracini, and Gabriel Piterberg, sketches possible approaches to representations of Palestine. This chapter situates the mapping of 1948 Palestine in Leon Uris's *The Haj* (1984) and Elias Khoury's counter-narrative, *Gate of the Sun* (1998; trans. 2005), within the emergent geopolitics of settler colonialism.<sup>2</sup> It explores how representations of the land and the 'otherwise knowable history' of the events of 1948 prove pivotal to legitimating as well as contesting the settlers' claim to Palestine. The chapter compares and contrasts two versions of the 1948 Palestinian exodus in order to show how these narratives manipulate fictional history and reveal structures of historical and rhetorical erasures. In so doing, the chapter indicates how Uris and Khoury's literary representations engage with issues at stake in the writing of 1948, particularly structures of silence, permission and commission, archives and oral history. This comparative study illustrates how fictional history is mediated by forms of power that insist on relaying one version of events that achieves general, indeed global, acceptance, whilst simultaneously pushing alternative (hi)stories to relatively peripheral realms.

## 1.1 1948 Palestine: Erasures

### **The 1948 Palestinian Exodus: Flight or Expulsion?**

The foundational myths, well articulated in Uris's two best-selling novels on Israel, *Exodus* (1958) and *The Haj* (1984), were challenged by the revisionist work of a group of Israeli historians, commonly referred to as the new historians or post-Zionists. These historians, including Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, and Ilan Pappé, along with the earlier work of Brauch Kimmerling, studied the newly declassified Israeli archives and rewrote the history of the 1948 war, suggesting a revisionist historical narrative.<sup>3</sup> The narration of the 1948 Palestinian exodus from the land of Palestine constitutes a major discrepancy between Israeli and Palestinian historical accounts, and also between official Israeli history and the revisionist narratives of the new historians. The conventional Zionist narrative holds that 'during the war, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled to the neighboring Arab states, mainly in response to orders from their leaders and despite Jewish pleas to stay.'<sup>4</sup> This narrative has been challenged by Palestinian historians such as Walid Khalidi, and only as recently as the 1980s has this version been disputed from inside the Israeli academic sphere by Morris, Pappé, and Shlaim, who had undertaken 'to expose the skeletons in Zionism's closet and offer a challenge to its official historical narrative.'<sup>5</sup> A major concern in these debates is whether the Palestinians in 1948 voluntarily left the land or were forced to leave by the occupying settlers.

Addressing the question of 'Why Did the Palestinians Leave' in 1948,<sup>6</sup> Khalidi has destabilised the Zionist narrative of 'the evacuation orders.' He examined the archives of three Arab newspapers and the BBC transcripts of the Arab radio broadcasts of that time period in search of evidence of the dubious evacuation orders,<sup>7</sup> and concluded that the archives did not include 'a single reference, direct or indirect, to an order given to the Arabs of Palestine to leave.'<sup>8</sup> In 1961, two years after the publication of Khalidi's study, the dismantling of the Zionist version of the Palestinian exodus was further

substantiated by the Irish historian, Erskine Childers, who conducted a replica of Khalidi's study.<sup>9</sup> Re-assessing the BBC scripts of Arab radio broadcasts, Childers validated Khalidi's conclusions, unveiled the unreliability of Zionist claims about these alleged orders, and cited positive evidence supporting the fact that Arab governments had, rather, urged Palestinians to stay.<sup>10</sup>

Further research by Khalidi and the Israeli new historian Ilan Pappé revealed the link between the 1948 Palestinian exodus and the Zionist overarching plan known as 'Plan Dalet.' Khalidi explored how the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 was carefully planned and systematically executed. This plan, wrote Khalidi, 'visualized a series of operations which ... would have left the whole of Palestine in 1948 under Zionist military occupation.'<sup>11</sup> Such commands and objectives as '[t]o capture Haifa and *rout* its Arab population,' '*purify* eastern Galilee of Arabs,' 'occupy Beisan and *drive away* the semi-sedentary Bedouin communities in the neighborhood,' and 'occupy Acre and *purify* western Galilee of Arabs,' are included in Khalid's article in reference to the particular operations of Plan Dalet.<sup>12</sup> The italicised words highlight a dominant Zionist policy aiming at the elimination of Palestinians from the land. Developing Khalidi's argument, Pappé (2006) revealed how this plan informed the Zionist 'ethnic cleansing' of Palestine before and after 1948:<sup>13</sup> 'for most Palestinians, the date of 15 May 1948 was of no special significance at the time: it was just one more day in the horrific calendar of ethnic cleansing that had started more than five months earlier.'<sup>14</sup> Palestinian urban and rural areas, including Qastal, Haifa, Lydda and Ramle, and Galilee, among many others, were targets for Plan Dalet operations.

The settlers' notion of 'population transfer' informed not only the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948, but also measures taken to prevent their return to the land.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the centrality of Plan Dalet to the Zionist transfer ideology, Gabriel Piterberg provided further evidence of Zionists' endorsement of a policy of 'retroactive transfer' in order to ensure the non-return of Palestinian refugees.<sup>16</sup> The invention of such terms as 'retroactive

transfer' and 'present absentees,' according to Piterberg, signifies an underlying transfer ideology and a refusal to concede to Palestinian repatriation.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, Piterberg has argued that the erasure of Arabs' existence in Palestine was not only physical but also discursive. The Zionists attempted to erase and reformulate Palestinian collective memory through calculated designs of 'cultural obliteration' targeting Palestinian memory, identity, and culture, which I will explore as part of the rhetorical structure of settler colonial formations.<sup>18</sup> This overview of Palestinians' accounts and new historians' revisionist discourses on the 1948 exodus illuminates ways of comparing and contrasting Uris's and Khoury's two versions of the otherwise knowable history of the *nakba*.

### **Archaeology and the 'Architecture of Erasure'**

In Zionist settler colonial discourse, archaeology is firmly linked to the settlers' claims to the land and the erasure of its Palestinian history. Establishing this link, Pappé argues that 'the archeological zeal to reproduce the map of "ancient" Israel was in essence none other than a systematic, scholarly, political and military attempt to de-Arabise the terrain—its names and geography but above all its history.'<sup>19</sup> Using archaeology to reinvent Palestine on behalf of Zionist settler colonialism takes two forms: the building of museums, and the replacement of Palestinian historical sites with the making of what Piterberg and others call 'the flawless Hebrew map.'<sup>20</sup> A telling example of both can be found in what Saree Makdisi has explored as 'the architecture of erasure' in reference to the newly launched Museum of Tolerance in Jerusalem.<sup>21</sup> The site for this museum project 'includes a cemetery—in fact, the largest and most important Muslim cemetery in all of Palestine, which had been in continuous use for hundreds of years from the time of the Crusades until the uprooting of Palestine in 1948.'<sup>22</sup> This carefully planned Israeli site of memory, which has been designed to replace a Palestinian site of memory, clearly demonstrates Israel's 'endless process of covering over, removing, or managing a stubbornly

persistent Palestinian presence' in order to 'secure a sense of Jewish national homeliness.'<sup>23</sup> The future visitors of a 'Museum of Tolerance,' claiming to represent mutual understanding and human dignity, will be oblivious to 'the profundity of the historical, material, and psychical layers of denial on which they stand.'<sup>24</sup> Settlers' architectural and narrative enclaves have remained central to the construction of the Palestinian invisibility on the land.

Since the inception of Zionist settlements in Palestine, the museum, and the constructed history it conveys, have been crucial to the architecture of kibbutz-building. The centrality of the museum to the kibbutz, and, by extension, to the Zionist claim to an exclusively Jewish homeland, echoes in Piterberg's remark that 'the construction of an authoritative history, and its effective conveyance both domestically and internationally played a significant role in the colonisation of Palestine, in the dispossession of its native Palestinians, and in the establishment and development of Israel as an exclusively Jewish state.'<sup>25</sup> Efforts to reconstruct this authoritative history are clear in the Zionist concern for archaeology, artefacts, and museums. The acts of collecting artefacts, removing them from their original contexts, and displaying them in constructed contexts often serve to communicate a premeditated narrative to the viewing public.

Stephen Greenblatt's argument on 'wonder' and 'resonance' helps explain the centrality of the museum to kibbutz-building in Palestine. By wonder, Greenblatt refers to the uniqueness of the artefact: 'the power of the displayed object to stop the viewer in his or her tracks, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention.'<sup>26</sup> Wonder could be imposed upon that object by some external forces to serve a particular purpose. The mere acts of collecting an artefact, isolating it from its original context, and then displaying it in a constructed context illustrate the permeation of exterior forces in structuring a particular form of knowledge. Resonance, however, refers to 'the power of the displayed object to reach beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from

which it has emerged.<sup>27</sup> While museums in colonial Europe include artefacts collected from colonies ‘east of Suez,’ displaced from their original colonial contexts, and appropriated into the colonizer’s structure of knowledge, the kibbutz museums constitute a peculiar experience. Their uniqueness is better explained against the background of Greenblatt’s argument on the hybrid experience of wonderful resonance and resonant wonder. The hybrid impact of the kibbutz museums on the European viewer emerges from the cross-cultural encounter between the Euro-American settler and the Eastern aura of the artefacts, which are collected and displayed so as to deliver particular messages that fit into the Zionist master narrative. In viewing these artifacts, the colonial settler at first glance experiences wonder, then as the contextualised objects bring about associations to biblical heritage, the wonder collapses into resonance. The poetics and politics of representation are most fulfilled by this hybrid experience of ‘wonderful resonance’ that resonates much further as the viewer moves from one kibbutz museum to another.<sup>28</sup>

Initially developed to analyse museums and artefacts, Greenblatt’s concepts of ‘wonder’ and ‘resonance’ helpfully suggest ways of thinking about how Uris’s influential novel describes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in contrast to the Palestinian version of events, one that has long been silent and silenced. I am suggesting that the artefact, whether a literary text or a museum object, propagates or violates a particular structure of knowledge, thus effecting ‘resonance’ or ‘wonder’ among viewers. Inclusions and omissions, deliberate or otherwise, contribute to shaping conflicting images and views of the same event across ideological and colonial divides, such as those separating the Zionist from the Palestinian.

## **1.2 Leon Uris and the Mapping of Settler Colonialism**

Representations of 1948 Palestine echo the territorial ambitions that operate through the language and the practice of settler colonialism. The land itself



proves central to the literature engaged with legitimating or contesting settler colonial formations. While the title once suggested for Uris's *Exodus*, 'The Land is Mine,' illustrates this centrality, his later *The Haj* reveals links between the Zionist enterprise in 1948 Palestine and settler colonial formations based on claims to the land and the elimination of its indigenous population. Patrick Wolfe explains:

The primary object of settler-colonization is the land itself rather than the surplus value to be derived from mixing native labour with it. Though, in practice, Indigenous labour was indispensable to Europeans, settler-colonization is at base a winner-take-all project whose dominant feature is not exploitation but replacement. The logic of this project, a sustained institutional tendency to eliminate the Indigenous population, informs a range of historical practices that might otherwise appear distinct— invasion is a structure not an event.<sup>29</sup>

This structure, which is typical of settler colonial forms, finds both rhetorical and historical resonance in Uris's representations of the 1948 events. The 'logic of elimination,' as Wolfe has termed it, characterises discursive and historical structures in the novel that contribute to the physical displacement of Palestinians and the silencing of their narration. In *The Haj*, Uris revisits the socio-historical context of 1948 Palestine to tell the story of the founding of Shemesh Kibbutz near the Palestinian village of Tabah.<sup>30</sup> The events of the 1948 war are told through the conversations, action, and reflections of Gideon Asch, the kibbutz leader, and Haj Ibrahim, the Mukhtar of Tabah. Disputes over land and water and disparities in power and modernisation shape the relationship between Shemesh and Tabah. The eventual exodus of the villagers from Tabah to internal refuge in the Qumran caves echoes the historical experience of the 1948 *nakba*.

### **Shemesh Kibbutz and the Pure Settlement**

In settler colonial formations, the settlers' relationship with the land is defined in terms of the space permitted to the indigenous population. Uris's novel

represents two types of settlements, as usefully outlined by Gershon Shafir, who explored the centrality of the relation between land and labour to the construction of Zionist settlements in Palestine. According to Shafir, the two main types of Zionist settler colonies in Palestine are the 'ethnic plantation' and the 'pure settlement colony.'<sup>31</sup> This differentiation is based on the settlers' relationship with the natives in terms of land and labour. While ethnic plantation colonies seek 'both land and cheap labour' from the natives and exploit 'indentured white as well as slave labour,' the pure settlement colony eschews 'any non-white settler labour and [seeks] from the natives "only" their land, thereby rendering the mere presence of the natives on lands coveted for further settlement superfluous.'<sup>32</sup> As we will see, in Uris's *The Haj*, Shemesh Kibbutz and Rosh Pinna represent a pure settlement and an ethnic plantation, respectively, while the former is presented as the preferred settlement paradigm.

The central character, Gideon Asch, now an officer of the Haganah in the 'pure' settlement of Shemesh, recalls spending his childhood in the ethnic plantation of Rosh Pinna. Gideon's childhood memories of Rosh Pinna, located in the Galilean town of Tiberias, idealize the plantation colony, whilst simultaneously questioning the viability of this settlement type in the context of Zionist nation building. In 'the relative comforts of Rosh Pinna,' where boundaries are blurred and mutual visibility of settlers and indigenes is maintained, a society in the making is constantly jeopardised.<sup>33</sup> In contrast to the cultural flexibility of Rosh Pinna, Shemesh Kibbutz represents an ethnically pure settlement where different groups do not mix. Located west of Jerusalem on the Valley of Ayalon, Shemesh embraces ethnic exclusion, since labour inside the fenced area is limited to the 'new breed' of European 'white' settlers who survived Russian and Polish pogroms.<sup>34</sup> The border or the wall proves crucial to the formation of ethnically pure settlements, restricting and often preventing contact and interaction not only with Palestinians but also with

oriental Jews. The landscape of Shemesh, defined by 'a square perimeter of barbed wire,' is firmly structured upon racial and cultural divides.<sup>35</sup>

For Uris, the Shemesh Kibbutz represents a successful settlement and an ideal paradigm:

Inside Shemesh and every other kibbutz in the Ayalon, the Haganah under Gideon Asch had created a force completely able to defend itself. It was even rumored that the Jews were manufacturing arms in clandestine factories in the kibbutzim. By spring of 1927 Shemesh began a large poultry house that was lit throughout the night to force egg production. Later in the year they enlarged their cattle and dairy operations to supply product [sic] as far away as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.<sup>36</sup>

The Hebrew word 'Shemesh' means sun. Like the sun, which produces light and life, Shemesh Kibbutz produces power, modernisation, economic independence, military supremacy, education, cultural refinement, and agricultural development. Under the guise of instrumental modernity, the exclusionary policy of the kibbutz in *The Haj* is either a way to defend the settlement against the threat of Palestinian incursions, or a result of the Palestinians' reluctance to accept the modernisation brought by the settlers. The example of Hani, a young man who breaks into Shemesh Kibbutz to steal some crops and ends up raping and assaulting a female settler, illustrates the need for defense. At the same time, Haj Ibrahim's refusal of Gideon Asch's offer of medical help to his ailing child demonstrates Palestinian 'conservatism.' Through the successful paradigm of Shemesh, Uris idealises the modernisation effected by the settlers' careful investment of white labour and indigenous resources. Through Gideon's recollection of past memories in Rosh Pinna and present nationalist engagement in Shemesh, Uris represents the historical shift from the 'ethnic plantation' type to the 'pure settlement colony.' Revealing the racist, colonialist ideology that informed this shift, Shafir emphasises that in 1905, a new method of Zionist colonization came to be based on 'a struggle for the "conquest of labor."'<sup>37</sup> By attributing the economic failure of Rosh Pinna to

an incompetent local labour, the novel represents a historically inaccurate picture in order to justify Zionists' attempts to monopolise in favour of Jewish workers whose 'tenacity, vitality, and a love and longing for the Promised Land' are not matched by Palestinians.<sup>38</sup> Uris justifies the move towards ethnically exclusive settlements as a redemptive practice designed to revive the failing economy of ethnic plantation colonies and protect the existence of a society in the making. Here, two contrastive images reveal a failing ethnic plantation superseded by a successful, yet exclusivist, pure settlement based on 'white labour':

By using Arab guards and a great deal of Arab labor, Rosh Pinna held on but never fully prospered. The settlement teetered, hitting and missing with experimental crops, suffering from isolation and constant marauding.<sup>39</sup>

Then suddenly,

In the Valley of Jezreel, in the Galilee, on the Plains of Sharon, in the Valley of Ayalon, and on that ancient coastal route of the Via Maris dozens of collective Jewish settlements called kibbutzim took on the chore and the sweet voice of springtime was once again heard in Palestine.<sup>40</sup>

However, that springtime was not heard in all the space known as Palestine, but restricted to Jewish enclaves, which controlled and redirected water supplies. The land and the demographic distribution of settlements, in Uris's representation, are strictly defined in terms of water. Settlers tend to build settlements where water is both available and accessible. However, as Uri Davis and others point out, while the availability of the Sinai oil to Israel was more visibly debated during the 1967 conflict, the centrality of water resources to their settler project was totally obscured: '[o]nly very recently, however, was mention made of another liquid resource—water. So obscure is this subject that few outside the area realize its importance.'<sup>41</sup> Uris reveals the dispute over water as crucial to the settler mentality ever before 1948. Water determines the

location of the settlement and the settlers' relation with their Palestinian neighbours. In *The Haj*, the right to water proves central to the construction of Shemesh and the subjugation of Tabah. Within this frame of power relations, the settlers' control of water supplies operates as a pretext to their sovereignty and the displacement of the native population:

The Jews broke the earthen dams that separated the canals from the swamp. Ibrahim's eyes opened like saucers as the connecting ditches sent the putrid waters oozing into the canals. Soon the canals were bulging and running downhill and before his very eyes the level of swamp began to drop. Within days he could almost see the Australian trees grow fat with the fetid juices of the swamp. As the swamp dried under the hot valley sun, incredibly black, rich topsoil appeared. A great deal of it was carried up to the terracing while the rest was reditched and turned over to drain off every last vestige of the swamp.<sup>42</sup>

The novel integrates the settlers' right to water in the Zionist construct of making the desert bloom, thus legitimating their claim to the land. Through control of water, the settlers in Shemesh transform the local ecosystem by altering the natural fauna and flora of the land. They have introduced a mixed pattern of farming, imported Australian trees and transformed the topography of the place.

The control of water, then, forms an early manifestation of the settlers' logic of elimination, which later develops into full-fledged violence. The novel echoes pre-1948 settlers' attempt to control water by building canals and diverting water supplies. In the fictional Palestinian village of Tabah, Gideon warns Haj Ibrahim: 'but you don't get any water. It belongs to us ... your great benefactor, Fawzi Effendi Kabir, sold us the water rights to the Brook of Ayalon.'<sup>43</sup> At times of crises, settlers use the water rights to suppress the resistance of the indigenous population:

'For your water you must pay a price,' Gideon said firmly.  
...  
'What is your price?' Ibrahim whispered, with fear crawling over him.  
'Peace.'

'Peace?'

'Peace.'

'That is all?'

'That is all. The valve that sends water into Tabah shall remain open so long as you stay out of our fields, stop shooting at us, and never again lay a hand on any of my people.'<sup>44</sup>

Settlers use their right to water to contain indigenous resistance and destroy the livelihood of Palestinian farmers and, thereby, slowly and silently displace them.

The rhetoric of instrumental modernity, employed to support the settlers' claim to the land in *The Haj*, fits nicely into what Veracini has described elsewhere as settlers' discourse on a 'higher use' of the land:

When settlers claim land, it is recurrently in the context of a language that refers to 'higher use', and assimilation policies are recurrently designed to 'uplift', 'elevate', and 'raise' indigenous communities. In modern Hebrew, *aliyah* means 'ascent', and to settle on the land is, literally, to ascend to the soil.'<sup>45</sup>

The establishment of Shemesh Kibbutz on the land of Tabah, as described in the novel, with all the technology it introduced in irrigation and agriculture, education and medication, manifests the Zionist discourse of a 'higher use' of the land. *The Haj* chronicles the beginning of the modernization of Palestine in the 1880s when the early Jewish immigrants reached the shores of Palestine:

Festering malarial swamp, unmerciful rock, desert, and denuded earth gave way to carpets of green, and the energy of building was heard and millions of trees grew where none had grown for centuries. A blossoming of culture and progress erupted from Jerusalem. North of the ancient port of Jaffa a new Jewish city sprang out of the sand dunes: Tel Aviv, the Hill of Spring.'<sup>46</sup>

The description links images of death, blood, disease, and barren deserts to Arab quarters and Arab agency, while images of livelihood, greenery, and fruitfulness are linked to the 'higher use' of the land by colonial settlers. Entering Shemesh Kibbutz, Ismael, the narrator, overwhelmed by the

advancement of the settlement, confronts the backwardness of his people's existence:

I had never seen a green lawn. I had never seen flowers that did not grow wild ... I had never seen a library with hundreds of books just for children ... I had never seen a museum or a science room in a school with microscopes and magnets and burners and bottles of chemicals ... I have never seen a medical clinic.<sup>47</sup>

For Uris, because of their neglect of Palestine, Arabs are unworthy of the land. 'It's not your land,' says Gideon Asch to Haj Ibrahim, 'you've given up on it long ago. You've neither fought for it, nor worked for it, nor ever called it a country of its own.'<sup>48</sup>

In *The Haj*, the modernising project of Zionist settlers faces threats of obliteration posed by a stereotyped and monolithic image of Islam. According to this (mis)representation, Islam is a religion that nourishes hatred and misanthropy, a religion that excludes others and impedes progress, a religion that is antithetical to every humanistic and democratic value embraced by the settlers. To understand the sociohistorical context of Uris's rhetoric, we might recall two important events: the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1970s and the Islamic Revolution, also known as the Iranian Revolution of 1979.<sup>49</sup> After the popular success of *Exodus*, Uris's return to the question of Palestine and his revisiting of the 1948 scene in *The Haj* could be interpreted as a reaction to the growing influence of Islamic parties in the politics of Islamic and Arab states, particularly Egypt and Iran.

Kathleen Shine Cain reads *The Haj* as a reflection of Islam as a fanatical religion founded on hatred and repression, an image prevalent in much of the Western world in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution.<sup>50</sup> I take this argument further by reading Uris's misrepresentation of Islam in the context of the empowerment of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as a substitute ideology to Nasser's Arab Nationalism. With the Arab victory in 1973, this movement gained more power, expressing the demand to participate in Egyptian politics.

If *Exodus* was written to narrate the founding story of Israel and generate interest in its moral mission, *The Haj* conveys a letter of warning against the threat posed by the political empowerment of Muslim parties in neighbouring Islamic and Arab states to the survival of the Zionist settler project. To convey this message, Uris represents Islam as antithetical to democracy, modernisation, and even to humanity, restraining the freedom of its followers and forcing them into a primordial existence:

They [Arabs] have a deep, deep, deep resentment because you have jolted them from their delusions of grandeur and shown them for what they are—a decadent, savage people controlled by a religion that has stripped them of all human ambition.<sup>51</sup>

### **Land and Archaeology**

In Zionist representations of 1948 Palestine, the politics of archaeology proves central to the legitimation of settlers' claim to the land and to the erasure of the Palestinian people from its history. The archaeological rhetoric proves essential to create structures of representation, constructing Palestine in biblical fashion and thus legitimating Zionist settlements as a return to the homeland. For those settlers, the old new land of Palestine appears 'intractably alien,' and therefore requires consistent taming in order to normalise their relationship to its landscape.<sup>52</sup> '[A] settler project is ultimately successful,' writes Veracini, 'only when it extinguishes itself—that is the settlers cease to be defined as such and become "natives", and their position becomes normalized.'<sup>53</sup> This normalisation is revealed in *The Haj* through the classical colonial type of Colonel Wingate, who calls for the biblical education of settlers as no less important than their military training.<sup>54</sup> Lecturing in Shemesh Kibbutz, Wingate preaches:

I am a dedicated Zionist. I believe this is Jewish land. I also believe that the ways of using these valleys and hills and deserts for defense have all been writ in the Bible. If there is ever to be a Jewish nation in Palestine, I feel destined to be a part of making it.<sup>55</sup>



In Wingate's settler mentality, Palestine is an old new land whose biblical history is buried under the rubble of the contemporary scene and needs to be excavated and re-invented both in reality and in the settlers' mentality. Here, Wingate echoes the archaeological perspective which, according to Barbara Parmenter, has dominated nineteenth-century Western travellers' representations of Palestine.<sup>56</sup>

At the same time, *The Haj* criticizes Arabs' neglect of archaeology and their abandonment of museums. In the novel, the only Arab expert in archaeology is Nuhri Mudhil, and he was trained by a Jewish archaeologist who purchased and rescued him from the negligence of his parents. Mudhil remarks on the general disregard for museums in the Arab world: 'The Islamic museums from Cairo to Baghdad are a shambles ... The fact is that one of the finest collections of the Islamic antiquities is in a Jewish museum in West Jerusalem.'<sup>57</sup> He tends to generalise and essentialise Arabs' lack of interest in preserving their past:

In the Arab world, we have placed little value on preserving our past. From Egypt to Iraq, our ancient sites have been looted down through the ages, mostly by our own people. There is a department of antiquities in Jordan, but neither a university nor museum. The department exists mainly to interest foreigners in coming to Jordan to dig. They take almost everything out. London is where you may discover ancient Egypt, usually in an unlighted basement or a vault.<sup>58</sup>

Mudhil's observations emphasise how Israeli and Western metropolitan centres preserve reliable knowledge of the past of both Arabs and Palestinians and the history of their lands. However, Mudhil does not question the manner in which artefacts are arranged and contextualised in metropolitan museums. *The Haj* does not interrogate how Western knowledge of Arab history is structured and constructed. The Palestinian archaeologist, Mudhil, promotes the excavation and collection of the material culture that forms the epistemic value of kibbutz museums. Palestinians like Haj Ibrahim and his son, Ismael, while aware of Mudhil's collaboration with Zionist settlers, get involved in the trade of rare

archaeological artefacts found in the Qumran caves where they took refuge during the 1948 War. Other Palestinians are antiquities dealers, selling broken artefacts and potsherds to kibbutzim, thus allowing their material culture to be appropriated by settlers.

A corollary to the politics of archaeology in Uris's novel is the settlers' concern for 'wounded artifacts,' as Greenblatt has termed it, including 'broken pots,' 'ancient potsherd,' 'flints,' and 'arrowheads.'<sup>59</sup> 'Wounded artifacts,' according to Greenblatt, 'may be compelling not only as witnesses to the violence of history but as signs of use, marks of human touch.'<sup>60</sup> Uris contrasts the violence visited upon Palestine by its previous conquerors during the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandate, as realised in the broken artefacts, with the Jews' restorative endeavors. Ismael, Uris's Palestinian narrator in *The Haj*, observes: 'the Jews spent hours putting the pot back into its original form.'<sup>61</sup> The work of restoring, rearranging and displaying wounded artefacts in a museum is associated with the settler's inscriptions of the vulnerability of pre-1948 Palestine to the violence of successive conquerors; it is the settlers who have introduced restoration and modernisation to the land.

While Uris forcefully engages with archaeology in *The Haj*, the colonial legacy of this discipline may explain Khoury's reluctance to deal with archaeological discourse in his novel. In "Postcolonial Archaeology," Chris Gasdon argues that :

Archaeology has become much more politically engaged in the last two decades and this is most manifest in relationships with indigenous people. Such changes could be broadly seen as deriving from settler nations' attempts to come to terms with the indigenous peoples they dispossessed and a major part of this attempt at accommodation is through rethinking culture and history ... [I]ndigenous people have viewed archaeology as the final act of usurpation in which white society ... has now removed any control over the construction of the past. Being able to construct their own past is a vital precondition for the resurrection of culture in the present. Indigenous control over their past does not necessarily mean that local people will not work with

archaeology ... but it does make for new sets of relationships, research goals, and forms of publications.<sup>62</sup>

Gasdon's focus on the centrality of archaeology to settler societies explains the complex nature of opening up this discipline to postcolonial theories and postcolonial re-narrations. This complexity can be attributed to the manipulation of archaeology in colonial discourse and to the ambiguity of the postcolonial in settler colonial situations: is it a condition that chronologically follows a colonial situation? Or does it imply a state of resistance to colonial power?

### 1.3 Elias Khoury and Counter-mapping

In representing 1948 Palestine, Elias Khoury, a Lebanese novelist, critic, and political commentator who was born in the year of the *nakba*, reveals the dynamics underlying the making of settler space and destabilises a settler discourse based on the emptiness of the land. His novel, *Gate of the Sun*, foregrounds the persistent counter-mapping of Palestine by the characters, mostly Palestinian refugees from various Galilean villages, who recount the history of the *nakba* by recalling memories of their displacement in 1948 and their subsequent infiltrations of the Israeli border to the demolished villages and the abandoned homes. Through the characters' descriptions of these secret journeys, the Galilee, far from being an empty space, recovers, at least textually, its Palestinian history and topography.

Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* is a narrative of presence and absence, of articulation and silence, challenging settler colonialism in more ways than could simply be suggested by the discursive act of writing back. The construction of Bab al-Shams, as both a novel and a cave, restores a silenced history and a vanished geography. While the novel re-writes a Palestinian version of events in the midst of restrictions imposed on their articulation, the

cave represents a miniature homeland re-built on a Palestinian plot of land in the face of an ongoing settler occupation.

The novel opens with Dr. Khalil Ayyoub, the narrator, trying to postpone the inevitable death of Yunes al-Asadi, a Palestinian resistance figure, who lies comatose in the poorly equipped Galilee Hospital in the Shatila refugee camp. To shake off the oblivious body of Yunes, Khalil sets out to re-tell the stories that Yunes has once told of the past. Through a series of regressions, the story of Yunes becomes entangled with the memories of numerous Palestinian peasants from al-Ghabsiyyeh, Ain al-Zaitoun, Deir al-Asad, al-Kweikat, al-Birwa and many other Galilean villages who risk their lives while infiltrating the border back to their former Palestinian locales in search of lost homes and transformed lands. Through these stories, *Gate of the Sun* re-constructs the *nakba* and restores the vanishing space of Palestine.

In *Gate of the Sun*, a clearly defined geography sketches the route of Palestinian refugees from the Galilee to South Lebanon, their temporary residence in the Shatila camp, and their secret return journeys to destroyed and occupied villages, which embrace traces of their former presence. Khoury's representation retains the Palestinian names of several Galilean villages and locales from which the Palestinian characters have been displaced. This impulse to restore a fragile world takes a more instructive tone when Khalil recalls a scene from the past in which Yunes has been spinning a globe, at the boys' camp, pointing to the Galilee, and instructing a young audience:

That's Acre. Here's Tyre. The plain runs to here, and these are the villages of the Acre District. Here's Ain al-Zaitoun and Deir al-Asad, and al-Birwa, and there's al-Ghabsiyyeh, and al-Karbi, and here's Tarshiha, and there's Bab al-Shams. We, kids, are from Ain al-Zaitoun. Ain al-Zaitoun is a little place, and the mountain surrounds it and protects it. Ain al-Zaitoun is the most beautiful village, but they destroyed it in '48. They bulldozed it after blowing up the houses, so we left it for Deir al-Asad. But me, I founded a village in a place no one knows, a village in the rocks where the sun enters and sleeps.<sup>63</sup>

In the face of a settler colonial formation based on the annihilation of native inhabitants and their local landscapes, the vivid description and precise naming of several pre-1948 Galilean places constitute attempts to re-configure Palestine and protect its vanishing space against oblivion. From the confinement of the refugee camp, Khalil, who has not seen Palestine, re-tells stories to liberate himself and the memories of the other characters from the burdens of the past and to escape from the estrangement, displacement, and decay characterising the present.

For Khalil, as for many Palestinian refugees, the present is only a constellation of semblances that only resemble the real, which they have left behind in Palestine. Talking to the unconscious mind of Yunes, Khalil argues:

You think you're in the hospital, but you're mistaken. This isn't a hospital, it just resembles a hospital. Everything here isn't itself but a simulacrum of itself. We say *house* but we don't live in houses, we live in places that resemble houses. We say *Beirut* but we aren't really in Beirut, we're in a semblance of Beirut. I say *doctor* but I'm not a doctor, I'm just pretending to be one. Even the camp itself—we say we're in the Shatila camp, but after the War of the Camps and the destruction of eighty percent of Shatila's houses, it's no longer a camp, it's just a semblance of a camp—you get the idea, the boring semblances go on and on.<sup>64</sup>

Settler colonialism has transformed the Palestinian reality, rendering their diasporic existence only an imperfect re-production of their former presence. Given this fact, the Palestinian characters in the novel need to re-connect and relate to Palestine through constantly re-mapping that space while telling stories about, what might appear, a lived reality.

In *Gate of the Sun*, the vanishing space of Palestine is restored in many ways. Most important is Yunes's reclamation of a cave in the occupied village of Deir al-Asad, near Acre. Yunes has made the cave of Bab al-Shams into 'a house, a village, a country,' re-producing a Palestinian space where he reunites with his wife, defying death and nihilism.<sup>65</sup> There, the two main lines of the story intersect: the love story between a Palestinian man and his wife, and the

settler occupation of Palestine. Despite settler occupation, the displaced Yunes infiltrates the Israeli border three times a year back to Bab al-Shams to meet with Nahilah who has remained in Deir al-Asad. Here, it is the displaced native who is intruding upon what came to be the sovereign territory of the settler. For years the construction of this Palestinian place has been veiled. But now, as Khalil re-narrates what Yunes has once told him about the place, the story is being re-communicated to a wider audience, suggesting the characters' defiance of the limits imposed on their local expression. Before her death, the ailing Nahilah uncovers the hidden reality of Bab al-Shams, confiding its long-kept secret to her eldest son, Salem. Nahilah requests from Salem to visit the cave and keep it clean:

It's your father's village, ask him what he wants to do with it. His home be kept neat. And when I die, take everything out and close up the entrance with stones. We cannot let the Israelis in there; it's the only liberated plot of Palestinian land.<sup>66</sup>

Nahilah and Yunes have not only created a Palestinian space but also have entrusted their offspring to secure this 'only liberated plot' from settlers' defilement. Yunes tells Khalil:

Salem called and said he'd closed the 'country' with stones. He said he'd gone at night with his son, Yunes, and Noor's son, Yunes, and Saleh's son, Yunes, and Mirwan's son, Yunes ... they'd gone and closed the country.<sup>67</sup>

Whether it is a 'house,' a 'village,' or a 'country,' Bab al-Shams has been a breeding place full of life and fertility. The numerous Yuneses of the third generation represent an extension and a continuity of the freedom fighter who has once 'liberated' this plot of Palestinian land.

If Yunes has created a real Palestinian place in the cave, Um Hassan reconstructs al-Kweikat by narrating memories of her revisit to the village. She describes her search for the house she has been forced to abandon, which has disappeared in a landscape transformed beyond recognition. In al-Kweikat,

settlers have 'demolished every single' Palestinian house and 'built the Beyt ha-Emek settlement.'<sup>68</sup> Only the new houses on the hill have remained, of which Um Hassan's is one. However, a Jewish Iraqi settler, who seems less inclined to leave Beirut for Palestine, has occupied Um Hassan's house. The settler asks Um Hassan: 'Where are you from?' 'From al-Kweikat, I told her. This is my house and this is my jug and this is my sofa, and the olive trees and the cactus and the land and the spring—everything.'<sup>69</sup> Um Hassan shows a stronger connection to the place than the Israeli settler who wishes to return to where she has come from: 'Send me back to Beirut and take this wretched land back.'<sup>70</sup> Besides its counter-mapping of al-Kweikat, the story of Um Hassan illustrates Khoury's understanding of the need to give voice to oriental Jews who have been completely marginalised in Uris's novel.

Affirming her belonging to the place, Khalil's grandmother, Shahineh, narrates her secret journey back to al-Ghabsiyyeh. She walks through familiar routes until she finds her house and the box of gold jewellery she has left behind. Like Shahineh, Ahmad Ali al-Jashi also tells about his visit to the Galilean village of al-Ghabsiyyeh in the company of his uncle:

We stood in the square, and I walked toward the west. There was grass all around me and they'd planted pines to hide the features of the place ... I walked through the plants, and the houses looked as though they'd been planted in the middle of the green grass. I stopped in front of our house but didn't go in. The stone walls were still intact, but the roof was gone and there was grass growing inside the house and out of the walls themselves, as though the grass were eating the walls ... My uncle said, 'Let's go.' I told him, 'This is our house.' 'I know,' he said. 'But we have come back to live here.' 'It's forbidden,' he said. 'Even visits are forbidden.' ... I told my uncle, 'We have an orchard. I want to see it.' I turned northward, and he walked at my side. I told him, 'Please, don't show me the way, Uncle,' ... There is a way of recognizing our orchard. It has a *muzawi* winter fig tree whose fruit is shaped like pears. I saw the fig tree and told him, 'This is our orchard.'<sup>71</sup>

This passage describes a desperate Palestinian claim to the land in which they once lived, built their houses, and planted their crops. This claim is based on

rootedness in the stones, the grass, the trees, and the springs, which define the Palestinian identity of the place.

‘In geopolitical terms,’ as Tracey Banivanua-Mar and Penelope Edmonds have noted, ‘the impact of settler colonialism is starkly visible in the landscapes it produces.’<sup>72</sup> Khoury’s representation reveals how the transformation of the land proves pivotal to the Zionist settler project, which seeks to justify settlers’ claim to the land while simultaneously contesting Palestinians’ right to return. The displaced Palestinian characters, who have revisited the Galilee, reveal that settlers ‘planted a pine forest on the site of the village’ of Ain al-Zaitoun, and built ‘the settlement of Achihud’ on top of the demolished village of al-Birwa.<sup>73</sup> Pointing to the structural erasure of Palestine, Khalil remarks how settlers ‘planted cypress trees in the middle of the olive groves at Ain Houd, and how the olive trees were ruined and died under the onslaught of the cypresses, which swallowed them up.’<sup>74</sup> In narrating Palestine, Carol Bardenstein has noted how images of oranges, prickly pears, and trees are woven into discourses of memory:

If one visits the site of the destroyed village of Gabsiyah in the Galilee, for example, upon closer scrutiny the trees and landscape themselves yield two very different and contesting narratives converging on the same site. One has to rely on landscape readings, because little else remains. What is most readily visible to the first-time visitor are the JNF [Jewish National Fund] trees planted on the site—the recognizable combination of pine and other trees that have grown over the past four decades in a manner that makes it seem as if perhaps that is all that was ever there.<sup>75</sup>

The landscapes of these destroyed villages narrate the intertwined histories of their pre-colonial and settler colonial times. The making of settler space is not only apparent in the transformation of the botany of the land, but also in the creation of bordered and policed spaces. Barbed wires, fences, and highways separate settlements from native spaces. In Deir al-Asad, Nahilah says, ‘the new settlement had sprung up like a weed, and they’d fenced off the land they’d



confiscated with barbed wire while everyone looked on, seeing their land shrinking and slipping out of their hands, unable to do anything.<sup>76</sup> When little else remains, Khoury focuses on the ways in which the erasure and transformation of landscapes prove central to transferring Palestinians from the land and re-imagining them in terms of complete absence.

From the fragments of memories, Khalil, who was born in the camp, re-maps the Galilee, while expressing apprehension at the fact that Palestinians need to construct their country in order to affirm its presence:

Do you believe we can construct our country out of these ambiguous stories? And why do we have to construct it? People inherit their countries as they inherit their languages. Why do we, of all the peoples of the world, have to invent our country every day so everything isn't lost and we find we've fallen into eternal sleep?<sup>77</sup>

While Khalil strives to rescue comatose Yunes from eternal sleep, Khoury attempts to rescue ragged Palestinian memories from falling into the eternal abyss of forgetfulness by giving the stories of expulsion and displacement a literary form, linking the Palestinian traumatic absence to the structural erasures carried out by the settlers.

#### **1.4 Leon Uris and Elias Khoury: Two Versions of the 1948 Events**

##### **Palestinian Exodus, Between Flight and Expulsion**

Uris's representations of 1948 in both novels confirm rather than destabilise the conventional Zionist narrative of 'the evacuation orders' and Palestinians' voluntarily flight from Palestine. In *Exodus*, Uris presents the Arabs' broadcast of evacuation orders during the 1948 war as an 'absolutely documented fact.'<sup>78</sup> The novel offers a detailed analysis of the Palestinian refugee problem from a Zionist standpoint through the voice of its narrator, Ari Ben Canaan. He files a report of the 'insolvable situation' of the Palestinian refugees,<sup>79</sup> emphasising that the '*major cause of the refugee situation comes from the*

*absolutely documented fact that the Arab leaders wanted the civilian population to leave Palestine as a political issue and a military weapon.*<sup>80</sup> However, the novel makes no reference either to the exact texts of these orders or to sources that presumably document them. This emphasis on the 'evacuation orders' is more explicitly stated in Uris' non-fiction work, *Jerusalem: Song of Songs* (1981). In this book, Uris includes statements of direct reference to the evacuation orders, including the following examples:

In many cases the Palestinians were urged by Arab leaders to clear out so that the destruction of the Jews could be accomplished with greater ease. This incessant bragging was so boisterous that it constituted the first step in the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem.<sup>81</sup>

They [the Arabs] were encouraged to leave Palestine by Arab governments who wanted smooth sailing when they came in to destroy the Jews.<sup>82</sup>

The frequent use of agentless passive forms in the above quotations demonstrates Uris's inability to provide the exact names of those who broadcast these orders and/or their exact texts.

Following the publication of *Exodus* and *Jerusalem: Song of Songs*, Uris continues to articulate settlers' received wisdom in his later novel *The Haj*, thus overlooking and marginalising the newly declassified archival materials, on which the Israeli new historians have based their revisionist historical narrative. Despite the new version of events conveyed in these archives, *The Haj* represents the Palestinian exodus in 1948 as 'a universal flight, a flight that resulted in a refugee problem that was to consume the Palestinian Arab.'<sup>83</sup> A close reading of *The Haj* reveals how the exodus of Palestinians from the imaginative village of Tabah serves as a microcosm of the larger 1948 Palestine.

In Uris's imagined world of Tabah, the villagers' evacuation and subsequent dispossession and displacement to the Qumran caves happened in response to orders received from real historical figures: Fawzi Kaukji, the leader of the Army of Liberation, and Abdul Kader Husseini, the leader of the Army of

Jihad.<sup>84</sup> In *The Haj*, the fictitious inhabitants of Tabah were ordered by actual Palestinian leaders to 'put up white flags' and not to fight.<sup>85</sup> Ironically, while 'their own leaders ... urged them to flee in order to clear the way for their armies,'<sup>86</sup> Gideon Asch, an imaginary Haganah officer and leader of Shemesh Kibbutz, advises the villagers to stay, yet they opt to evacuate.<sup>87</sup> The effect of this emphasis on the Arabs' evacuation orders is twofold: first, it questions the Palestinians' attachment to the land; second, it frees the settlers from any responsibility for the refugee problem, laying the blame squarely on Arab leaders. More importantly, this calculated circulation of one historical discourse results in a resonance that eventually prepares the reader to accept the conventional Zionist account of events with a measure of credibility that results from familiarity and resonance rather than from historical accuracy.

Uris extends his construction of the Palestinian exodus as flight rather than expulsion from the imagined world of Tabah to the real city of Haifa. The Palestinian exodus from Haifa in April 1948 has received attention in historical and literary debates: both Khalidi and Pappé have argued that the Haifa exodus was effected by the operation known as 'Cleansing the Leaven,'<sup>88</sup> which is part of the larger Zionist transfer scheme known as Plan Dalet. 'The shock and terror,' writes Pappé, 'were such that without packing any of their belongings or even knowing what they were doing, people began leaving en masse. In panic they headed towards the port.'<sup>89</sup> This chaotic scene urges the Arab community, seeking to instill some order, to broadcast orders through loudspeakers advising people to gather in the market place until an orderly evacuation can be organised.<sup>90</sup> In his literary rendition, however, Uris offers a completely different picture of the Haifa exodus:

The Arab population of Haifa ran without cause. Fears of annihilation were merely echoes and reflections of their own designs. They and their leaders had promised death to the Jews. The Arabs were consumed with fear that the Jews would do to them what they planned to do to the Jews ... [T]he Haifa exodus was repeated in Safad and Tiberias, where Arab populations bolted after short battles.<sup>91</sup>

This representation of the Haifa exodus as an unjustified flight can be deconstructed both from within the text as well as by comparison to Arab counter-representation of the event. Uris refers to the Irgun's technique of stampeding the Arab population out through acts of mass annihilations, such as what happened in Kastel and Deir Yassin.<sup>92</sup> This systematic Zionist strategy of expulsion by fear brings about the contradiction inherent in his representation of the Palestinian exodus from Haifa as an unnecessary flight.

Reading the depiction of the Haifa exodus in *The Haj* contrapuntally with Ghassan Kanafani's rendition of the event in *Return to Haifa* (1969; trans. 1984) further challenges the historical accuracy of Uris's representation. According to Kanafani's novel, the Arab area at the centre of the city was showered with mortar shells from the Jewish settlements on the surrounding hills, leaving the possibility of taking 'the one road leading to the coast' as the only way to survive, thus pushing the Palestinian inhabitants to the port.<sup>93</sup> Upon his return to Haifa in the aftermath of the 1967 war, Said, the central character in Kanafani's novel, recollects memories of the day he and his wife, among others, were forced to leave the city: 'Suddenly a roar of thunder came from the east, from the high hills of Karmal. Mortar shells began to fly across the centre of the town.'<sup>94</sup> The credibility of Uris's depiction of the Haifa exodus is destabilised by internal textual contradictions on the one hand, and on the other, by the counter-narrative of Kanafani's representation of the event.

In overt disavowal of the transfer ideology that informs Zionist settler colonialism, Uris's novel proclaims that, from the Israeli side, 'no demand was made for the Arabs to evacuate their civilian population.'<sup>95</sup> Marginalising the revisionist narrative of the Israeli new historians, Uris includes a long diatribe described in the novel as 'the Ben-Gurion policy':<sup>96</sup>

'Never,' [Ben-Gurion] said, ... 'will we adopt any policy to drive the Arabs from Palestine. In those places that spell strategic life and death for us, such as Ramle-Lyddā, as Latrun, as West Jerusalem, we will fight them with everything we have. If the Arabs choose to run, I will not beg them to stay. If they leave Palestine, I will not beg them to return. But

under no circumstances will we force out a single Arab who wants to remain. Defeat will go down hard for the Arabs. I pray they will consider their own brothers and sisters who fled from Palestine in the same manner that we care for our brothers and sisters. I pray the Arabs will give them a chance at a decent life. But when a man leaves his home during a war which he started, he cannot expect us to be responsible for his future.'<sup>97</sup>

Although Ramle and Lydda are located in the area designated for Arabs in the UN Partition Plan, Ben-Gurion announces a full-scale fight against the local Arab population of the two cities. Uris's so-called Ben-Gurion policy is nothing but a mask hiding the Zionist leader's embrace of the transfer ideology as stated by his biographer, Michael Bar-Zohar: 'in internal discussions, in instructions to his people, the "Old Man" demonstrated a clear stand: it was better that the smallest possible number of Arabs remain within the area of the state.'<sup>98</sup> A close reading of the above passage reveals more about the discrepancy inherent in both Ben-Gurion's and Uris' representations. The 'If' clauses draw possible scenarios for Palestinian futures, and the 'I pray' appeals, which are connected to the Jewish fate, serve to represent Arabs as being responsible for the events. Uris's representation of the Palestinian 1948 expulsion is typical of settler narratives which while 'focusing on the territory in settler colonial contexts,' obscure 'the confrontation and extreme violence necessary to create these empty spaces on the colonialists' imagination.'<sup>99</sup>

### **Deir Yassin: Conflicting Narratives**

The representation of the infamous 1948 event of Deir Yassin demonstrates how Uris and Khoury have dealt with the settler ideology of transfer in their novels. The difference between Uris's and Khoury's narrations is that one version acknowledges the event only as an exceptional case while the other sees the structure of transfer behind it. Before assessing these two literary versions of the event, it is useful to shed light on how Deir Yassin has been represented both in historical narrative and in media coverage. The massacre at Deir Yassin

took place on 9 April 1948, when 130 commandos of the Irgun and the Stern Gang attacked the village of about 750 Palestinian residents and killed 250, mostly women and children. It is important to note two facts here: first, Deir Yassin is located outside the area allocated by the United Nations Partition resolution to the Jewish State; second, the village had signed a peace pact with its neighbouring Jewish Kibbutz. These two facts undermine the Zionist claims that the massacre was an act of retaliation. Investigating twenty-nine historical accounts of the Deir Yassin massacre, Abid Husni Gama has pointed out some 'reasonably known facts' about the event, including its execution by the Irgun division with the approval of the Haganah.<sup>100</sup> He also cites the peaceful nature of the village and its lack of interest in politics, which destabilises the Zionist accepted wisdom. For many historians and commentators, this event is highly significant since it marks 'the beginning of the depopulation of over 400 Arab villages and cities and the expulsion of over 700,000 Palestinian inhabitants,' thus contributing to the making of the 1948 Palestinian *nakba*.<sup>101</sup> Daniel McGowan, the leader of the Deir Yassin Remembered organization,<sup>102</sup> interviewed Colonel Meir Pa'il, a military historian and a retired IDF member, who, while regretting the event, drew attention to the circulation of two contradictory narratives of the massacre.<sup>103</sup> The first maintains that there was no massacre, but a bitter battle. The second interpretation commends the massacre as a useful performance that facilitated Zionist interests; the panic it created among the villagers accelerated the Zionist scheme of seizing and depopulating Palestinian land.<sup>104</sup>

However, this widely publicised event has been presented in the official Zionist narrative as an example of an 'exceptional' act, carried out by an irregular group. On 10 April 1948, the *New York Times* reported that 'In house-to-house fighting,' a combined force of Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern group killed more than 200 Arabs, half of them women and children.<sup>105</sup> The use of the word 'fighting' in this report misrepresents the incident, echoing Meir Pa'il's description of the view that sees the event as a battle rather than a massacre. On

15 June 1953, *Time* magazine reported on the Tel Aviv court decision in relation to four Irgunists whose request for war veterans' pensions was rejected by the Israeli Defense Ministry on the basis that the wounds they had received in Deir Yassin had not been suffered in 'organized action against Arab bands or invaders.' The report revealed the perpetrators to be 'Jewish terrorists of the Stern Gang and Irgun Z-vai Leumi,' and described how 'the terrorists butchered everyone in sight: the corpses of 250 Arabs, mostly women and small children, were later found tossed into wells.'<sup>106</sup> One may conclude that some of the known facts about the massacre did circulate in Western societies through both historical records and media coverage.

To what extent did the Zionist project in Palestine benefit from the US-exaggerated press reports on the massacre? In answer to this question, Pappé states: 'at the time, the Jewish leadership proudly announced a high number of victims so as to make Deir Yassin the epicenter of the catastrophe—a warning to all Palestinians that a similar fate awaited them if they refused to abandon their homes and take flight.'<sup>107</sup> Israeli new historians further establish the effect of the determined popularisation of Deir Yassin in demoralising the Palestinians and forcing them to leave. Benny Morris cites the Deir Yassin massacre as one example of Jewish atrocities, which were publicised through local airwaves to generate fear among neighbouring Palestinian villages.<sup>108</sup> The publicising of the massacre through local and international media had a tremendously demoralising effect on the Palestinians, as it generated panic that led to massive exodus. Simha Flapan, another Israeli new historian, goes even further by suggesting that the massacre is 'the direct reason for the flight of the Arabs from Haifa on April 21 and from Jaffa on May 4, and the final collapse of the Palestinian fighting forces.'<sup>109</sup> Pointing out the close relation between this deliberate circulation of news about the massacre and the Palestinian exodus, Frances Hasso argues that 'the circulation of news and propaganda related to this massacre contributed substantially to a breakdown of morale and to increased panic among Palestinians,'<sup>110</sup> a panic that led to massive exodus. In

contrast to the wide coverage of Deir Yassin in Western media as a ‘violent’ yet ‘exceptional’ event is the historical debate that has revealed ‘a pattern of actions characterized by a large number of massacres designed to intimidate the population into flight.’<sup>111</sup> With this controversy in mind, I will examine representations of the Deir Yassin massacre and argue that, while Uris’s representation aims to vindicate what appears in the novel as an exceptional instance of settler violence, Khoury turns to Palestinian oral history to narrate similar, yet lesser-known, events in order to reveal how Deir Yassin fits into a structure of founding violence typical of settler colonial forms.

### **Deir Yassin in Uris’s *The Haj***

While *Exodus* includes no reference to Deir Yassin, *The Haj* engages in detailed vindication of the event. It is worth noting here that the Deir Yassin massacre was not included in the first manuscript of *The Haj*, which Uris submitted to Doubleday for revision in January 1983. According to Ira Nadel, Uris then referred to Deir Yassin in the revised version in response to criticism he had received from Sam Vaughan of Doubleday, who insisted that Uris’s ‘one-sidedness ... weakens credibility ... And if he didn’t finally arrive at something some of the Jews did wrong, we’d have to urge him to invent it (the Irgun’s massacre).’<sup>112</sup> *The Haj*, however, devotes approximately four pages to discussing the event, including a clear statement of the real motive behind the Deir Yassin massacre: ‘They [the Irgun intelligence] felt they could *stampede the population out*, as had been the case at the Kastel.’<sup>113</sup> This quotation articulates two important ideas: the Deir Yassin massacre was a clear implementation of the transfer ideology underlying Zionist settler colonialism; and the massacre was not ‘exceptional,’ but rather part of the settlers’ transfer structure. In *The Haj*, published only two years after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent massacres at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, Uris revisits the distant past of 1948 Palestine to revive support for Israel at a time when the moral superiority upon which the state stood had relatively declined. This



explains, though only partly, Uris's detailed representation of the Deir Yassin massacre, a purposeful vindication that could be extended to the 1982 event. Greenblatt's concept of subversion-containment usefully explains Uris's vindication of the Deir Yassin massacre in the sociohistorical context of the 1982 events. *The Haj* counteracts the effect of the 1982 invasion by offering a detailed description and premeditated vindication of the Deir Yassin massacre from the pro-Zionist perspective of Gideon Asch. A long dialogue between Gideon Asch and the English Colonel Brompton on this subject evokes all the questions and accusations that the global public, and not only Arabs, raised against the Zionist settlers in relation to the massacre. Through Gideon's interpretations, Uris explains the circumstances and motives for the events of Deir Yassin as well as opposition within the Jewish community to the Irgun's action. Gideon states: 'I am a Jew, Colonel, and I am tormented that we have been driven to do such things to survive. I can forgive the Arabs for murdering our children. I cannot forgive them for forcing us to murder theirs.'<sup>114</sup> Here, Uris draws on Golda Meir's familiar line whose reverberations echo in the tone and the language of Gideon.<sup>115</sup> For Uris, while the official force of the Haganah is not to be blamed, the Arabs share responsibility for their instigation of the Irgun's rage.

### **Deir Yassin in Khoury's *Gate of the Sun***

The absence of Deir Yassin from Khoury's representation of 1948 Palestine, while reflecting the general silence on this event in Arab and Palestinian fiction, reveals a shift in focus from the widely known to the lesser-known; from archives to history from below.<sup>116</sup> Khoury focuses instead on the less-publicised but historically significant massacre of Ain al-Zaitoun in Galilee.<sup>117</sup> If Deir Yassin was a turning point in the 1948 war, 'Ain al-Zaitoun marked the major turning point of the war in Galilee.'<sup>118</sup> The Arab novelist here draws on testimonies of Palestinian refugees to reconstruct the massacre, telling of the illegal and inhumane practices of the Palmach soldiers. From the hill of al-Kweikat, which overlooks Ain al-Zaitoun, a Palmach unit has 'rolled barrels of

explosives down onto the village,' an illegal action intended to annihilate the inhabitants if they refuse to evacuate the village.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, the surrender scene in the novel is a telling example of the Zionists' illegal practices: the Palestinian inhabitants have been ordered by Palmach soldiers to gather in one courtyard and a Palestinian youth has stepped out, crying:

[W]e surrender. Our village has fallen, and our men are defeated, and we surrender and expect to be treated humanely ... [W]e are captives, and you must treat us the way captured civilians are treated in wartime.<sup>120</sup>

A Palmach soldier answers with a shot, scattering the Palestinian's brains over the ground, and the rest of the villagers are driven 'like sheep toward the valley of al-Karrar.'<sup>121</sup> By representing Ain al-Zaitoun and revealing the illegal and inhumane performance of the Palmach soldiers, Khoury gives voice to what historical records and media reports have long marginalized or even silenced. Acknowledging the contribution of Khoury's novel to historiography, Pappé attributes the increasing publicity of Ain al-Zaitoun to *Gate of the Sun*, which draws heavily on Palestinian oral history. *Gate of the Sun* has given publicity to a lesser-known massacre perpetrated by Zionist leaders, which perhaps helps explain why Khoury opts to focus on Ain al-Zaitoun, while mentioning the more widely-publicised Deir Yassin only in passing.

Beyond the historical accuracy of a fictional representation, Khoury's detailed description of what came to be called the massacre of the Mud suggests a metaphorical reference to the structure of the settlers' founding violence in 1948. For Khoury, it is 'the real embodiment of [Palestinian] tragedy':<sup>122</sup>

It was a diluvial downpour and the truck forged through it. We reached Zabbouba, close to Jenin on the Jordanian border. They made us get down from the truck, ordered to us to cross to the Arab side, and started firing over our heads. It was a march of rain, death, and mud. The mud covered the ground, and the rain was like ropes. Cold, darkness, and fear. Twenty men walking, sliding, grabbing at the ropes of rain hung down from the sky and falling down. They'd try to rise, and they'd get

stuck in the mud. Twenty men hanging onto ropes of rain, sobbing and coughing, trying to walk but sliding and sticking in the mud. The mud was like glue. They stuck to the ground. They fell and the mud swallowed them. The ropes of water falling from the sky began to turn to mud. And the dying started. That's how the men of Sha'ab died in the Massacre of the Mud, which took place on a certain day in December of '48.<sup>123</sup>

In an interview, Khoury commented on the symbolic significance of the Massacre of the Mud, stating that it represents Palestine.<sup>124</sup> During the 1948 war, and because of Zionist founding violence and atrocities, Palestine became an extended pond of mud, menacing rather than safeguarding Palestinians' life, dignity, and freedom. This imagery illustrates a case of enforced flight. If the people of Sha'ab opted to stay, they would be 'glued' to a land where death, cold, darkness, and fear awaited them; a land where even 'rain,' the symbol of life, became thwarting. For Palestinians, the land of Palestine, under Zionist settler colonialism, became as transformable and unstable as mud.

### **1.5 The writing of 1948 Palestine: Commission versus Permission / Archival Narration versus History from Below**

One winter night I shared my guard duty in Kibbutz Hulda with an elderly ideologue ... With a strangely ironic expression on his face, he suddenly whispered to me, 'What do you expect from those Palestinians? From their point of view, aliens have landed in their country and gradually taken some of it away, claiming that in return they will shower the natives with loving-kindness, and Palestinians simply said no thanks, and took to arms in order to repel the Zionist invaders?' Being the teenage product of a conventional Zionist upbringing, I was shocked by his use of the word Palestinians, as well as by the treacherous revelation that the enemy not only had a point of view, but a fairly convincing one at that.

(Amos Oz, 'To Prevail over the Past,' 1993)

'Don't you think it's shameful that we don't write our own history?' he asked.

The anecdote told by Amos Oz illustrates the Israeli writer's 'wonder' – in Greenblatt's sense of the word – at the prospect of a 'fairly convincing' Palestinian narrative of the events of 1948, a narrative different from that with which he is familiar, being 'a product of a conventional Zionist upbringing.' This 'wonder' or 'shock of the unfamiliar' at discovering the absence of a historical narrative told by Palestinians in turn produces shame in Khoury's imaginary Arab writer.<sup>125</sup> 'Departing from the assumption that in a settler context the struggle over narrative becomes an especially contested domain,'<sup>126</sup> this comparative study explores the issues at stake in writing in and of the novel, arguing that the relationship between Uris's and Khoury's writings of 1948 Palestine illustrates the dialectics between commission and permission to narrate, institutional agency and absence, archives and orality.

### **Commission versus Permission to Narrate**

Recent evidence has shown that Uris was commissioned to write a novel about the founding of the state of Israel, which would legitimate the Zionist settler project. In his biographical account, *Leon Uris: Life of a Best Seller*, Ira Nadel states that

Surprisingly, *Exodus* did not begin with Uris but with a vice president of MGM, Dore Schary ... a politically active Jew who had lectured on anti-Semitism to soldiers during the Second World War ... By the mid-1950s ... he thought it was time for someone to write the story of the new state of Israel – which he, of course, would then film.<sup>127</sup>

Uris was selected for the task and was offered '\$7,500 for the as yet unwritten narrative, tentatively titled "The Big Dream."' <sup>128</sup> More recently, the Palestinian historian Rashid Khalidi has provided further evidence of how Uris came to write *Exodus*. In a lecture delivered at the Brooklyn Law School on 22 September 2010, and again at the Palestine Centre in Washington, Khalidi

revealed that *Exodus* was 'carefully crafted propaganda' fostered by renowned figures in US public relations. Khalidi asserted that Edward Gottlieb, one of the founders of the modern public relations industry, both commissioned the book and paid for Uris's research.<sup>129</sup> It is not important here whether it was Schary or Gottlieb who commissioned Uris to write *Exodus*; rather, what is important is the fact that Uris's committed engagement in the circulation of a version of events started at a time when Arab and Palestinian writers were still struggling with 'the permission to narrate,' as Edward Said has termed it.<sup>130</sup>

The ways in which Uris was constructed by both publishers and critics reveal the corporate support that promoted a version of events to be globally accepted as historically accurate. Uris's engagement with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in his writing involved two trips to Israel: one in 1956 and another in 1978. The aim of his first visit, which lasted for eight months, was to cover the Sinai campaign as a war correspondent and to do research for the writing of *Exodus*, for which he had already signed the contract. On the second trip, Uris stayed for nine months and was accompanied by his wife, Jill, a photographer. Three years later, more than a hundred photographs of the city of Jerusalem, taken by Jill, with detailed commentaries by Uris, formed the material for *Jerusalem: Song of Songs* (1981), whose basic argument is that the city of 'Jerusalem was, from its inception, meant to be ruled by Jews.'<sup>131</sup> Three years later, this idea was re-presented in *The Hajj*. In addition to his actual visits, discussions with Bernard Lewis and readings of Raphael Patai's *The Arab Mind* (1976), a book unsympathetic to Arabs, influenced his representation of Islam and Arabs in 1948 Palestine.<sup>132</sup>

The successful print history of *Exodus* indicates its global reception and suggests the high resonance of the images and discourses that the novel propagated among the US and world public. For most of those readers, *Exodus* was a history book, not a literary representation.<sup>133</sup> According to M.M. Silver, *Exodus* was on top of the US bestseller lists for almost five months following May 1959 and, in September of that year, the advance paperback orders of 1.5

million copies had no precedent in publishing history.<sup>134</sup> These 'remarkable sales figures coupled with the box-office success of Otto Preminger's 1960 film version of the novel,' Silver maintains, 'regularly prompt comparison to mass-culture landmarks, such as *Gone with the Wind*.'<sup>135</sup> The book was published under forty-six different covers, and was translated into fifty languages. Emphasising the ideological significance of the novel's high global sales to Jews throughout the world, the Jewish-American novelist Saul Bellow insists that 'the survivors of Hitler's terror in Europe and Israel will benefit more from good publicity than from realistic representation.'<sup>136</sup> However, if Bellow's remark implies Uris's complicity in articulating and disseminating the Zionist received wisdom about the 1948 conflict, the construction of the author by critics and corporate supporters illustrates how Uris and his version of the 1948 events seem to have been engaged in a power/knowledge paradigm. The print history of *Exodus* suggests links between major encounters in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the dates of its reprints. The appearances of new editions following the 1967 war, the 1973 war, and the 1982 invasion of Lebanon suggest attempts to divert readers' memories away from the current victimisation of the Palestinians by Israel to the historical victimisation of the Jews in Europe, which constitutes the ideological cornerstone of the Zionist settler colonial enterprise. The way Uris's novels have shaped 1948 Palestine clearly illustrates the reciprocal relation between text and context, between the socio-historical context that determines the circulation of *Exodus* and the powerful resonance of the images it articulates, which have fashioned American, and global, memory of the events of 1948.

While this chapter focuses on *The Haj*, it is useful to shed some light on Uris's earlier bestseller, *Exodus* (1958), 'the text that, more than any other single artifact, set the narrative frames for a sympathetic worldwide understanding of modern Israel's genesis,' as M.M. Silver describes it.<sup>137</sup> According to David Ben-Gurion, 'as a literary work, [*Exodus*] isn't much. But as a piece of propaganda, it's the greatest thing ever written about Israel.'<sup>138</sup> Written in 1958, *Exodus*

narrates the founding story of the state of Israel, suggesting the continuity of the 1948 War with the European victimisation of the Jews. The novel, and the history it conveys, is told from the perspective of the kibbutz leader, Ari Ben Canaan. It traces a journey from statelessness to statehood. Parallel to the founding of Israel is the love story between Canaan, who is said to be based on the Israeli military leader and politician Moshe Dayan; and Kitty Fremont, a Christian American nurse. Kitty meets Canaan in Cyprus while trying to transfer Jewish children on board the detained immigration ship *Exodus* to Palestine, and becomes involved in Zionist labour. This American-Israeli romance, as M.M. Silver suggests, 'cleverly symbolizes America's developing love affair with Israel.'<sup>139</sup> Uris's commitment to presenting a pro-Zionist narrative is reflected in his sustained marginalisation of Palestinians in the novel: *Exodus* remains silent about the displacement of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948. The historical experience of the Palestinian *nakba* goes unrecorded in the novel.<sup>140</sup>

Not only critics, but also publishers, contributed to the construction of Uris and his fiction as historically accurate. Maps and photographs were major tools. While *Jerusalem: Song of Songs* includes approximately a hundred photographs, both *Exodus* and *The Haj* contain numerous maps of Palestine at different stages of its history. *The Haj* even includes an invented map, locating the fictive village of Tabah, which according to the novel 'occupies a small but strategic knoll' in the Valley of Ayalon, and 'stands sentinel as the gateway to Jerusalem,' thus creating the effect of the real.<sup>141</sup> According to Ira Nadel, 'the photographs of Uris that appear on the backs of his novels enlarge the idea of the author as explorer' and project Uris as 'a romantic figure who travelled the globe to write.'<sup>142</sup> Commenting on the photograph on the back jacket of *Exodus*, Nadel writes: 'Uris stands in fatigues next to a military jeep while on patrol in the Negev, his left hand on its MG 34 machine gun, which is pointed skyward. The message is clear: here is a writer willing to challenge danger and do battle.'<sup>143</sup> This battle in which Uris is a distinguished general is rather a

rhetorical one, yet necessary to the structure that any settler colonial project seeks to establish.

### **Khoury and Palestinian Silence**

In the epoch of silence between 1948 and 1967, Palestinian writers published only a few novels.<sup>144</sup> External and internal forces contributed to the absence of a Palestinian version of the 1948 events.<sup>145</sup> The Palestinian critic Ibrahim Taha notes the limitations imposed on Palestinian writers:

A searching analysis of the themes of the Palestinian literature written in the 1950s reveals a very small group of writers who dared to write on political subjects and criticize the authorities despite the harsh policy of the military government. Another group of writers preferred to treat various subjects that did not irritate the establishment, such as social matters, or even subjects that the state promoted, including praise for progress in various areas of life such as agriculture, industry, medicine, and so on.<sup>146</sup>

To avoid confrontation with their local authorities, post-1948 writers shifted their focus from political subjects to social matters. But this was not the only cause of a belated narrative. A Western power/ knowledge paradigm, as Said has shown, was powerfully at work in silencing Palestinian narratives.

Providing evidence, Said points out that *The New York Review of Books* has not printed works by Palestinians while printing articles critical of Israel by Western writers.<sup>147</sup> From this Orientalist perspective, Palestinians cannot speak directly about themselves and need to be represented by Western writers. In her study of Kanafani's *Return to Haifa*, Barbara Harlow refers to the 1960s as a time when

the literature of occupied Palestine (Israel) was, for reasons of Israeli repression and censorship as well as Arab neglect, largely unknown outside the borders of the then 18-year-old state of Israel, and much of Kanafani's research and work is concerned with documenting the existence and material conditions of production of Palestinian literature under Israeli occupation, in the face of what he designates as a 'cultural blockade.'<sup>148</sup>



The existence of a rhetorical struggle is also noted by Toine Van Teeffelen, who contends that 'Palestinians presently struggle as much for physical survival in their land as for keeping their national story alive in a power-ridden arena of Western-dominated international communications.'<sup>149</sup> Lacking the permission, let alone the appointment and commission, which Jewish American novelists enjoy to tell the story of a major event in their history, Arab and Palestinian writers become 'the disappointed of the Earth,' as Caroline Rooney once described them.<sup>150</sup> For Palestinian writers, therefore, the narration of their national story became the story. Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* illustrates how narrating the events of 1948 is a way to defy death and evade erasure.

For Khoury, nations that do not write their history doubtlessly face extinction, and it is the writer's responsibility to prevent collective forgetfulness. 'What has terrified me most ... is that I am a writer,' Khoury once said in a 1998 interview to *al-Adab* literary magazine: 'we live in an oral society that doesn't write things down ... and my fear has been that our present and past are facing extinction.' If Uris's *Exodus* 'ripped open the shroud of American Jewry's silence about Israel in the 1950s,'<sup>151</sup> Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* breaks the Palestinian silence by offering the first epic narrative of the 1948 *nakba*. Fifty years after the *nakba*, an Arab version of the 1948 war answered back as 'the Palestinian *Exodus*.'<sup>152</sup> The long period that separates the two novels is conspicuously linked to questions of whether history is always written by the victor, and whether the subaltern can ever speak.<sup>153</sup> From a postcolonial perspective, Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* engages with the absence of a Palestinian version of the 1948 *nakba* in two ways: absence as silence and absence as distortion.

The second epigraph to this section quotes a summons by Khoury's imaginary writer to subvert the coloniser's version of history:

He said there were only two books about the massacre, both by Israelis. One was by a journalist, Amnon Kapliouk, and the other, the report of

Israel's Kahane Commission. 'Don't you think it's shameful that we don't write our own history?' he asked.<sup>154</sup>

While silence and distortion are criticised as structures of absence, partial representations that fail to render the polyphony and complexity of the historical experience are equally decried. In an interview, Khoury states that *Gate of the Sun* is meant to bridge the gap left by the Palestinian novelists Ghassan Kanafani and Emile Habibi, whose novels articulate only partial pictures of what happened in 1948. According to Khoury, what is missing is 'the experience of being uprooted, the banishment and the crime, the absence.'<sup>155</sup> His novel, therefore, aims to tell a version of the 1948 events that includes the tragic details of the Palestinian expulsion from their land. It also aims to criticise both the silence during the two decades of the 1950s and 1960s and the focus among Palestinian novelists, including Kanafani, on 'mythic stories' and romantic nationalist nostalgia:

Ghassan Kanafani came, you told him your story, he took notes, and then he didn't ... write your story. Why didn't he write it? ... It was in the mid-fifties when he came to see you and your story hadn't yet become a story. Hundreds of people were slipping across from Lebanon to Galilee. Some of them came back and some of them were killed... That, maybe, is why Kanafani didn't follow up on the story—because he was looking for mythic stories, and yours was just the story of a man in love.<sup>156</sup>

Early in the novel, the narrator, Khalil, wonders why the love story of Yunes and his wife, Nahilah, across the colonial divide between Lebanon and occupied Galilee would not appeal to Kanafani. Khoury embarks on unpacking the partial representations of earlier writers by telling the untold part of the Palestinian experience.

Although writers' partial depictions might have distorted the larger picture of the 1948 *nakba*, the gaping silence of the survivors has impeded the reconstruction of these memories in literary form. As the novel presents a plethora of stories about 1948, it also engages with varied attitudes towards

silence, memory and remembering. Yunes resists remembering as part of his resistance to death and termination. According to Khalil, Yunes is not 'convinced the end has come' and he is not 'ready to sit on the sidelines and remember.'<sup>157</sup> While Yunes avoids remembering, Khalil insists on the articulation of memories since they are the only archives available to post-1948 generations. Despite Yunes's reluctance, Khalil insists on hearing the man's memories in the hope that they might fill in the gaps created by his grandmother's shattered and fragmented memory: 'My grandmother used to tell them stories as though she were tearing them into shreds; instead of gathering them together, she ripped them apart, and I understood nothing.'<sup>158</sup> The defective memory of the traumatised Palestinians resonates among different characters in the novel:

The story as Nuha related it to me was as distorted as her grandmother's memory. Nuha was a child and her grandmother an old woman. The child couldn't remember, and the old woman couldn't speak. The grandmother would raise her hand and point upward as though invoking the help of mysterious powers and all Nuha would see was dust. 'I was two years old,' she said, 'so I can't remember anything. I remember vague images, an old woman speechless in the house, my father looking at her with hatred. My father hardened into stone. He would enter the house in silence and leave it in silence.'<sup>159</sup>

Rather than destabilising the epistemic value of its content, this fragmented memory testifies to the historicity of the trauma and the continuity of its consequences. In their introduction to *Nakba*, Lila Abu-Lughod and Ahmad H. Sa'di place the fragmented memory of the Palestinians who had experienced the traumatic events of 1948 within the frame of traumatised collective memory. Abu-Lughod and Sa'di assert, 'it can take victims years to be able to assimilate their experience and give them meaning and form.'<sup>160</sup> An alternative interpretation, as advanced by Abu-Lughod and Sa'di, suggests that a comprehensible narration of the past depends on having 'comfortable distance' from the past and 'a detached perspective' in the present through

which the traumatic event could be narrated.<sup>161</sup> The fact that the *nakba*, for most Palestinians, including the characters of *Gate of the Sun* who live in refugee camps, is a lived present prevents that necessary distance from trauma that is required for the telling of their stories in comprehensive ways.

In addition to the internal causes of this silence, *Gate of the Sun* points to the continuous complicity of the West with the absence of a Palestinian narrative. Khalil tells the story of Catherine, a French actress, who has come to Beirut to acquaint herself with Shatila in preparation for the part she has been offered in a stage performance of Jean Genet's *Quatre heures à Chatila*, a play with scenes from the 1982 Israeli invasion of Sabra and Shatila. After she has seen and heard directly from Palestinians, Catherine decides not to take the part: 'I can't. I can't see the victim as someone turned executioner because that would mean history is meaningless.'<sup>162</sup> She tells Khalil how in support of Shoah, she visited Israel and lived for three months in a kibbutz in the Galilee, and during her stay she had neither seen the demolished Palestinian villages nor known about the expulsion of Palestinians from their country. Now that she knows, Catherine chooses to remain silent rather than getting involved in an artistic production that might disturb a long-established Zionist construct. Instead, Catherine expresses her interest in finding details to tell the story of nine anonymous Jewish women, who according to the narrative of the Israeli writer, Amnon Kapeliouk, were killed by the Israeli forces in the 1982 events. At this point, Khalil condemns this insular perspective that allows a Western artist to speak for one side and remain silent about the other:

I understand that you won't act in this play so you won't feel implicated ... In your view, our death doesn't deserve to have a play put on about it. But then you come and ask about nine Jewish women who, you say, or your Israeli writer says, were slaughtered here in the camp. There were more than fifteen hundred people killed, and you're searching for nine!<sup>163</sup>

Khalil understands the power dynamics that allow one narrative to circulate while simultaneously silencing alternative (hi)stories. In order to gain a space from which they can be heard, Khalil emphasises, Palestinians need a military victory to secure the power and the institutional support necessary for the narration of their nation:

Don't think anyone could know such a story and not get the idea that he might become a writer—though to turn this true story into a novel we'd need at least one military victory so that people would take us seriously and believe that our tragedy deserves to be placed next to the other tragedies our ferocious century has known, while casting the gloom of its final days over us.<sup>164</sup>

After decades of invisibility, only a military victory can rescue Palestinians from the textual peripheries to which the victor's narrative has pushed them ever since the 1948 war and the *nakba* that has followed in its wake.

### **Monologic Authoritative Narrative versus Polyphonic Orality**

In addition to the dialectic of commission and permission that relates Uris's *The Haj* to Khoury's *Gate of the Sun*, the novelists' engagements with written archives and oral history, with conventional narratives and new history, are central to understanding the issues at stake in representing 1948 Palestine. In *The Haj*, Uris revisits 1948 Palestine from the perspective of a Palestinian narrator, Ismael. While the novel appears to be polyphonic and inclusive of Palestinian voices, it dismantles the credibility of these voices and leaves the scene under the sole domination of Zionist mythic claims. The novel incessantly raises doubts about the credibility of Ismael's narrative, and does so from the outset. It opens with Ismael, who is then only eight years old, acknowledging the limitations of his authoritativeness as a narrator of events:

Other events happened here when I was not present. Aha! How could I know of these? Do not forget, my esteemed reader, that we Arabs are unusually gifted in matters of fantasy and magic. Did we not give the world *A Thousand and One Nights*? ... Our tale comes from a million suns

and moons and comets and all that I cannot possibly know will reach these pages with the help of Allah and our special magic.<sup>165</sup>

This intervention of supernatural powers as a source of information in Ismael's narrative further destabilises the reliability of his narration.

Uris's representation of the Palestinian exodus as discussed above suggests conformity with accepted wisdom and marginalisation of revisionist narratives. If Uris was the diligent researcher he was portrayed as in the global media, he might have known the research work of Khalidi (1959, 1961), Childers (1961), and Nafez Nazzal (1978)—all published in English and before *The Haj*. His long visits to Israel and contacts with known figures there raise the possibility that he might have learned about the declassification of new archival materials. Writing back to the settler narrative, Khoury's representation suggests a reaction to the monologic voice of conventional archival narratives. He spent much of the 1980s in the Shatila refugee camps collecting materials and interviewing Palestinian refugees from Galilean villages in order to narrate the hitherto-untold Palestinian oral history.<sup>166</sup> He opens up his novel to the polyphony of history from below, thus producing a more complex and diverse representation of events than could be made possible by the monologism of a Zionist authoritative narrative. Khalil, the narrator of *Gate of the Sun*, expresses grave concerns about the consequences of having a historical narrative that is both monolithic and monologic: 'I'm scared of a history that has only one version. History has dozens of versions, and for it to ossify into one leads only to death.'<sup>167</sup> He emphasises that the story of 1948 Palestine is 'a rough one' with 'a thousand ways to tell it.'<sup>168</sup> Khoury illustrates the various 'ways' of telling the history of the 1948 exodus through the intervention of multiple versions of the historical experience in Khalil's narration of Yunes's story of expulsion from Galilee to the Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon. This polyphonic narration of the 1948 Palestinian exodus becomes central to the reclamation of communal memory and the telling of history from below.

Khoury's novel, then, marks a shift away from the written to the oral, from a history told by the elite who rely on documents to the plurality of 'history from below' told through oral testimonies. Khoury weaves a profusion of stories told by dispossessed Palestinians into the textual tapestry of *Gate of the Sun*. The majority of those characters are peasants from Galilean villages who challenge the danger of oblivion by remembering and retelling. Storytelling in the novel serves to oppose forgetfulness, death, and nihilism, suggesting a link with Scheherazade's invented tradition of storytelling, in *Thousand Nights and One Night*, as a way to evade certain demise. It is only through narrating these memories that Yunes, a metaphor of the vanishing space of Palestine, can be resurrected and his presence maintained against total erasure. In Khalil's description, Yunes and Palestine are inseparable from each other; both are real, not imagined, and both suffer from 'settlements' of foreign bodies in their cells:

You said you understood the meaning of the word country after the fall of Sha'ab. A country isn't oranges or olives, or the mosque of al-Jazzar in Acre. A country is falling into the abyss, feeling that you are part of the whole, and dying because it died.<sup>169</sup>

Khoury chooses a more complex approach than earlier representations that celebrated the metaphoric and mythic significations of Palestine, such as oranges and olives. In the novel, Yunes reprimands Khalil for keeping a rotten branch of orange tree from the land of Palestine: '[b]efore hanging a scrap of the homeland up on the wall, it'd be better to knock the wall down and leave. We have to eat every last orange in the world and not be afraid, because the homeland isn't oranges. The homeland is us.'<sup>170</sup> Khoury's representation offers a more complex approach than could be possible in earlier narrations. In re-defining Palestine, the novel marks a shift not only towards the untold oral history but also to the less-narrated experience of 1948 in rural Palestine. By describing the historical experience of the Galilean villages, *Gate of the Sun* challenges the focus on urban Palestine and the marginalisation of its rural

space by Palestinian novelists such as Ghassan Kanafani, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, and Sahar Khalifeh.<sup>171</sup>

Contrasting the narrative structures of colonial and settler colonial storytelling, Veracini notes that while 'colonial narratives normally have a circular form,' settler colonial narratives appear in linear forms.<sup>172</sup> He explains:

Colonial narratives normally have a circular form; they represent an *Odyssey* consisting of an outward movement followed by interaction with exotic and colonized Others in foreign surroundings, and by a final return to an original locale ... We should attend to the ongoing relevance of a circular narrative structure.<sup>173</sup>

In Uris's novel, the linear structure represents two odysseys towards opposing ends: the settler's odyssey to Palestine and the Palestinians' exodus from Palestine. Both are envisaged with no chance of return. The impossibility of return for the Palestinians is clearly illustrated in the image of Allenby Bridge, through which Palestinians cross the border to find refuge in Jordan, as a one-way bridge: 'Allenby was a bridge of great uncertainty to the future, perhaps spanning a river of no return.'<sup>174</sup>

While Uris's *The Haj* is about two Janus-faced one-way odysseys to and from the land of Shemesh and Tabah, Khoury's novel resists closure. The final scene shows Khalil defying termination and insisting on continuity:

I left my house barefoot and ran to your grave. I'm standing here. The night covers me, the March rain washes me and I tell you no, *this isn't how stories end*. No. I stand. The rain forms ropes that extend from the sky to the ground. My feet sink into the mud. I stretch out my hand, I grasp the ropes of rain and I walk and walk and walk [sic]<sup>175</sup>

Khoury commented on the continuity of retelling the *nakba* and the significance of the closing scene as Khalil continues to walk out, insisting on the absence of the full stop in the translation to signal the continuity of Palestinian exile and diaspora until they return to the land of Palestine.<sup>176</sup> Walking and returning are inextricably intertwined in the case of Palestinian struggle.<sup>177</sup> In the face of erasure and oblivion, the legacy of Khoury's epic narrative continues to inspire



translators, filmmakers, and political activists. But the story of *Gate of the Sun* has not ended there, as it has been retold first by Yousry Nassrallah, the Egyptian filmmaker who adapted the novel into a film in 2004, then in January 2013, when a group of Palestinians and international volunteers set up tents and established a protest village named Bab al-Shams after Khoury's novel, on a West Bank private land expropriated by Israel and designated as a future settlement. This event was widely covered by local and international media. The retelling of the story through this subversive act is foretold in the novel:

Salem said he'd asked the children to keep the secret of the cave. 'It's Yunes' secret. Leave Yunes in the whale's belly,' he told them, 'and after three days, or three years, or three decades, your grandfather Yunes will emerge from the whale's belly, just like the first Yunes did, and Palestine will return, and we'll call the village that we'll rebuild Bab al-Shams.'<sup>178</sup>

In this passage, the allusion to Prophet Yunes [Jonah] attributes meanings of temporality and sacredness to the Palestinian tragedy. Palestine is sacred if the Palestinians remain loyal to the land. Only then, their return will be as certain as the return of Jonah from the belly of the whale. As this fictional work has reconstructed historical facts, the prospect that the fictional village of Bab alShams turns into reality appears possible to Khoury. When this prophecy came true in 2013, Khoury wrote a letter to the activists who built the tent village of Bab alShams:

This is the Palestine that Younis dreamt of in the novel "Bab Al Shams / Gate of the Sun." Younis had a dream made of words, and the words became wounds bleeding over the land. You became, people of Bab Al Shams, the words that carry the dream of freedom and return Palestine to Palestine.<sup>179</sup>

*Gate of the Sun* suggests the agency of literary narratives in changing the facts on the ground, particularly in the context of Palestine, where the right to return and the right to narrate seem inextricably intertwined.

Within the framework of settler colonialism, this comparative study of representations of Palestine in Uris's *The Haj* and Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* reveals the centrality of the land to the rhetorical structure in which the 1948 war and its 'knowable historical events' have been interwoven, unveiling how the Zionist invasion in 1948 was not only an event but also a structure. This chapter explores the intervention of the Jewish American best-selling novel in the circulation and escalation of the resonance of particular settlers' tropes and rhetoric among a Western reading public. A basic element in Uris's representation is fashioning the land within biblical history, utilising archaeology, to legitimate the settlers' claim to the land and justify the Zionist settler project. To interrogate Palestinians' attachment to the land, otherwise knowable historical events such as the Palestinian exodus in 1948 are rendered as either voluntary flight or reaction to evacuation orders from Arab leaders, marginalising Arab historical accounts and the newly-declassified archives that brought this conventional narrative into question.

Although the infamous Deir Yassin massacre is justified by Uris as an exceptional event carried out by an unofficial group of settlers, it actually illustrates a historical structure informed by the 'logic of elimination' in settler colonial formations. Breaking the silence, Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* suggests an act of writing back to the settler's narrative, and a reaction to earlier Arab literary representations loaded with romantic appeals and symbolic significations. Through this literary intervention, Khoury engages with Palestinian and Israeli intellectual debates, extending his sources to include Palestinian oral testimonies and Israeli revisionist history. Undermining the rhetorical structure that underlies Uris's narrative, Khoury's novel shifts focus away from a monologic voice to dialogic voices, from a singular narrative to a plurality of narratives, from Israeli written archives to Palestinian oral testimonies, from the victor's commission to write to the permission to narrate colonial struggle. The absence of the other side of the narrative and the subsequent 'shock of the unfamiliar' suggests the increasing imperativeness of

contrapuntal readings to 'prevail over the past' and to better understand the events of 1948; readings that take into account not only the historical narratives of both settlers and indigenes but also the literary representations of Jewish American and Arab writers. The next chapter extends this contrapuntal reading to the context of the 1967 war, exploring the ways in which Arab writers have responded to emerging sociopolitical conditions in Palestine and the ultimate dislocation of Palestinians.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This phrase is the title of Book 2 in Leon Uris, *Exodus* (New York: Doubleday, 1958) 197.

<sup>2</sup> Elias Khoury's *Bab al-Shams* was first published in Arabic in 1998 and translated into English by Humphrey Davies under the title *Gate of the Sun*. For this thesis, I have consulted the fourth edition of the Arabic text (Beirut: Dar al-Adaab, 2005) and the US edition of Davies' translation (New York: Archipelago Books, 2005), from which all quotations in this chapter are taken. It is worth noting here that there are slight differences between the US and UK editions of the translated book; for example, names of characters are spelled differently (e.g. 'Yunes' and 'Khalil' in the US edition are spelled as 'Yunis' and 'Khaleel' in the UK version). I also found textual differences in the two editions.

<sup>3</sup> Benny Morris's *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1988), Avi Shlaim's *Collusion across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement and the Partition of Palestine* (New York: Columbia U P, 1988), and Ilan Pappé's *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: St Martin's P, 1988) were published contemporaneously in 1988, after Uris's *The Haj*. However, in 1983, a year before the release of *The Haj*, Brauch Kimmerling, whose work is often included among that of the new historians, published *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics* (Berkeley: U of California, Institute of International Studies, 1983). The *Guardian* describes him as 'probably the first Israeli academic to analyze Zionism in settler-immigrant, colonialist terms' (Lawrence Joffe, 'Brauch Kimmerling,' Obituary, *Guardian* 26 Jun. 2007). Furthermore, while Pappé's revisionist work was released in print in 1988, he had conducted his research in the course of his PhD study at Oxford University, completed in 1984. One concludes that the materials upon which the new historians have based their revisionist history of the 1948 events were available during the time when Uris wrote *The Haj*.

<sup>4</sup> Avi Shlaim, 'The Debate about 1948,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27.3 (1995): 287.

<sup>5</sup> Nur Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (London: Zed Books, 2012) 154.

<sup>6</sup> Here I refer to Walid Khalidi's 'Why Did the Palestinians Leave? An Examination of the Zionist Version of the Exodus of '48' (1959), republished as 'Why Did the Palestinians Leave? Revisited' in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 34 (2005).

<sup>7</sup> These include the Egyptian *al-Ahram*, the Lebanese *al-Hayat*, and the Palestinian *al-Difa'*. Explaining his selection of these three newspapers, Khalidi states: 'A choice was made of three newspapers: the Egyptian *al-Ahram*, as the most reliable newspaper in the Arab world, the Lebanese *al-Hayat*, as the newspaper which concerned itself with Palestinian affairs more than any other newspaper outside Palestine, and *al-Difa'*, the leading Palestinian newspaper' (44).

<sup>8</sup> Khalidi, 'Why Did the Palestinians Leave, Revisited' 46. Raising further doubts, Khalidi remarked that on those occasions when Zionist records made reference to Arab evacuation orders, they failed to provide specific information about the exact text of these orders, the Arab radio station which allegedly broadcast them, or even the time and day they were broadcast. Moreover, Khalidi supported his argument with positive evidence, as he discussed measures taken by Arab governments to prevent the Palestinian exodus, including the radio broadcasts that urged Palestinians to stay and the denial by Lebanon and Syria of residence permits to Palestinian men of military age on April 30 and May 6, respectively. He then pointed to the Zionist 'psychological offensive' highlighted by radio messages warning the Arabs of diseases, the ineffectiveness of their armed resistance, and the incompetence of their leaders.

<sup>9</sup> Here I refer to Childers' article 'The Other Exodus.' *The Spectator*, 12 May 1961.

<sup>10</sup> In his study 'The Palestinian Exodus in 1948' (*Journal of Palestinian Studies* 9 [1980]), Steven Glazer evaluates a number of historical sources on the subject of the Palestinian exodus on the basis of their qualitative content, and commends the work of Childers as ranking among the strongest (100).

<sup>11</sup> Walid Khalidi, 'Plan Dalet: Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine,' *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18 (1988): 17.

<sup>12</sup> Khalidi, 'Plan Dalet: Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine' 17, 18. Emphasis added.

<sup>13</sup> Analyzing the wording of the plan shows the recurrent use of the Hebrew word *tihur*, which means *cleansing*.

<sup>14</sup> Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007) 131.

<sup>15</sup> Gabriel Piterberg, 'Erasures,' *New Left Review* 10 (2001): 34.

<sup>16</sup> Piterberg, 'Erasures' 35. Piterberg wrote: 'As early as May 28, 1948, when [Yosef Weitz] headed the semi-official three-member Transfer Committee, he noted in his diary a meeting with Sharett. On this occasion, Weitz asked Sharett whether he thought orderly action should be taken to ensure that the flight of Arabs from the war zone was an irreversible fact, and described the aim of such action as a 'retroactive transfer' (transfer *be-di 'avad*). Sharett said yes' (35). That orderly action was taken to ensure the flight of Palestinians would be an irreversible fact. Piterberg notes how the administrative term of 'present absentees' provides further evidence of the determination of Israelis to control and dispossess both external and internal refugees.

<sup>17</sup> Piterberg, 'Erasures' 35, 42.

<sup>18</sup> Piterberg, 'Erasures' 43.

<sup>19</sup> Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing* 226.

<sup>20</sup> Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (London: Verso, 2008) 210.

- 21 Saree Makdisi, 'The Architecture of Erasure,' *Critical Inquiry* 36 (2010): 519-559.
- 22 Makdisi, 'The Architecture of Erasure' 520.
- 23 Makdisi, 'The Architecture of Erasure' 527.
- 24 Makdisi, 'The Architecture of Erasure' 559.
- 25 Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism* 96-97.
- 26 Stephen Greenblatt, 'Resonance and Wonder,' *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1991) 42.
- 27 Greenblatt, 'Resonance and Wonder' 42.
- 28 Greenblatt, 'Resonance and Wonder' 54.
- 29 Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Willington House, 1999) 163. In a different context, Wolfe also writes: 'territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element.' (Patrick Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,' *Journal of Genocide Research* 8.4 [2006]: 388).
- 30 Shemesh Kibbutz would later become the city of Beit Shemesh, founded in 1950.
- 31 Gershon Shafir, 'Zionism and Colonialism: A Comparative Approach,' *The Israel/Palestine Question: Rewriting Histories*, ed. Ilan Pappé (London: Routledge, 1999) 74.
- 32 Gabriel Piterberg, 'Literature of Settler Societies: Albert Camus, S. Yizhar and Amos Oz,' *Settler Colonial Studies* 2.1 (2011): 6.
- 33 Leon Uris, *The Haj* (New York: Bantam, 1985) 23. *The Haj* was first published in 1984 by Doubleday, reprinted by Bantam in 1985 and issued in thirteen printings through November 1989.
- 34 Uris, *The Haj* 22.
- 35 Uris, *The Haj* 22.
- 36 Uris, *The Haj* 45.
- 37 Shafir 77. Shafir states that the slogan of this movement was 'a necessary condition for the realization of Zionism is the conquest of all jobs in Palestine by Jews' (77).
- 38 Uris, *The Haj* 21.
- 39 Uris, *The Haj* 21.

40 Uris, *The Haj* 22.

41 Uri Davis et al., 'Israel's Water Policies,' *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 9.2 (1980):  
3.

42 Uris, *The Haj* 37.

43 Uris, *The Haj* 47.

44 Uris, *The Haj* 49.

45 Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2010) 20.

46 Uris, *The Haj* 22.

47 Uris, *The Haj* 110.

48 Uris, *The Haj* 56.

49 After the defeat of the Nasserist ideology of Arab Nationalism in 1967, Anwar Sadat came to office with the alternative paradigm of Islamism. This new ideology gained more popularity with the Arab victory in 1973.

The Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 involved the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was supported by the United States and the United Kingdom, and its replacement with an Islamic republic under Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the revolution.

50 Kathleen Shine Cain, *Leon Uris: A Critical Companion* (Westport: Greenwood P, 1998) 181.

51 Uris, *The Haj* 74.

52 Lorenzo Veracini, 'The Other Shift: Settler Colonialism, Israel, and the Occupation,' *Journal of Palestine Studies* 42.2 (2013): 28.

53 Veracini, 'The Other Shift' 28.

54 This character appears to me to be based on the historical figure of Orde Wingate, a pro-Zionist British army officer assigned to the British Mandate of Palestine, where he was involved in training Haganah groups.

55 Uris, *The Haj* 70.

56 See Barbara McKean Parmenter, *Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1994).

57 Uris, *The Haj* 351.

58 Uris, *The Haj* 345.

59 Uris, *The Haj* 105.

- 60 Greenblatt, 'Resonance and Wonder' 44.
- 61 Uris, *The Haj* 105.
- 62 Chris Gasdon, 'Postcolonial Archaeology: Issues of Culture, Identity, and Knowledge,' *Archaeological Theory Today*, ed. Ian Hodder (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) 249.
- 63 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 20.
- 64 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 119.
- 65 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 384.
- 66 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 522.
- 67 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 522.
- 68 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 105.
- 69 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 111.
- 70 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 112.
- 71 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 327.
- 72 Tracey Banivanua-Mar and Penelope Edmonds, 'Introduction,' *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*, ed. Tracey Banivanua-Mar and Penelope Edmonds (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2010) 1.
- 73 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 177, 207.
- 74 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 201.
- 75 Carol Bardenstein, 'Threads of Memory and Discourses of Rootedness: Of Trees, Oranges, and Prickly Pear Cactus in Israel/Palestine,' *Edebiya't* 8.1 (1998): 9.
- 76 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 70.
- 77 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 380.
- 78 Uris, *Exodus* 576.
- 79 Uris, *Exodus* 574.
- 80 Uris, *Exodus* 575-76. Emphasis in the original.
- 81 Jill and Leon Uris, *Jerusalem: Song of Songs* (New York: Doubleday, 1981) 244.
- 82 Uris and Uris, *Jerusalem: Song of Songs* 253.
- 83 Uris, *The Haj* 181.
- 84 Uris, *The Haj* 177.



85 Uris, *The Haj* 184.

86 Uris, *The Haj* 199.

87 Uris, *The Haj* 215.

88 The operation was known by its Hebrew name, '*biur hametz*.' The city of Haifa was to be cleared of its Arab population in the same manner: Jewish houses were to be cleared of all traces of bread and flour on Passover's eve, 21 April.

89 Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing* 95.

90 Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing* 96.

91 Uris, *The Haj* 199.

92 Uris, *The Haj* 211.

93 Ghassan Kanafani, 'Return to Haifa,' *Palestine's Children*, trans. Barbara Harlow (London: Heinemann, 1984) 103.

94 Kanafani 102.

95 Uris, *The Haj* 199.

96 Uris, *The Haj* 199.

97 Uris, *The Haj* 192.

98 Quoted in Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing* 47-48.

99 Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington, eds. *Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2011) 1.

100 These facts include: (1) The Irgun Zavai Leumi, the Lohamei Herut Israel (Lehi or Stern Gang), and the Haganah were known to have agreed to cooperate in their military actions since 1945. (2) On Friday, 9 April 1948, during the battle of Jerusalem, two I.Z.L units and one Lehi unit were ordered, with the Haganah's approval, to take the village of Deir Yassin. (3) Deir Yassin was an Arab village located west of Jerusalem. It was considered friendly to the Jews and suspect by Arabs, and was known to have rejected the deployment of Arab irregulars in the village. (4) After Deir Yassin was taken, at least 254 people were killed. Some may have fallen defending their homes, but the rest were lined up and machine-gunned to death. Certainly, not less than 254 died, but not all the inhabitants were murdered. Some corpses were thrown into a well to cover up the massacre. Jacques de Reynier of the Red Cross personally counted 254 bodies. (5) David Ben-Gurion, then Head of the Jewish Agency, sent a cable of apology to King Abdullah of Jordan, denouncing and apologizing for the massacre. See Abid Husni Gama, 'The Myths and Realities of Deir Yasin' (N.P. n.pag. n.d.).

- <sup>101</sup> Daniel McGowan, 'Deir Yassin Remembered,' *Remembering Deir Yassin: The Future of Israel and Palestine*, ed. Daniel McGowan and Marc H. Ellis (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1998) 4. For Pappé, 'once the decision was taken [in March 1948], it took six months to complete the mission. When it was over, more than half of Palestine's native population, close to 800,000 people, had been uprooted, 531 villages had been destroyed, and eleven urban neighbourhoods emptied of their inhabitants' (Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing* xiii).
- <sup>102</sup> Deir Yassin Remembered is an organization of Jews and non-Jews working to build a memorial at Deir Yassin, on the west side of Jerusalem, within sight of Yad Vashem, the memorial of the Holocaust. Daniel McGowan is also the editor of a website and a book entitled *Remembering Deir Yassin: The Future of Israel and Palestine* (1998), designed to support the establishment of the memorial.
- <sup>103</sup> Pa'il worked for the Haganah at the time of the massacre.
- <sup>104</sup> Meir Pa'il, 'Jewish Eye-Witness,' Interview with Daniel McGowan, McGowan and Ellis 41-2.
- <sup>105</sup> '200 Arabs Killed, Stronghold Taken: Irgun and Stern Groups Unite to Win Deir Yasin' *New York Times*. 10 Apr. 1948.
- <sup>106</sup> 'Israel: Bloody Ghost,' *Time*, 15 Jun. 1953.
- <sup>107</sup> Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing* 91.
- <sup>108</sup> Benny Morris, 'The Palestine Exodus 1948,' Interview by Danny Rubenstein, *Palestine-Israel Journal* 2.4 (1995).
- <sup>109</sup> Quoted in Frances S. Hasso, 'Modernity and Gender in Arab Accounts of the 1948 and 1967 Defeats,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (2000): 498.
- <sup>110</sup> Hasso 498.
- <sup>111</sup> Nur Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba* 84.
- <sup>112</sup> Quoted in Ira B. Nadel, *Leon Uris: Life of a Best Seller* (Austin: Texas UP, 2010) 241.
- <sup>113</sup> Uris, *The Haj* 211. Emphasis added.
- <sup>114</sup> Uris, *The Haj* 212.
- <sup>115</sup> Uris echoes the words of Golda Meir who said: 'We can forgive the Arabs for killing our children. We cannot forgive them for forcing us to kill their children. We will only have peace with the Arabs when they love their children more than they hate us.' Quoted in Piterberg, *The Returns of Zion* 29.
- <sup>116</sup> 'Powerful and shattering as it was,' wrote Reja'e Busailah, 'and although it constitutes an important aspect of the Palestinian legacy, it is the one event in Palestinian history that has gone essentially unrecorded from the standpoint of the

victim.' Quoted in Lila Abu-Lughod, 'Return to Half-Ruins: Memory, Postmemory, and Living History in Palestine,' *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, ed. Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod (New York: Columbia UP, 2007) 91.

<sup>117</sup> In the 6 May 1992 issue of *Ha'ir*, Guy Erlich unveils the Israeli conspiracy of silence by listing seven other massacres, of which only Deir Yassin has been acknowledged by Israeli official sources. Following Deir Yassin in the list is the massacre of Ain elZaitoun, a Galilean village where Khoury sets most of the events in his novel. See Guy Erlich, 'Zionist Massacres in 1948: New Evidence' *Ha'ir*. 6 May 1992. *Deir Yassin Remembered*. Org. Web. Accessed 29 Jan. 2011.

<sup>118</sup> Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 177.

<sup>119</sup> Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 177.

<sup>120</sup> Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 179.

<sup>121</sup> Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 179.

<sup>122</sup> Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 233.

<sup>123</sup> Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 234.

<sup>124</sup> Elias Khoury, 'The Key to Memory,' Interview with BrAan Hanrahan, 20 Apr. 2006.

<sup>125</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 2.

<sup>126</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Societies* (London: Pluto P, 2006) 64.

<sup>127</sup> Nadel 94-95.

<sup>128</sup> Nadel 95.

<sup>129</sup> Rashid Khalidi, 'The Palestine Question and the U.S. Public Sphere,' a speech delivered as the 2010 Edward Said Memorial Lecture at the Palestine Center, Washington, DC, on 7 October 2010. Before that, the lecture was delivered at Brooklyn Law School, 22 September 2010. Khalidi might have based his argument on Arthur Stevens's *The Persuasion Explosion* (Washington, DC: Acropolis Publishers, 1985), which relates the commission of a novel showing Israel in positive terms to the American reading public from Gottlieb, who hired Uris for the task. The same narrative of Gottlieb commissioning Uris to write *Exodus* is retold by Jack Shaheen in *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (Northampton: Olive Branch Press, 2001).

<sup>130</sup> Said's oft quoted phrase, 'The Permission to Narrate,' is the title of an essay first published in 1984, and reprinted in *The Edward Said Reader*, ed. Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin (New York: Vintage, 2000) 243-266. Said argues that the Palestinian narrative of dispossession has faced Western attempts to revoke permission to narrate the Palestinian experience.

131 Nadel 236.

132 See Nadel, *Leon Uris* 245. Nadel, incorrectly, refers to Raphael as Alan Patai. A copy of Patai's book was found in Uris's library and his wife has acknowledged the huge influence the book had on Uris's novel.

133 Stephen J. Whitfield, 'Necrology: Leon Uris (1924-2003),' *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 94.4 (2004): 671.

134 M.M. Silver, *Our Exodus: Leon Uris and the Americanization of Israel's Founding Story* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010) 5.

135 Silver 5.

136 Quoted in Whitfield 667.

137 Silver 5.

138 Quoted by Allan Elsner in 'Rereading Leon Uris' *Exodus: A Disquieting Experience*, *Jewish Journal* 18 Apr. 2013: n.pag.

139 Silver 9.

140 Said has described Palestinians as victims of the victims in 'Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims' in Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1992) 56-114.

141 Uris, *The Haj* 14, 15. This village is fictional; its name is listed neither in Salman H. Abu Sitta's *Atlas of Palestine, 1917-1966* (London: Palestine Land Society, 2010) nor in *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, ed. Walid Khalidi (Washington DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).

142 Nadel 9.

143 Nadel 8.

144 These include novels by Israeli Arabs: Tawfiq Muammar's *Muthakkirat Laji aw Hayfa fi al-Maraka*, [*Memoirs of a Refugee or Haifa at War* (1958)], Muhammad Abbasi's *Hubb bila Ghad* [*Love without Hope* (1962)], and Attalah Mansur's *Wa Baqiyat Samira* [*Samira Has Remained* (1962)]; novels by exiled Palestinians include Nasir al-Din al-Nashashibi's *Hifnat Rimal* [*A Handful of Sand* (1964)] and *Habbat al-Burtugal* [*Oranges* (1966)].

145 In *Publish It Not: The Middle East Cover-Up*, Christopher Mayhew and Michael Adams unveil the concealment and deceit imposed on British media discussions of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, which results in misinformed and biased perceptions (London: Longman Group, 1975).

146 Ibrahim Taha, 'The Palestinians in Israel: Towards a Minority Literature,' *Arabic and Middle Eastern Literatures* 3.2 (2000): 221.

- 147 Said, *The Question of Palestine* 253.
- 148 Barbara Harlow, *Resistance Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1987) 6.
- 149 Toine Van Teeffelen, '(Ex)communicating Palestine: From Best-Selling Terrorist Fiction to Real-Life Personal Accounts,' *Terrorism and the Postmodern Novel*, spec. issue of *Studies of the Novel* 36.3 (2004): 438. Teeffelen is a Dutch development director of the Arab Education Institute who has written articles and publications on the image of Palestine and Palestinians.
- 150 This phrase is the title of Caroline Rooney's essay, 'The Disappointed of the Earth,' *Psychoanalysis and History* 11. 2 (2009): 159-174.
- 151 Silver 6.
- 152 Silver 182.
- 153 Here I allude to Gayatri Spivak's phrase 'Can the Subaltern Speak,' and Winston Churchill's statement: 'history is told by the victors'
- 154 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 264-265.
- 155 Elias Khoury, 'Interview with Zakia Aqra,' *CEMMIS, Centre for Mediterranean, Middle East, and Islamic Studies*, U of Peloponnese, n.d.
- 156 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 41.
- 157 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 174.
- 158 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 176.
- 159 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 203.
- 160 Lila Abu-Lugod and Ahmad H. Sa'di, 'Introduction: The Claims of Memory,' *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, ed. Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod (New York: Columbia UP, 2007) 10.
- 161 Sa'di and Abu-Lughod 10.
- 162 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 430.
- 163 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 434.
- 164 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 435.
- 165 Uris, *The Haj* 5.
- 166 Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba* 226.
- 167 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 297.
- 168 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 213.

169 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 193.

170 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 26.

171 Examples include Ghassan Kanafani's *A'ida ila Haifa* (1968) [*Return to Haifa*], Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's *Sayyadoun fi Shari'a Dayyig* (1960) [*Hunters in a Narrow Street*], and Sahar Khalifeh's *Al-Sabbar* (1976) [*Wild Thorns*].

172 Veracini, *Settler Colonialism* 96.

173 Veracini, *Settler Colonialism* 96-97.

174 Uris, *The Haj* 287.

175 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 539.

176 In 2011, a symposium entitled 'Translating Palestine,' held at the American University in Cairo, gathered Khoury, the writer of *Gate of the Sun*, Humphrey Davies, the translator who rendered his novel into English, and Yousry Nasrallah, the Egyptian filmmaker who produced the cinematic version in 2004.

177 A detailed discussion of the multilayered meanings and significations of the Palestinian chronotopes of walking and returning will be offered in the fourth chapter.

178 Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 522.

179 Elias Khoury, 'Letter to my People in the Village of Bab al-Shams,' trans. Sonja Mejcher-Atassi, 12 Jan. 2013. *Mondoweiss.net*. Here, in Khoury's translated letter, the name 'Younis' is spelled differently from that which appears in the translated novel.

## Chapter 2

### Palestine 1967: Shifts and Thresholds

The previous chapter has offered an exploration of literary representations of 1948 Palestine based on a negotiation between the emergent geopolitics of comparative settler colonialism on the one hand and comparative literature on the other. The present chapter extends this cross-cultural research to the socio-historical context of the 1967 war. It argues that literary representations of the 1967 war articulate ambivalence, liminality and possibilities of shifts and mobility in the immediate aftermath of the war. As Palestinians became a stateless nation, Israeli settlements prevailed beyond Palestinian borders and over more Arab territories. Given this peculiar coloniser/colonised relation, this chapter examines how the 1967 war is represented as a metaphorical border separating a post-1948 past from the post-1967 present, and the immediate aftermath of the war as a liminal space generating new possibilities and fresh perspectives. The chapter, then, explores the link between the 1967 war and major cultural and socio-political shifts in representations of Palestine in works by Arab writers including Edward W. Said (1935-2003), Halim Barakat (born 1933), and Sahar Khalifeh (born 1941), and the Jewish American writer Saul Bellow (1915-2005).

The resonance of the border and the liminal space in Palestinian literature has been noted in studies by Kamal Abdul-Malek and, more recently, Anna Ball. Through the prism of Victor Turner's conception of the liminal phase in the rite of passage, Abdul-Malek reveals how a profound consciousness of the liminal condition of the Palestinians permeates the creative imagination of Palestinian writers and filmmakers.<sup>1</sup> Anna Ball, using a postcolonial feminist approach, has examined Palestinian border-narratives, suggesting the possibility of a uniquely Palestinian border-theory. This

Palestinian conceptualisation of borders, according to Ball, while having points of tension and overlap with existing postcolonial feminist theories of borders, is particularly receptive of a return to bounded models of selfhood and space.<sup>2</sup> Here, however, I focus on representations of the 1967 war as a border in works by a variety of Arab and Palestinian writers working in different genres in order to reveal the centrality of the 1967 war to an understanding of the political and intellectual shifts permeating Palestinian cultural expression and liminal consciousness. In doing so, the chapter utilises Turner's anthropological conceptualisation of liminality to interpret a major shift in the identity formation of the intellectual, marked by a return to the politics of the local, as represented in Edward Said's memoir and the imaginary characters of Halim Barakat and Saul Bellow.

The Arab critic, Faisal Darraj, explores the impact of the 1967 defeat on the Arab novel, revealing alterations in form and content. Darraj argues that this historical event has created a clear divide between a pre-1967 progressive narrative and a post-war tragic and enclosed fictional world.<sup>3</sup> Drawing on the motif of the artist as a young man, Darraj reveals how an alienated and defeated man whose melancholy ends only with death has replaced the promising youth of the pre-1967 novel. Other critics, including Iyyad Nassar and Sulaiman Al Azra'ee, have noted the increasing indulgence in self-criticism and self-flagellation as characteristic of what they call the literature of defeat.<sup>4</sup> Amidst the pervasive sense of defeat and the ongoing injustice of the occupation, there is, however, an element of agency in post-1967 Palestinian narratives to which critics have not yet paid much attention.

## **2.1 Post-1967 Shifts**

### **From Settler Colonialism to Colonial Forms**

In 'The Other Shift,' Lorenzo Veracini explores a paradigm shift in post-1967 Israeli control policy in the Occupied Territories. This 'other shift,' as



conceptualised by Veracini, sketches a reversion from a settler colonial formation, targeting the merging of settlers' with the colonised indigenes to a colonial form whereby the newly occupied territories are separated and controlled from a Metropolis; Tel Aviv in this case. The Israeli separationist policy, adopted in 1967 and sustained through the construction of walls, highways and checkpoints, has created borders, both physical and metaphorical, reminiscent of nineteenth-century European colonial practices in diverse colonial zones. To explain the reversal, Veracini has usefully drawn a comparison between post-1967 Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories and the British Mandate (1922-1948):

Structurally, both Britain and Israel functioned/function as the metropolitan centre (the occupying colonial power) relative to the territories they seized militarily in 1917 and 1967, respectively. Both sponsored Jewish colonial settlements, and because during their respective occupations the indigenous population remained in situ, these settlements required military and administrative means to assure their survival and development. But whereas Zionism during the 1947-49 war was able to expel the majority of the Palestinians from within the borders of what became Israel proper, in 1967 the population living in what remained of Palestine did not leave.<sup>5</sup>

Paradoxically, the gradual movement of the Israeli colonial settler across the Green Line to extend control over more Palestinian territories parallels a return to an out-dated colonial formation that dominated Mandate Palestine before the establishment of the state. This shift, as I show, is clearly echoed in Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns*, which explores colonial forms in the West Bank and reveals both the ambivalence and the high resonance of the border in Palestinian existence and cultural expression. Khalifeh's novel illustrates links between the possible and necessary crossing of internal and external borders and the settlers' shift to colonial forms marked by maximal exploitation of labour and resources.

## **From Pan-Arabism to Palestinian Nationalism**

This reversion to a previous colonial form is not the only manifestation of a shift that translates into a paradoxical movement forward but towards a past of clearly defined borders. Key Arab literary works reveal a return from Pan-Arabism to nation-state nationalism; from the collective to the local experience in Arabic literature written in the immediate aftermath of the 1967 defeat. In reaction to the military and ideological defeat of the Arabs in 1967, a Palestinian nationalist consciousness developed as an alternative ideology to Nasser's defeated pan-Arabism.<sup>6</sup> 'This watershed event,' as Rashid Khalidi has argued, 'did no more than bury an Arab nationalism that was already all but deceased in Egypt, Syria, and the Palestinian political arena.'<sup>7</sup> The rise of nation-state nationalism, which came to replace a pan-Arabist consciousness, has cast its shadow on Arab writers who have adjusted the focus of their writing to capture the particularities of their local experience of the defeat. As Edward Said has noted:

Since 1967, however, there has been no unanimity on the principal thesis which that disaster supposedly proved, the existence of a collective Arab identity. While it is true that the war involved the Arabs as a whole, the very particularism spurring the writer to capture every detail of life also led him to make precise differentiations between, say, local and collective experience. In a curious way, therefore, the rise in prominence of Palestinian writers after 1967 (Mahmoud Darwish, Samih el-Kassem, Kanafani, Fadwa Touqan, and others), a tendency which accompanied the enormous dissemination of political interest in specifically Palestinian activity, was only one aspect of the change that also produced a more intense focus upon the distinctions between the varieties of Arab experience.<sup>8</sup>

The results of the 1967 war have accordingly been twofold, giving rise to a new focus for Palestinian writers on the one hand, and on the other, engendering an increased regionalism within Arab literature concerned with the particularities of local experience. This is notably true in Egypt. Saleh Abu-Esba'a's 1975 survey of the representation of Palestine in Arabic fiction reveals the reluctance

of Egyptian writers to render the Palestinian historical experience. According to Abu-Esba'a, except for a minor Palestinian character in Yusuf AlSiba'i's *Tareeq al A'wdah* [The Road of Return], Palestine rarely figures in post-1967 Egyptian literature.<sup>9</sup> The Egyptian writers who dealt with the June War chose to focus primarily on the Egyptian part of the tragedy, such as the Israeli occupation of the Sinai Peninsula and the destruction of the Egyptian Air Force. The absence of Palestine and the emphasis on the local Egyptian experience in Naguib Mahfouz's *Taht al-mizalla* [Under the Umbrella] (1969) and *Hubb taht al-matar* [Love under the Rain] (1973) expose an increasing regionalism in post-1967 Arab writing that characterizes works by the older generation of Arab writers.

Said has conceptualised how, after 1948, Arab writers increasingly tended to represent the present within firmly defined spatial and temporal borders through what he has called the 'scene.' He explains how the 'scenic method' or what he has also termed 'episodism' sketch ways of reconstructing the reality and history of 1948 events in post-1948 Arab novels.<sup>10</sup> According to Said, the scenic method best translates the intermittent nature of post-1948 conditions. While the past was identified with loss and therefore with uncertainty, the present was

a constant experience, a *scene* to be articulated with all the resources of language and vision. Even when the writer's aim is to render the present as disaster, it is the *scene* as the irreducible form of the present which the writer must affirm.<sup>11</sup>

Since 1967, the scene, according to Said, has acquired additional meaning for Arab writers; it has come to suggest geographical specificity in addition to its post-1948 implications of temporal discontinuity, hence adding spatial rifts to the already existing rifts in time. The Arab writer, Halim Barakat, as I show, endorses the scenic method to represent the geographical dispersion of post-1967 Palestinian existence.

## The Return of the Arab Intellectual's Consciousness

As a corollary to the political defeat of pan-Arabism, disillusioned Arab intellectuals and literary writers both inside the Arab world and in the Western diaspora, find themselves liberated from the limits of official narratives and state restrictions. The fact that Arab writers embraced a position in opposition to Nasser's ideology as illustrated by the two examples of the Egyptian playwright, Tawfig Al-Hakim (1898-1987), and the Syrian poet, Nizar Qabbani (1923-1998), suggests the centrality of the 1967 defeat in the emancipation of Arab intellectuals from the clutches of the state. Al-Hakim's *A'wdat Al Wa'i* (1976), translated into English as *The Return of Consciousness* (1985), offers a reassessment of events from the fresh perspective of the post-1967 awakening.<sup>12</sup> He lays the blame for the defeat squarely on Nasser and his ardent purveyors in the media who hypnotised the public with unrealistic narratives about the military magnitude of their army and false reports about their performance on the battlefield.<sup>13</sup> Misled by the official narrative inoculated by the media, Arab intellectuals had little chance in the pre-1967 period to negotiate politics or assess the (mis)use of power by the state. Al-Hakim attributes the awakening and return of consciousness to the 1967 defeat, which dismantled the self-aggrandised picture of the manufacturers of the 1952 revolution.

Nizar Qabbani, once an ardent disciple of Nasserism, responded to the 1967 debacle with a political poem entitled 'Hawamish ala Daftar Al-Naksa' [Footnotes in the Notebook of the Setback]. In this poem, he links the Arab defeat in 1948 with the 1967 rout, ascribing the political and military failure of the Arabs to their oppressive regimes and backward societies:

The old word is dead.  
The old books are dead.  
Our speech with holes like worn-out shoes is dead.  
Dead is the mind that led to defeat.  
...  
My grieved country,  
In a flash

You changed me from a poet who wrote love poems  
To a poet who writes with a knife.<sup>14</sup>

Like most post-1967 Arab writers, Qabbani realised the burgeoning urgency of a new literary discourse, an emergent Arab auto-critique, that would meet the rise of a new consciousness, for now 'the old word' and 'the old books,' those products of 'the mind that led to defeat' should be buried.

The new discourse renounces the term '*naksa*,' 'which suggests nothing more radical than a relapse, a temporary setback.'<sup>15</sup> It was Nasser who first used the Arabic term *naksa* on his 9 June public address to describe the 1967 defeat. The term implies mitigation of a past defeat and anticipation of upcoming revival. However, in contrast to the high resonance of the term *nakba*, *naksa* failed to circulate widely among a public cognizant of the tragic and entrenched causes that had led to defeat. 'Although some zealous Nasserists and pan-Arabists downplayed the significance of the defeat by calling it *al-naksa*,' writes Fawaz Gerges, 'they were a minority, a voice in the wilderness, a counter-productive claim, difficult to sell.'<sup>16</sup> For example, the Syrian intellectual, novelist, and poet, Ghada Al-Samman, rejected Nasser's *naksa*, warning that circulation of this term in Arab media was meant to anesthetise the public by projecting the defeat as merely a 'setback.' For her, the 1967 defeat did not happen in six days, but in the twenty years following 1948; it is the defeat of disengaged intellectuals, of unreliable media, of totalitarian governments. On her journey from Damascus to London, Al-Samman reflected on the defeat of Arab intellectuals and her consequent decision to isolate herself through exile. Al-Samman articulated these reflections into a border narrative that, as we will see, characterises post-1967 literature as a whole.<sup>17</sup>

The impact of the 1967 defeat on generating border narratives articulating intellectual shifts reaches beyond the geographical edges of the Arab world to stimulate the transformation of exiled Palestinian intellectuals and writers. Whilst the defeat liberated Arab intellectuals inside the Arab world from a coalition with power, for the exiled Palestinian intellectuals, it became

and remains the crisis in their rite of passage from assimilation into dominant Western cultures to nationalist and political commitments to their subordinate cultural group. No example could better illustrate the centrality of the 1967 war to this intellectual shift than the intellectual trajectory of the American Palestinian Edward Said. His intellectual journey, as retrospectively narrated in his memoir, *Out of Place* (2000), exposes the unique and ambivalent nature of a threshold condition immediately following the 1967 defeat. The metaphorical border between an exilic condition and a firmly bounded national space suggests a site of contestation, discovery, and new possibilities. This condition of marginality, as revealed in post-1967 Palestinian writing, illustrates a chronotope of threshold in the Palestinian historical experience, opening possibilities of shifts unprepared and paths untrodden. This historical overview illuminates the articulation of liminality and shift in key works written since 1967.

## 2.2 Edward W. Said: A Passage to Palestine?

### *Out of Place* (2000)

The intellectual journey and literary career of Edward W. Said as retrospectively described in his memoir, *Out of Place* (2000), illustrate the centrality of the 1967 war to the evolution of a new identity formation among Palestinian writers. Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, an exiled Palestinian writer, has pointed out that the 1967 defeat proved pivotal to the emergence of what he has called the 'Faust syndrome in Palestinian intellectuals.'<sup>18</sup> As if they had signed a pact with the devil, according to Jabra, those writers suddenly broke with their previous silence and found a medium of expression:

Palestinian intellectuals were suddenly everywhere: writing, teaching, talking, doing things, influencing a whole Arab society in most unexpected ways. They were coping with their sense of loss, turning their exile into force, creating thereby a mystique of being Palestinian.<sup>19</sup>

Emphasising the centrality of the 1967 war in breaking the silence of Palestinian intellectuals in particular, Jabra states that '[b]y 1970, Palestinian poetry and fiction had given Arabic writing everywhere a colouring, a force, a style, distinctively their own.'<sup>20</sup> The influence of exiled Palestinian thinkers in planting the seeds of the renaissance of the intellectual milieu in neighbouring Arab states, as the British historian Arnold Toynbee stated in a conversation he had with Jabra, is similar to that of Greek thinkers who were expelled by the Turks from Byzantium in 1453. Those exiled Greek intellectuals spread throughout medieval Europe and became a major factor in bringing about its renaissance.<sup>21</sup> Said's example is a significant illustration of Toynbee's idea. His contribution to colonial discourse studies reaches beyond the Arab world to announce the advent of a highly politicised critical discourse in Western academia, one that takes account of the colonial other's voice.

To trace Said's new identity formation, I draw on Victor Turner's conceptualisation of liminality in rites of passage as a useful analytical framework for understanding the centrality of the 1967 conflict to Said's intellectual development and literary itinerary from 'separation' to 'reintegration' with Palestine. Whereas for Tawfiq Al-Hakim the 1967 defeat marks 'the return of consciousness,' for Said it embodies the 'ultimate dislocation' for his searching mind, which eventually discovered 'where it had all started, the struggle over Palestine.'<sup>22</sup> Turner has developed the concept of liminality as the most visible expression of anti-structure; a threshold period when continuity of tradition may become uncertain, hierarchies may be reversed, and new perspectives may be enabled.<sup>23</sup> The immediate aftermath of 1967 has turned out to be a liminal phase, a threshold, in Said's rite of passage, characterised by crisis, ambivalence, and anti-structure. This liminal phase becomes a site of self-definition, a space-time for the reassembling of his fractured exile experience along a shared Palestinian past. The greater visibility of Palestine in the works he published in the 1970s and onwards, including *The Question of Palestine* (1979), *After the Last Sky* (1986), *The Politics of Dispossession*

(1994), and *Peace and its Discontent* (1995), to mention a few, clearly illustrate the shift.

The 1967 war marks and extends a liminal phase in Said's intellectual journey as in his writing, separating a past of disengagement from a future of political commitment to what came to be central to his work, 'the Question of Palestine.' Said's pre-1967 period may be said to be characterised by the family's determined suppression of Palestine and political questioning:

It seems inexplicable to me now that having dominated our lives for generations, the problem of Palestine and its tragic loss, which affected virtually everyone we know, deeply changing our world, should have been so relatively repressed, undiscussed, or even remarked on by my parents ... But the repression of Palestine in our lives occurred as part of a larger depoliticization on the part of my parents, who hated and distrusted politics, feeling too precarious in Egypt for participation or even open discussion.<sup>24</sup>

If this silence had been the case while Said and his family were re-establishing their life in Cairo after the 1948 expulsion, his pre-1967 time in America was probably little different. Not only at home, but also during the years of his political disengagement at Columbia University in New York, Palestine was not discussed:

The remoteness of the Palestine I grew up in, my family's silence over its role, and then its long disappearance from our lives, my mother's open discomfort with the subject and later aggressive dislike of both Palestine and politics, my lack of contact with Palestinians during the eleven years of my American education: all this allowed me to live my early American life at a great distance from the Palestine of remote memory, unresolved sorrow, and uncomprehending anger.<sup>25</sup>

For Said, the 1967 war, however, has brought about the marginal crisis, and the transition it has produced illustrates what sociologists such as Everett V. Stonequist would describe as a 'partial adjustment' found through 'identification with the subordinate or "oppressed" group, and perhaps the assumption of a role of leadership in that group.'<sup>26</sup> In Said's intellectual



trajectory, the transition finds form in his identification locally with the cause of Palestine, and more globally with oppressed and colonised groups. This transition can be described in terms of Turner's three-phase rite of passage: separation, liminality, and reintegration. For Turner, that 'period of margin or "liminality"' should be regarded as 'an interstructural situation.'<sup>27</sup> In this intervening liminal phase, the passenger is neither here, nor there; but occupies an ambiguous state in between. This 'unhomely moment,' as Homi Bhabha has observed in a different context, 'relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence.'<sup>28</sup> Said's experience of a marginal crisis summons a connection to the wider political crisis of Palestine.

Said's route from separation from Palestine to reintegration parallels a return from a borderless diasporic existence to a firmly bounded space reconstructed and redefined against a Palestinian nationalist ethos. A survey of Said's 1970s political activity and intellectual productivity reveals a growing concern for the plight of the long marginalised and silenced subject of Palestine. His eventual direct involvement with the PLO, his intervention in Western media with debates and interviews on Palestine, and his re-inscription of Palestinian history in *The Question of Palestine* (1979), offer striking examples. The dislocation Said experienced in 1967 proves instrumental to his formulating a fresh mode of intellectual intervention which 'speaks the truth to power,' and questions structures of silencing. Said concludes the memoir with a remark that further emphasises the centrality of the war to his intellectual development:

And 1967 brought more dislocations, where for me it seemed to embody *the* dislocation that subsumed all the other losses, the disappeared worlds of my youth and upbringing, the unpolitical years of my education, the assumption of disengaged teaching and scholarship at Columbia, and so on. I was no longer the same person after 1967; the shock of that war drove me to where it had all started, the struggle over Palestine.<sup>29</sup>

The unsettling condition of dislocation and marginality reconfigured and reconstituted the political in Said's writing. This pivotal experience turned Said into an organic intellectual, one of Antonio Gramsci's dynamic intellectuals who are actively involved in the struggles of their societies.<sup>30</sup> Said's ethics of intellectual practice is defined by speaking the truth to power. Driven by an ethical obligation to tell the truth, Said, like many Palestinian writers, finds a convenient form in the autobiography to narrate their national history.

'Autobiography,' according to J. M. Coetzee, 'is a kind of writing in which you tell the story of yourself as truthfully as you can, or as truthfully as you can bear to,' or rather as truthfully as you are permitted to.<sup>31</sup> Debating the place of truth in autobiography, J. M. Coetzee argues that

An autobiographer is not only a man who once upon a time lived a life in which he loved, fought, suffered, strove, was misunderstood, and of which he now tells the story; he is also a man engaged in writing a story. That story is written within the limits of a pact, the pact of autobiography.<sup>32</sup>

However, the act of truth-telling is not without 'cost' or 'threat' to the confessing intellectual.<sup>33</sup> Truth-telling and the 'cost' of truth-telling can be measured by the space defined by the intellectual's responsibility to reality and the limits enforced by institutional agency, between speaking the truth to power and the permission to narrate. In 'Truth in Autobiography,' Coetzee reflects on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* in terms of what he has described as 'the economy of confession' whereby 'everything shameful is valuable: every secret or shameful appetite is confessable currency.'<sup>34</sup> For Coetzee, even the time that the autobiographer chooses to write the story of his/her life is part of the process of 'making' the truth, which unveils, through writing, the intellectual's present state of mind and perception of past events and experiences. Said wrote his autobiography during the fading years of his life when he was struggling with Leukemia, and more specifically when his war with disease and death was coming to a tragic end. Under these conditions, the

'confessant' was less frustrated by the cost of truth-telling and the threat of confession than by the absence of a version of truth that, if remains untold, his own death would wrap in permanent silence. The writing of his autobiography turns out to be a revelation of, and a reflection on, the shameful silence on Palestine that has characterized the beginnings of his intellectual life. In *Out of Place*, Said appeared more outspoken and more determined than ever to confess to himself and to his readers the truth about Palestine and about his family's protracted evasion of the subject.

However, beyond the limits of the local experience of Palestine, Said's post-1967 politicised discourse has had a global impact, as it has shifted focus in literary criticism to a fresh perspective from which the construction of far-flung places in Western discourse came to be approached. This commitment to intervene in structures of representation in Western hegemonic discourse and to speak for the marginalised and the silenced, as foregrounded in *Orientalism* (1978), and further developed in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), has mapped the framework for what came to be the postcolonial school of thought. Following Said, postcolonial theorists have concerned themselves with global issues relevant to the colonial world across historical and geographical borders. The global impact of this empowering and liberating marginality has led Said to choose permanent residence in the liminal space between the politics of the local and the reach to the global.

### **2.3 Halim Barakat: River without Bridges**

The centrality of the 1967 war as a liminal phase in framing the political identity of the Arab intellectual, as Jabra and Said have shown, finds literary representation in Halim Barakat's fiction. The 'ultimate dislocation' that evoked the 'Faust Syndrome' and the formation of the political identity of Palestinians echoes clearly in Barakat's representations of the 1967 war. Born in Syria and raised in Beirut, Barakat is a novelist and an academic who studied and taught

at different American universities.<sup>35</sup> This prolific writer has paid particular attention to the 1967 war and its repercussions in Arab societies. Three of his works have direct relevance to the June War. Two are novels: *Sittat Ayyam* (1961), translated into English as *Six Days* (1990), and *'Awdat at-Tair ila al-Bahr* (1969), translated into English as *Days of Dust* (1983). The third, *River without Bridges: A Study of the Exodus of the 1967 Palestinian Arab Refugees* (1968), is a sociological study written in collaboration with his fellow sociology professor, Peter Dodd.<sup>36</sup> For Barakat, 1967 was a liminal moment separating a past of absence from a future of presence, a past of disengagement from a future of participation.

Associated with notions of liminality, frontiers, and displacement are metaphors of the river, the bridge, and the Flying Dutchman that compellingly resonate in Barakat's writings on the 1967 conflict.<sup>37</sup> The Jordan River has become for all Palestinians a river without bridges; a liminal space spanning two worlds: the West Bank and the East Bank; homeland and refugee camps; place and placelessness. However, the crossing of this river became a one-way route; an exodus into exile with no return:

From a high spot in Amman, Ramzy Safady gazed down at the River Jordan. His heartbeats were getting faster, or slowing down perhaps- he did not know which. The land beyond the river was now out of bounds to him. He could not cross the Jordan. Previously he had not been able to visit Haifa or Jaffa or Acre or Safad or Nazareth or Ramla or Lydda; but now he could no longer visit Jerusalem or Ramallah or Bethlehem or Hebron or Nablus or Jenin or Qalqilya or Tulkarm.<sup>38</sup>

The exile's gaze over the river into Palestine reveals little more than further displacements. Barakat's post-1967 Palestinian narratives reconfigure the river as a frontier demarcating the interior of Palestine from the vast sea of exteriority.

For Barakat, the trope of the Flying Dutchman, which appears in both *Six Days* and *Days of Dust*, represents Palestine:

The thought struck Ramzy that his country was like the *Flying Dutchman*, the shouts of the students like those of the sailors when they sighted land. He had been listening the previous day to Wagner's opera about an enchanted ship unable to reach harbour, sailing the seas till eternity. The captain had sworn that he would circle round a mountainous peak guarded by fierce gales even if he had to sail on till judgement day. The gods, or the devils, were angry when they heard his oath and condemned him to sail on in exile forever. He could break the spell only by finding a woman true to him till death. The *Flying Dutchman* was permitted to return to land once every seven years so that he might search for such a woman.<sup>39</sup>

In this metaphoric structure, the legendary Flying Dutchman returns from a vast sea of exile at moments of thresholds like those of wars and conflicts, seeking salvation and return to the land. In Barakat's literary representations, the 1967 war forms one such historical moment of possibility for the Flying Dutchman and for Palestine:

War had been declared. The *Flying Dutchman* could see land, cliffs towering in the distance. Hope was rising again. It seemed the ship could dock safely. The sailors' shouts filled the air. The cheers of the university students in Beirut acclaimed the return to Palestine. Voices were rising in all parts of the Arab states.

'Once more Palestine, like the *Flying Dutchman*, had been given the opportunity to reach its goal.'<sup>40</sup>

### *Six Days (1961)*

Written and published a few years before 1967, *Six Days* has anticipated in many ways both the outbreak of the Six Day War and the subsequent defeat of the Palestinian people's struggle against erasure and transfer. Here, Barakat is a telling example of the writer as 'a seer able to realize through anticipation both the bitfalls and the progressive opportunities of history as it unfolds.'<sup>41</sup> The novel tells of the imaginary town of Dayr Albahr, whose inhabitants have received an ultimatum demanding that they surrender within six days or be wiped out.

The inhabitants of Dayr Albahr had decided to stand steadfast in the face of the threat from the enemy who already occupied the country, and now was positioned just south of the city. They will not abandon their city, whose land, air and shade of trees they have lived with for thousands of years. Above all, they cannot surrender. The enemy's threat denies them their very existence.<sup>42</sup>

In this settler colonial scenario, the native inhabitants have to choose between the surrender to and the struggle against transfer. Although defeat seems looming, Suhail, the protagonist, remains committed to struggle, promoting resistance among the dwellers of Dayr Albahr.

In the midst of the great uncertainty during the liminal temporality of the six days, Suhail expresses the inevitability of defeat:

He utters, 'A great nation will fall,' as though he were the oracle at Delphi, engulfed by the smoke of the sacrifice. He merges with the fog, trees, soil, and rocks: 'Death, fear, and challenge are we.'<sup>43</sup>

To the surprise of Dayr Albahr, the occupiers burn the city and annihilate its inhabitants one day before the deadline set in the ultimatum. Only Suhail, who has been detained by the occupying settlers, survives to tell the story of his erased town. The curiously prophetic potential of Barakat's novel, whose title and plot tells of a real war yet to come in 1967, reveals a significant development in Arab writers' engagement with politicised discourse. Here, I explore how Barakat's pre-1967 novel, *Six Days*, articulates a settler colonial scenario in which the indigenes are threatened by erasure and transfer. The city of Dayr Albahr represents post-1948 Palestine in the liminal space that immediately precedes the transitional events of 1967. The settlers' threat to annihilate the native population of the town suggests a settler colonial framework, based primarily, as Patrick Wolf has argued, on the elimination of the native inhabitants.<sup>44</sup>

Facing annihilation and total erasure from history at the hands of occupying settlers, Dayr Albahr enters a liminal space. Suhail clearly articulates this liminality, observing that 'the hands of the big clock are motionless,'<sup>45</sup>

referring to the liminal temporality which Dayr Albahr inhabits between occupation and erasure. In that liminal temporality between resistance and submission; between action and invisibility; between enunciation and silence, the native population of the city chooses to cross the border into the fraught realm of national self-determination. While they are waiting for the occupiers to destroy Dayr Albahr, representatives from the town assemble to make a decision. Suhail, the promoter of resistance, has never been more determined than when he confirms at the assembly: 'the question was surrender or death. And the answer was simple: death or victory.'<sup>46</sup>

After the decision has been made, Suhail retreats from communal life to nature in order to be able to re-assess the situation in isolation from the community's position and from the rhetoric of its leaders. In these moments of self-definition, Suhail seeks unity with nature, promoting a form of resistance that involves escape from 'the deceit, lies and hypocrisy' of the city and return to nature.<sup>47</sup> Elias Khoury describes Suhail as a rebel figure who resists power coalitions and maintains a space of scepticism in order to be able to reflect and contemplate societal problems away from the interests of those in power.<sup>48</sup> Khoury emphasises that Suhail's isolation from society should not be misunderstood as escape but as a necessary retreat to re-evaluate and re-construct the present turmoil.

Although Suhail realises that the drastic imbalance in power relations will only lead to an inescapable defeat, he chooses to resist. However, rather than joining the armed resistance of the city with a group of youths who started training in preparation for confrontation with the occupiers, Suhail retreats to nature, evoking connection to the land. In so doing, Barakat's fictional character promotes a counter-discourse to settler colonialism, one based on the natives' claim to the land:

He leans against the trunk of the oak. A thick fog is rolling in, surrounding Dayr Albahr, separating it from the rest of the world. The city seems to float apart from the pines, the oak, and the orchard. Red

bricks fuse with the gray fog. The city is a ship from the land of Canaan, plowing the sea for the first time, defying certain death. Oh, mighty Goliath, you honoured the rules of battle, but not the shepherd who tricked you into your death ... He cannot bring himself to be part of this place, nor to be separate from it. He does not want the mindless stability. The fog reaches him. The ship faces death without oars ... And the smoke of the sacrifice already covers him. He melts into the things around him; the fog, trees, stones, and ground.<sup>49</sup>

During these moments of self-discovery, Suhail's monologues include direct allusions to Palestine, thus establishing the link with the imaginary space of Dayr Albahr. His choice is based on the awareness that, through rhetorical resistance, nations survive the violence of erasure and re-write their historical experience. The settlers' understanding of the power of rhetoric in both legitimating and dismantling settler colonialism makes them fully aware of the major threat posed by Suhail. In reaction, he is detained by the settlers until the town is completely destroyed. The final scene shows settlers releasing Suhail when his words are no longer a threat:

A cloud of smoke is carried by the sea air toward the mountains. He says nothing. He can do nothing but stare. A wind blows in from the sea, turns on itself, carrying him and throwing him in a rocky valley. Wailing runs with the moans of the waves.  
'Now do you understand why we no longer need you to talk?'<sup>50</sup>

For the colonial settlers of Dayr Albahr, narrative erasures are no less important than the demolition of the town and the annihilation of its native inhabitants.

Despite the erasure of Dayr Albahr, the novel closes with a note of hope. The survival of Suhail and the ashes of the burnt-out ruins will continue to bear witness to the settlers' 'founding violence' and to the natives' claims to the land. Suhail optimistically affirms: 'Ashes fertilize the land.' The settler replies: 'But we will reap it for ourselves.' Suhail, however, defiantly interrupts: 'Only for a short time.'<sup>51</sup> Barakat's *Six Days* reveals the ethos of the liminal temporality that precedes the Arabs' defeat in 1967. It suggests the Arab writer's awareness of the inevitability of confrontation with the settlers and the necessity of



developing an anti-colonial discourse based on the centrality of the land to Palestinian resistance.

### *Days of Dust* (1969)

Barakat's next novel, *Days of Dust*, revisits 1967 Palestine, not from the imaginary space of Dayr Albahr, but rather from real places contextualising the border experience of Palestinians in the immediate aftermath of the June War. The story of Ramzy Safady, a professor of sociology at the American University in Beirut and a Palestinian exile since 1948, intersects with the stories of other Palestinian exiles across different Palestinian and Arab cities. The structure of *Days of Dust* consists of three sections: the first part, 'The Threshold,' and the third part, 'Numerous Days of Dust,' are shorter than the second part, 'Voices Surge and the South Wind Rages' which breaks into six sub-sections narrating the events of the six days of the war. This tripartite structure begins with the immediate post-war period between 11 and 20 June, then shifts back in time to recount the events of the six days of war, and changes temporality again to continue its account of the post-war events with which the novel started.

The novel mirrors the emergence of two modes of resistance, cultural and armed, as represented by the characters of Ramzy Safady, the intellectual, and Azmy Abdel Qadir, the guerrilla fighter. While Ramzy decides to liberate intellectuals and take action by conducting a sociological study on a refugee camp in Amman, Azmy sets himself free from the confines of state politics and joins a group of Palestinian guerrillas in Jerusalem:

Azmy Abdel Qadir was continuing to fight in the streets of Jerusalem. He no longer was concerned for his own life. He moves on from one place to the next, hiding behind doors and windows, always searching for the face of an Israeli soldier. The Arab Legion had withdrawn ... but he said he would not retreat so long as he was able to use his other hand to pull the trigger.<sup>52</sup>

Despite the tragedy of defeat and mass expulsion, the narrative closes with a note of hope, as '[i]t occurred to Ramzy that the guerrillas were the only bridge that would take the Arabs to the future that would take them beyond the walls of the tragedy.'<sup>53</sup> As the novel promises, the Flying Dutchman will not remain rootless and exiled. Through the combined endeavour of Arab intellectuals and guerrilla fighters, bridges to the land may gradually be constructed and the Flying Dutchman may eventually be saved and return home.

Barakat's two novels discursively perform acts of cultural resistance. As counter-narratives, they reclaim the memory of the 1967 war, and reconstruct its history. In contrast to the explicit treatment of the question of Palestine in *Days of Dust*, *Six Days* signifies Palestine only indirectly. Barakat's pre-1967 veiled rendition of the Arab-Israeli conflict has shifted to a more overt representation in his post-1967 text. Symbols and invented designations are replaced with actual geographical places, real public figures, historical incidents and contemporaneous media debates. The intellectual evolution in Barakat's writing illustrates how the 1967 defeat transformed silence into engagement, and alienation into participation.

The character of Ramzy, whose name translates as 'my symbol,' has autobiographical implications: both Ramzy and Barakat are Arab intellectuals and academics with degrees earned from Western universities. Following the war, the character Ramzy Safady, like the author Barakat, travels to Amman in order to interview Palestinian refugees. Barakat's interviews would later form the material for *River Without Bridges*, a sociological study conducted in collaboration with Peter Dodd, his fellow professor of sociology at the American University in Beirut.<sup>54</sup> From these interviews and from news reports in the Arab press, Barakat learned of most of the events and scenes described in *Days of Dust*, particularly those of the refugee camps in Amman.

With its rifts in time, the narrative structurally imitates the rupture that the War has created in Palestinian consciousness. Associated with the war, metaphors of 'purgatory,' 'threshold,' 'bridge' resonate throughout the

narrative, revealing the immediate aftermath of the 1967 war as a liminal phase. On the first day of war, all the Palestinian characters in the narrative who had been uprooted in 1948 anticipate 'a threshold of the future.'<sup>55</sup> For Ramzy, 'the war will prove a purgatory for the Arabs,' and 'purgatory is a journey of hope.'<sup>56</sup> This note of hope is linked with the possibilities that a liminal phase usually unfolds. Given that the first part in the novel is entitled 'The Threshold,' the 1967 war could be interpreted from the perspective of Bakhtin's chronotope of threshold. '[H]ighly charged with emotion and value, the chronotope of *threshold*,' as Bakhtin describes, 'is connected with the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life.'<sup>57</sup> In *Days of Dust*, the 1967 war 'was a threshold of the future not merely for Abdel Rahman but for Ramzy and Taha and Azmy and for all those who had been uprooted in 1948.'<sup>58</sup>

The novel develops in the form of numerous episodes, shifting the scene of action across various Arab cities and villages including Beirut, Amman, Jerusalem, Jericho, Hebron, Sabastia, and Beit Nuba. In his introduction to the novel, Said notes that Barakat's *Days of Dust* shares with post-1967 prose 'the interest in intense particularity,' which takes form in the 'amplification of six days into a wide range of geographical and emotional voyages.'<sup>59</sup> However, not only through the scenic presentation of action does a post-1967 sense of discontinuity manifest itself, but also through the tripartite structure of the novel. Said establishes the link between form and content, suggesting a direct connection between the 'scene' method and representations of Palestine:

the scene does not merely reflect the crisis, or historical duration, or the paradox of the present. Rather, the scene *is contemporaneity* in its most problematic and even rarified form. In no place can one see this more effectively than in prose directly concerned with the events in Palestine.<sup>60</sup>

This particular contemporaneity of the Palestinians is clearly reflected in their exile and geographical dispersal—an existential condition that can be effectively presented by what Said has termed 'episodism.' Barakat's *Days of Dust* reconstructs the 1967 war and its socio-historical context through reports

from Arab radio broadcasts and conversations between geographically diverse characters. The swift shifts in the narrative from one scene to another allow the novelist to render the Palestinians' sense of unity with their land despite occupation, borders, expulsion, and geographical dispersal. Barakat's novel reveals how Palestinian characters challenge their post-1967 condition as a stateless community by constructing an imagined geography with firm borders of a shared national past and a common destiny. While the setting moves from Beirut to Amman to the West Bank, Palestine continues to link Palestinians in internal and external exiles; Ramzy Safady in Beirut shares feelings and concerns with Azmy Abdel Qadir in Jerusalem and other characters in refugee camps in Amman.

Among their concerns is the need to break the silence and reclaim the active engagement of all social and educational institutions, particularly universities, in the national work at times of political crisis. Through its fictional university professor, the narrative criticises the pre-war disengagement of Arab universities:

It pained him that Arab universities were isolated and living in either the past or the future. It had become accepted that students not participate [sic] in the present. They were being trained to believe that students must prepare for the future by attending lectures, studying, learning, and developing their potential without actual participation ... Yet the universities, both in their own view and in that of most Arabs and Arab governments, were an ideal place, divorced from life itself.<sup>61</sup>

Ramzy despairs at the idealised role and the thwarted potential of the university during times of crisis. Ramzy regretfully emphasises that he does not 'know of one colleague or student who was active on behalf of his country at its darkest hour.'<sup>62</sup> However, the fictional world of the narrative captures the development of a fresh perspective from which Arab writers, university professors and intellectuals have begun to reassess and redefine their role in times of political crisis.<sup>63</sup>

For Barakat, the post-1967 return of consciousness, as Al-Hakim has termed it, involves the writer's engagement in the politics of narrative and counter-narrative. In the few days following the war, this new awareness translates into action when Ramzy leads a group of the AUB university professors and students to investigate the 1967 Palestinian exodus through field studies of refugee camps in Amman. Ramzy suggests:

What do you think about sending a group of professors and students from the social sciences to Jordan to investigate the circumstances of the exodus, the types of people who have been refugees, and what they experienced during the war. No one made that sort of study in 1948, and Israel was able to mislead the whole world about the circumstances and significance of the flight of the refugees.<sup>64</sup>

One aim of the study, as the characters agree, is to write and disseminate a narrative of the 1967 defeat and the exodus that followed in its wake from a Palestinian perspective, rather than leaving the palimpsest of 1967 Palestine to the monologism of the victor's inscriptions.

Barakat's concern for reconstructing the events of 1967 highlights a reaction to the gaping silence that followed the 1948 *nakba*. For Barakat, silence contributes to protract the defeat and the invisibility of Arabs and Palestinians. The silence of Arab intellectuals and writers during the events of 1967 has left the scene to the full play of false reports from Arab radio broadcasts. The novel shows Arab intellectuals and writers who have remained silent and refrained from voicing their doubts to be partly responsible for the defeat and the delusion of the public. Deluded Arab societies, prepared to celebrate a historical victory, woke up on 10 June shocked by the defeat and the subsequent Israeli annexation of more Arab territories. As *Days of Dust* has revealed, the absence of intellectuals from the scene contributes to the delusion of the public by the state's dissemination of false reports. A revealing conversation between Ramzy and his fellow academic Kamil Salama articulates the awakening of the nationalist consciousness of the Arab intellectual:

He bumped into his colleague Kamil Salama and commented, 'Don't you think it's a crime we aren't able to do anything?'

'You know, you and Nadir and Bashir are all asking that question. But not me.'

Ramzy felt a little angry: 'I don't know how you can escape asking that question.'

'It's very simple. As university teachers we are able to operate during peacetime. Whatever we do in wartime should be a continuation of our search for the truth. War is a passing phenomenon. My concern is with teaching and doing research.'<sup>65</sup>

This conversation is interrupted by false reports from Cairo announcing that 'all the Arab frontal commands had begun moving toward the interior of Israel, having promised one another to meet in Tel Aviv.'<sup>66</sup> The juxtaposition of Kamil's retreat from political engagement and his commitment to disinterested research with the public delusion by false media coverage destabilises his conceptualisation of the 'search for the truth' and affirms the Saidian alternative position of speaking the truth to power as the main task of the intellectual. Given the discursive consequences of the gaping silence of Arab writers on the 1948 *nakba*, Barakat's novel both reflects and calls attention to the increasing imperative of immediate reconstructions of the 1967 events by Arab writers.

By representing the demolition of the Moroccan Quarter and the town of Qalqilya, Barakat's novel has anticipated historical accounts by both Arab and Israeli writers that reveal the continuity of structures of erasure in 1967 with settler colonial practice in 1948. Describing the total erasure of the Moroccan Quarter of East Jerusalem on 11 June and the expulsion of its inhabitants, the narrator tells how '[s]cores of houses in the so-called Moroccan quarter had collapsed before the bulldozers. Hundreds of homeless from that quarter were wandering through the city's streets, moving like ants through its body.'<sup>67</sup> A similar scene from the town of Qalqilya discloses what Nur Masalha has later explored as a continuation of the ideology of transfer that has informed Zionist settler colonialism since 1948. However, the only Israeli historical account cited by Nur Masalha for evidence of the 1967 transfer was

Uzi Benziman's *Jerusalem: A City Without a Wall*, published in 1973 four years after Barakat's novel. According to Masalha, cabinet communiqués of Israeli leaders as cited in Benziman's book reveal the demolition of the Moroccan Quarter in 1967 as a deliberate act and a careful plan of transfer. This systematic policy of eviction and demolition, according to Masalha, was evident in numerous locations in the West Bank including, in addition to the Moroccan Quarter, the three Latrun villages, the border towns of Qalqilyah and Tulkarm, and the Hebron District.<sup>68</sup> The Moroccan Quarter, which was adjacent to the Wailing Wall, was demolished to create space for visitors to the Wall, thus hiding the Islamic and Arab identity of the Old City in order to resurrect its Jewish character. Driven by the same settler logic, Canada Park was erected on the 20,000 dunums of the three Latrun villages. Compared to the mass expulsion of Palestinians in 1948, Masalha notes the geographically selective character of its 1967 version, with Israel focusing on areas endowed with biblical history in order to justify the expulsion of the Palestinians.<sup>69</sup> Barakat's very act of writing the novel is an important contribution to the political engagement of Arab writers with the subject of Palestine. By reconstructing the events of 1967, Barakat's novel re-inscribes what the settlers' narrative might have omitted, left out, or manipulated.

Besides engaging with settler colonial forms of erasure and transfer, *Days of Dust* points to areas of discrepancy between Israeli and Arabic narratives. Through its reconstruction of events, the novel engages with reports on the Israeli use of napalm in the war.<sup>70</sup> The post-war delegation of doctors, professors, and students to Amman under the lead of Ramzy confirms Israel's use of napalm bombs as a terror factor forcing panic-stricken refugees from Jerusalem, Hebron, and Ramallah to surge through Jericho, seeking refuge on the other side of the bridge. While 'Pamela and his friend Bashir were treating those who had been burned by napalm,' 'Ramzy was observing, listening, questioning, and taking pictures.'<sup>71</sup> The case of the Palestinian character Taha Kanaan best illustrates this memory of trauma in Ramzy's consciousness:

Taha Kanaan's screams had pursued Ramzy ever since he had arrived in Amman, on the day after the war had ended. Ramzy had walked through the streets of the city and had gone from one hospital to another. Taha Kanaan's napalm-burned face stuck to him. Ramzy wished the sea would surge up to his land and take with it everything in its path. He wished the sea could wash dust from his face.<sup>72</sup>

The discontinuity in the temporal structure of the novel allows the narrator to return to the story of Taha Kanaan with a detailed description that shows the link between the Palestinian exodus from Jericho in 1967 and the Israelis' use of napalm in the war:

They found the whole camp ablaze. Tongues of flame were turning the night into day. The firemen directed their hoses at the fire, but it only burned more fiercely. It seemed to flow along with water, even darting out over its surface. They were amazed. They did not realize that the camp was alight with napalm. Everything, even the water, was burning.<sup>73</sup>

For Ramzy, the napalm continues to shape his memory of Palestine, as he would imagine:

A napalm bomb burned my face while I remained here, safe, in Beirut. I was murdered in the streets of Jerusalem, but there are no vultures to devour my body. I am an old quarter of Jerusalem, destroyed, then occupied by the enemy. Refugees erect their tents on my face and chest.<sup>74</sup>

This historical trauma reaches out beyond the borders of Palestine to the exiles in far-flung places, who constantly re-shape their collective memory and re-define their national identity in terms of a shared traumatic past.

Uncertainty continues to surround the events of that year. In contrast to the abundant and growing number of publications on 1948, new historians have paid less attention to disentangling the myths woven into the Israeli narrative of 1967. Contributions by Ilan Pappé and, only recently, by Avi Shlaim, suggest a turn by the Israeli new historians to venture into this fraught terrain. While Pappé emphasises that since the 1950s Israel had developed plans for a swift occupation of the West Bank in order to create 'more defensible



borders' by retrieving what its group of 'redeemers' call Judea and Samaria,<sup>75</sup> Shlaim re-produces received Israeli narratives. He insists that Israel in 1967, contrary to the Arab claims of a premeditated war plot, led 'a defensive war, not an offensive war, let alone an expansionist war,' for which it had no choice, as its army was only responding to Nasser's moves.<sup>76</sup> Shlaim concludes that, in the light of newly declassified Israeli documents, 'the theory of a premeditated plan is simply wrong,' and that 'territorial war aims only emerged during the course of the fighting.'<sup>77</sup> Clearly, Barakat's immediate literary intervention and sociological study of the 1967 exodus challenges what Masalha has explained as the relationship between knowledge, power, and history writing manifest in Israeli revisionist narration: 'History is mostly written and rewritten by those in power – in possession of records and state papers – that is by conquerors and colonizers.'<sup>78</sup> Barakat's literary representation, along with accounts published in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod's anthology, *The Arab-Israeli Confrontation of June 1967: An Arab Perspective* (1970), suggests the concern of Arab writers to defy silence by constructing the history of the 1967 conflict in their own terms. Unlike 1948, 'the outpouring of print after 1967 suggests a vast effort at reconstructing that history and that reality.'<sup>79</sup>

Barakat's writings anticipate both the historical event and the historical discourse of the 1967 defeat and the continuity of settlers' structures of erasure, suggesting the engagement of the Arab writer in the politics of Palestine. For Barakat, the 1967 defeat promoted the ideal of the revolutionary novel, one which shifted focus away from celebrating an idealised vision of reality to generating a revolutionary consciousness premised upon the struggle for liberation and engagement in the politics of national narrative.<sup>80</sup> In *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and the State* (1993), Barakat situates both *Six Days* and *Days of Dust* within the framework of what he has termed the 'revolutionary Arab novel.' Tension in these novels takes the form of a struggle with external forces as embodied largely in the domination of repressive political regimes and settler colonial powers. For Barakat, the revolutionary ideal of depicting

'the plight of the disinherited and uprooted' is clearly connected with the struggle against settler colonialism in Palestine.<sup>81</sup> The next section explores how Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* articulates this emerging revolutionary rhetoric in depicting the plight of Palestinian workers in the Occupied Territories.

## 2.4 Sahar Khalifeh: Crossing Borders, Confronting Frontiers

### *Wild Thorns* (1976)

Sahar Khalifeh's *As-Sabbar* (1976), first translated into English in 1985 as *Wild Thorns*, articulates the ambivalence of Palestinians' border experience.<sup>82</sup> In the novel, two manifestations of the border interrelate: the first border separates the West Bank and Jordan and the second is the Green Line that segregates post-1948 Israel from post-1967 Occupied Territories. The overlapping experiences of Usama al-Karmi's return to Nablus through Amman on the one hand, and Adil al-Karmi's daily crossings of the Green Line from Nablus to Tel Aviv on the other, reconfigure the ambivalence of the border in Palestinian consciousness. Each of the two experiences of border-crossing in the novel engages with a particular shift in post-1967 Palestinian self-representation. In so doing, Khalifeh's novel reveals the more complicated reality of life under occupation, which goes far beyond 'the simple dichotomy of a brutal occupier and an oppressed occupied.'<sup>83</sup> The novel sheds critical light on the increasing tension between nationalist and existential struggles in post-1967 Nablus through representations of the Palestinian labourer and the resistance fighter. '[T]he emerging consciousness since, perhaps, the 1967 defeat and failure of nationalist ideology,' writes Muhsin Al Musawi, 'alerts writers to new ways and methods of looking upon the present in its past and burgeoning future.'<sup>84</sup> One of these ways, illustrated by Khalifeh in *Wild Thorns*, is to explore the ambivalence of a Palestinian community living in the newly-occupied territory of the West Bank and torn between their national cause and existential crisis.

## Crossing the Bridge from Amman to Nablus

On the bridge, the movement forward from Amman to the West Bank parallels a return to memories of the land before the occupation: 'the scent from the arched pines overwhelmed him [Usama], reminding him of what to expect beyond the bridge.' Through reports of his thoughts and feelings, the narrative engages with a politicised discourse of nature. Memories of the 'pine forests of Jirzim, of al-Tur, of Ramallah. Pine trees, prickly pears, almonds, grapes, figs, olives. Mount Sinai and that "peaceful land" that had never known peace. No; perhaps it had, once. The land of milk and honey, "the promised land"' disintegrate at the site of the border.<sup>85</sup> Usama's return to Nablus from Amman after years of exile effects a critique of Israeli settler colonialism:

The land around the barracks set up to process entry into the occupied West Bank was grey, devoid of even the smallest shrub. Skilled hands had removed all the natural ground cover of spring to prevent anything undesirable from slipping across the border, to keep out anyone bent on challenging state security. New shoots of mallow had been recently uprooted and their green leaves lay piled on the pavement in front of the barracks, casting soft shadows on the dusty, barren ground.<sup>86</sup>

This returning exile does not have to walk far inside the land before he sees the erosion of the natural landscape of the land by settlers' machinery. The site of the border, then, serves to demythologise the settlers' mythic slogan of 'making the desert bloom.'<sup>87</sup>

*Wild Thorns*, however, complicates the Palestinian border experience, especially when Usama's border-narrative overlaps with that of his cousin, Adil. The first designates the external border experienced by refugees to Arab states, and the other represents internal borders such as the Green Line, the Separation Wall, checkpoints, and barbed wires experienced by those who have remained under occupation. While Usama crosses the external border intent on becoming a resistance fighter and determined to bomb settlers' targets, Adil, at a time of economic deprivation, finds himself forced to cross the internal border into booming Tel Aviv in order to provide for his family. At those moments in

the text when the two routes of Usama and Adil intersect, their border experiences are challenged by the question of what matters more: resistance or survival?

### **Crossing the Green Line**

The relation between the two zones across the Green Line, which Adil crosses on a daily basis has been recently explored by Lorenzo Veracini as a shift from settler colonialism to colonial formations:

In theoretical terms, one crucial distinction between colonialism and settler colonialism as separate formations is that the first aims to perpetuate itself whereas the latter aims to supersede itself. The difference is absolutely critical: while a colonial society is successful only if the separation between colonizer and colonized is retained, a settler colonial project is ultimately successful only when it extinguishes itself—that is, when the settlers cease to be defined as such and become ‘natives,’ and their position becomes normalized.<sup>88</sup>

While emphasising that settler colonial objectives have informed the pre-1948, post-1948, and post-1967 practice of Zionist settlers, Veracini points to a distinction between settler colonial formations in the Occupied Territories from what came to be Israel proper. This ‘other shift,’ according to Veracini, ‘involves a transition from a system of relationships that can be understood as *settler colonial* to a relational system crucially characterised by *colonial forms*.’ Thus, the ‘classic’ model of settler colonialism does not apply in the 1967 territories.<sup>89</sup> Instead, the reciprocal constitution and dialectical representation of coloniser and colonised, characteristic of colonial forms, becomes deeply entrenched and strictly maintained by borders such as the Green Line, checkpoints, and highways. Moreover, the maximal exploitation of labour and resources typical of colonial forms which Adil and other Palestinian labourers experience clearly represents this ‘other shift.’

If Usama’s border narrative reveals the settlers’ abuse of natural landscapes for security measures, Adil’s border journey suggests a criticism of

the settler's economic policy in the Occupied Territories. Aryeh Arnon discusses two modes of economic policies promoted after 1967: the integrationist and the protectionist. While the pro-integrationist camp advocates the integration of the Palestinians from the Occupied Territories into the Israeli economy, the protectionist policy prevents Palestinian products from competing with the Israeli market. The result of this peculiar manipulation of trade and labour, according to Arnon, is a 'partial' and 'involuntary' economic integration.<sup>90</sup> Khalifeh's representation of 1967 Palestine illustrates this partial and involuntary economic integration of the Occupied Territories through characters' reports of the relation between Israel proper on the one hand and the markets and resources of the West Bank on the other. Palestinian characters buy and eat 'Israeli rice, Israeli tahina and Israeli sugar. Commodities lose their nationality as soon as they reach Eliat.'<sup>91</sup> The West Bank is integrated only partially as a capitalist market for Israeli products sold at cheap prices, thus competing with and threatening the local Palestinian economy. While portraying Adil's border-crossing, *Wild Thorns* reveals the uneven economic development of the two zones divided by the Green Line. This polarity is manifested when the scene shifts from the dull, frustrated world of Nablus to the vibrant uproar of Tel Aviv's factories: 'The noise of machinery filled the air with an infernal din. Bulldozers and electric saws roared, cement mixers screeched, axes and hammers thudded and banged relentlessly.'<sup>92</sup>

In similar ways, the integration of Palestinian labour in the Israeli economy is only partial and involuntary. The economic deprivation has led destitute Palestinians from the West Bank to cross the frontier to the coloniser's zone in search of job opportunities. In the novel,

A man from the upper echelons of Palestinian society was saying, 'Employment inside Israel is something that's actually been imposed on our workers. We are not to blame and neither is our social structure. It's the occupation.'<sup>93</sup>

Palestinian labourers are deprived of the rights enjoyed by Israelis. As a result, the local land owners fail to cultivate their lands. However, even those farmers who cultivated the land and harvested the crops were frustrated by the Israelis' flooding of the Palestinian markets with crops sold at lower prices.

Adil, however, represents only one case of the Palestinian worker besides two other cases in the novel: Zuhdi and Abu Sabir. While Adil belongs to the upper-middle class, the other two are members of the working class. Under occupation, class distinctions melt into the pot of collective deprivation. 'Together with the Palestinian citizens of Israel,' writes Ilan Pappé, the population of the West Bank 'provided nearly a quarter of the labour in Israeli industry in the mid-1970s, and made up 50 per cent of the workforce in construction and agriculture.'<sup>94</sup> Adil's family, although it still owns land, fails to cultivate it. Destitute Palestinian labourers cross interior and exterior borders in search for bread. Adil is, then, left with no other choice but to work in an Israeli factory in order to provide for his family. Through the other two examples, Zuhdi and Abu Sabir, Khalifeh lays bare the injustices befalling 'these Palestinian workers [who] were badly paid and treated, and had no social security, but nonetheless earned more money than they would within their own territory.'<sup>95</sup> Losing four fingers from his right hand while working in a Tel Aviv factory, Abu Sabir faces the injustices and inhumanity of his Israeli employer, who refuses to take him in one of the many ambulances waiting there:

'Where is the ambulance?' cried Adil.

'They refused to let him have one.'

'What? I don't believe it!'

'It's true. Abu Sabir doesn't have a work permit, so he's not covered by insurance.'

Adil ran off to the information office. The Jew apologized politely: 'I'm sorry,' he said, shaking his head. 'We can get help only for those who have work permits. It's against regulations. I'm sorry, friend.'

'But the ambulances are just standing there doing nothing.'

'Sorry, friend.'<sup>96</sup>

Abu Sabir represents the plight of many Palestinians who cross the Green Line only to be hired as unskilled workers without insurance. In the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinians face the double burden of occupation both by Israel and inside its workplaces.

Khalifeh's representation of post-1967 Palestine sheds light on the poor conditions of Palestinian workers in the Occupied Territories. Elaborating on the daily routine of those Palestinian workers, Pappé writes:

It consisted of daily commuting, beginning at sunrise at an Israeli checkpoint, where they were quite often subjected to maltreatment and harassment. From there they moved to areas referred to as 'the slave market', where prospective Israeli employers would choose the lucky ones as workers for the day... At the end of the day they would be paid wages that are pittance by Israeli standards, but better than Jordanian or Egyptian wages.<sup>97</sup>

The segregationist policy of the Israeli employers goes beyond the mere inequality of wages. Complaining about the racist treatment of work owners, a Palestinian worker in the novel reflects: 'there's a big difference between Muhammad and Cohen: Muhammad gets the heavy work, Cohen the light.'<sup>98</sup>

### **Resistance or Survival: 'There's More Than One Dimension to the Picture'**

The economic deprivation of Palestinians illustrated by Adil and other workers generates the novel's main dispute: what matters more in the Occupied Territories—resistance or survival? With particular focus on the ambivalence of West Bank labourers inside Israel, Khalifeh reveals what Arab revolutionary rhetoric has overlooked. The narrative raises more questions than it answers. The controversy of whether resistance matters more than survival, and whether post-1967 Palestine lives under 'occupation or disintegration,' are left unresolved. Contrary to the one-dimensional perspective of the revolutionary rhetoric dominating representations of Palestine, Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* insists that 'there's more than one dimension to the picture.'<sup>99</sup>

In the face of this multi-dimensional conflict between survival under occupation and national liberation, the novel re-defines resistance, revealing a more complicated and multi-dimensional reality than what appears to the observer across the border. 'There's more than one dimension to the picture,' Adil relentlessly repeats throughout the novel.<sup>100</sup> Adil and his cousin Usama represent two distinct routes for the post-1967 Palestinian identity respectively: the Palestinian who remained under occupation, and the refugee to a neighbouring Arab state. Living in distinct geopolitical circumstances, the two have developed different notions of resistance. While Adil finds resistance in the daily challenges he has to overcome in order to sustain the survival of his family, Usama endorses Frantz Fanon's notion of armed resistance as an objective on its own, jeopardizing the lives of his close relatives for the grand cause of liberation. After all, the Palestinian resistance movement has been influenced by other anti-colonial movements around the world. Fanon's legacy, as Ibrahim Abu-Loghod and others have shown, has extended to the Palestinian liberation movement. In the novel, Usama's border journey, which is linked with the Palestinian anti-colonial struggle, accentuates this legacy. He returns to the West Bank with the purpose of committing a revolutionary attack directed at the buses that transfer Palestinian workers, sacrificing their lives. Adil's brother cooperates with Usama in bombing the Egged bus; and consequently, his family faces the collective punishment of having their house demolished.

Khalifeh's novel raises the following philosophical question: should the colonised Palestinian struggle for the land, or for survival on the land? In this sense, Khalifeh reiterates Fanon's thought that '[t]he people take their stand from the start on the broad and inclusive positions of *Bread and the land*: how can we obtain the land, and bread to eat?'<sup>101</sup> In this context, Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* articulates the re-invention of the Palestinian resistance to settler colonialism in association with worldwide anti-colonial movements. In the aftermath of 1967, Palestinians began to re-invent their struggle in relation to



the resistance movement of other colonial and settler colonial situations. The Palestinian *Mugawamah* [resistance], as Pappé has observed, 'emerged from the 1967 war much stronger and won legitimacy throughout the Palestinian world. The movement's leaders achieved this by adopting concepts such as those of Frantz Fanon.'<sup>102</sup> This link with global anti-colonial movements has also been noted by Ibrahim Abu Lughod who contends that 'the Palestinian struggle was also part of the worldwide struggle among capitalists, imperialists, and the working class.'<sup>103</sup>

As the novel closes, the dispute materialised by the two overlapping border narratives is further intensified and complicated. After two decades of Israeli settler colonialism and Palestinian frustration at the Arab debacle in 1967, a despairing colonised people find themselves struggling for nothing beyond survival. That philosophical question takes form from debates among characters over whether living under occupation creates a resistant or submissive character. These debates are most profound and most vibrant among Palestinian youths in detention centres. As one character reflects:

Israel should beware of what it's created – a time bomb about to explode. Its prisons have become breeding grounds for ideas, not disposal sites for land-mines. History will find it hard to judge whether the occupation was a blessing or a disaster. It's a tough question.<sup>104</sup>

Khalifeh deliberately continues to raise questions and interrogate received opinions without always reaching a resolution.

For Khalifeh, fictive and factual elements interrelate and overlap in the writing of historical events and historical figures. 'Anyway, history's only stories that people invent,' says Adil.<sup>105</sup> If nations are 'imagined communities,' as Benedict Anderson has argued, Khalifeh's Palestinian characters evoke narratives from Arab cultural history, both real and imagined, for subversive and anti-colonial expression. In those moments of defeat, the detained Palestinians in *Wild Thorns* escape their present situation by invoking the heroic tales of Abu Zayd al Hilali, Antar Ibn Shaddad, and Sayf Ibn Dhi Yazin,

retreating to the imagined world of *The Arabian Nights*, or reflecting on other contexts of historical relevance like that of the poor who took over the Bastille in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, wondering if their own economic deprivation could ever shift existing power relations. The Arab critic Muhsin Al Musawi has described the emergent revolutionary rhetoric in recent Arab novels:

On the one hand, this [revolutionary] rhetoric upholds the ideal of freedom and equality, for instance, but its total commitment to the issues of nationhood or statehood against mandate and colonizing powers trapped it in a master narrative mechanism, which is, at times, reductionist to the core. It overlooks specific problems and bypasses the marginalization of women, peasants, labourers, and ethnic groups.<sup>106</sup>

While this emergent Arab revolutionary rhetoric finds expression in Barakat's focus on the Palestinian struggle for liberation from a settler colonial power, Khalifeh's literary representation of 1967 Palestine develops it by shifting focus to the ambivalence of Palestinian colonial existence. Khalifeh's contribution to the literary expression of 1967 Palestine rests on developing a revolutionary rhetoric inclusive of the previously marginalised group of Palestinian workers. In doing so, *Wild Thorns* explores the ambivalence of Palestinian life under occupation in the West Bank, which results from the interplay of settler colonial and metropole colonial formations, from partial and involuntary economic integration, and from nationalist and existential crises.

## **2.5 Saul Bellow: From Diasporic Distraction to the Realm of Aesthetic Bliss**

The Jewish American novelist and Nobel Laureate, Saul Bellow (1915-2005), directly experienced the 1967 conflict as a *Newsday* correspondent. The thematic substance of his reports and dispatches has been republished in his non-fiction collection, *It All Adds Up* (1995). Memories of scenes from battlefields directly inform two of his post-1967 works, making a brief appearance in the fictional narrative of *Mr Sammler's Planet* (1970) and appearing more fully in his travel

account, *To Jerusalem and Back* (1976). I will explore the centrality of the 1967 war and the US/Israeli coalition to the shift in the intellectual cycle of Bellow's diasporic Jewish protagonists. The 1967 war marks a great shift in the American-Israeli relations, with Lyndon Johnson's administration abandoning neutrality in the Arab-Israel conflict and tilting in favour of Israel.<sup>107</sup> 'The conceptual borderlines dividing Israel and the US,' writes Veracini, 'have become somewhat blurred.'<sup>108</sup> Within the frame of this coalition, this section explores Bellow's literary representations of 1967 Palestine in order to sketch ways in which his protagonists reflect this change and shift from relative distance to direct intervention. I will shed some light on the fictional narrative of Mr Sammler before discussing Bellow's journey to post-1967 occupied Palestine in more detail. Unlike Said, Barakat and Khalifeh, Bellow articulates a hegemonic settler narrative in which the protagonist's liminal experience and temporary disengagement from politics transform into identification with the settler colonial enterprise.

### ***Mr Sammler's Planet* (1970)**

Written in 1970, *Mr Sammler's Planet* tells the story of Artur Sammler, a Holocaust survivor, intellectual and occasional lecturer at Colombia in the 1960s.<sup>109</sup> His nephew, Dr. Arnold Gruner, gynecologist, brings Sammler and his daughter, Shula, to the US in 1947. Supported by Dr. Gruner, Mr Sammler joins a European group of journalists going to the fraught territory of the 1967 battlefields. The 1967 conflict proves pivotal to the intellectual journey of Artur Sammler from disengagement to active participation, from the global vision of 'cosmopolis' to the local perspective of a Jewish exile.

Despite the limited space that Bellow allows for Sammler's recollections of 1967 memories, this intervention forms a crucial moment in the novel since it separates two phases in Sammler's intellectual trajectory. The first phase features a 'Mr Minutely-Observant Artur Sammler' who is more inclined to observe in silence and record the details of the world around him than be called

upon to act.<sup>110</sup> Immersed in abstraction, Sammler advances a theory of 'cosmopolis' and begins a book project on H. G. Wells. For Sammler, the notion of 'cosmopolis' involves

the propagation of the sciences of biology, history, and sociology and the effective application of scientific principles to the enlargement of human life; the building of a planned, orderly, and beautiful world society: abolishing national sovereignty, outlawing war; subjecting money and credit ... a service society based on a rational scientific attitude toward life.<sup>111</sup>

In the post-war period, Sammler begins to develop grave doubts about both 'cosmopolis' and Wells. He quits the book project, renounces 'cosmopolis' and begins to look positively towards the Israeli historical experience that transformed Jews from 'victims' and 'wanderers' to 'tough' militants who 'did a job' in 1967.<sup>112</sup> The Aqaba crisis and the 1967 war that followed it prove central to the formulation of Sammler's new identity and his active involvement in battlefields:

At the beginning of the Aqaba crisis he [Sammler] had suddenly become excited. He could not sit still. He had written to an old journalist friend in London and said he was obliged to go, he absolutely must go, as a journalist, and cover the events. There was an association of Eastern European publications. All Sammler really wanted was credentials, a card to enable him to wire cables ... the money was supplied by Gruner. And so Sammler had been with the armies on the three fronts. It was curious, that. At the age of seventy-two on battlegrounds.<sup>113</sup>

Despite being summoned from within to solidarity with Israel, Sammler receives corporate support that makes his political engagement both possible and revealing. Not unlike Uris, who was commissioned to write a hegemonic settler narrative of 1948 history, Bellow's protagonist receives the financial support of a Jewish Asian businessman, Gruner, and the technical backing of a fellow journalist in London.

From battlefields, Sammler describes Israeli violence during the 1967 war. Scenes from Al Arish on the Sinai Peninsula feature Sammler engaging with the present landscape of decay:

There were dug positions, emplacements, trenches, and in them, too, there were hundreds of corpses. The odour was like dumb cardboard. The clothes of the dead, greenish-brown sweaters, tunics, shirts were strained by the swelling, the gases, the fluids. Swollen gigantic arms, legs, roasted in the sun. the dogs ate human roast ... The inhabitants had run away from the encampments you saw here and there—the low tents, Bedouin-style, but made of plastic crate wrappings dumped from ships, pieces of Styrofoam, dirty sheets of cellulose like insect moltings [sic], large cockroach cases. Poor folk! Ah, poor creatures!<sup>114</sup>

The empathetic overtones of the above description disappear from later reenactments of the scene in both *It All Adds Up* and *To Jerusalem and Back*. Responding to this sight, Father Newell admiringly comments on the Israelis' performance in the War: '[T]hey did a job, didn't they.' While the American Father Newell speaks to the Polish Mr. Sammler 'as one American to another,' he connects the Arabs' part in the war to the Communist Russian superpower.<sup>115</sup> Stressing the role of the Soviet Union in the 1967 war as a strategic ally to the Arabs, the novel divides the world into two parties: Russia and the Arabs on one side, the U.S. and Israel on the other.

Bellow's representation of the 1967 war acknowledges the use of napalm by Israeli soldiers. Father Newell, who accompanies Sammler in the Sinai Peninsula, remarks on the traces of napalm on the battlefield: 'In a lowered voice, out of respect for the Israelis who denied its use, he identified the napalm. See all that reddish, all that mauve out there? Salmon-pink with a green tinge in the clinkers was the sure sign.' Despite confirming the much-disputed issue of Israeli use of napalm, the priest seems unprovoked by the threat to morality that this conclusion might cause. He, rather, shows adherence to the centrality of the war in bringing about the identity transformation of the Jew from the victimized wanderer to the 'tough' fighter.<sup>116</sup>

A parallel transformation that Sammler has undergone translates this centrality. Sammler articulates a shift from global diasporic histories to the 'sheer theatricality' of the 1967 war; from distance to engagement in media intervention.<sup>117</sup> According to Said, 'This was a war fought as much in the media as on the battlefields; the struggle was felt to be immediately historical because it was fought simultaneously in the scenes created by actuality and those created by television, radio, newspaper.'<sup>118</sup> While Barakat's Arab intellectual, Ramzy Safady, condemns the deliberate deception of Arab media reports during the war, Bellow's Jewish intellectual, Sammler, conspires with an overwhelmingly pro-Israeli position embraced by the US media coverage in the 1960s.

### ***To Jerusalem and Back (1976)***

Written in 1976, *To Jerusalem and Back* recounts Bellow's sojourn in the contested territory of post-1967 Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, before he returned to Chicago through London. It articulates a settler colonial narrative, from the perspective of a Jewish American intellectual traversing the Palestinian territories newly occupied by Israel. After the perplexing conflicts of 1967 and 1973, and the emergence of the Israel/US coalition, Bellow travels eastwards, escaping the burdens of Jewish diaspora and the distracted American public. His travel narrative can be interpreted as part of the settler's process of self-discovery by return to the essence of homeland. If *Mr Sammler's Planet* unveils concerns about the intellectuals' distance from intervention and action, *To Jerusalem and Back* articulates a case of intellectuals' engagement in the interplay of history and politics at a time of crisis. In 'The Distracted Public' – an essay that appeared in *It All Adds Up* (1995) – Bellow explains his thoughts about the distraction that invades the public through a variety of forces: political, commercial, technological, journalistic. The process of emergence from distraction and dispersion towards discovery and recognition of certain essences defines the 'aesthetic bliss' which is, according to Bellow, the

responsibility of novelists and writers.<sup>119</sup> *To Jerusalem and Back*, I argue, articulates the journey of a Jewish American intellectual from the burdens of distraction in the diaspora to his search for purpose in post-1967 Israel.

According to Christine Bird, three formative aspects of Bellow's cultural and national identity shape his travelling persona: the writer, the Jew and the American. She describes how 'Bellow brings these three fates together in *To Jerusalem and Back* as he confronts his own Jewishness in returning home.'<sup>120</sup> Bird, however, focuses on the significance of the 'return journey' as a major part of the narrative and the impact of journeying in Israel on Bellow's new perception of America. I take Bird's argument further to show how the fusion of these three perspectives distort rather than illuminate Bellow's perception of the land. At moments of observation, the traveller's gaze seems influenced by engagement in the US/Israel power coalition, Jewish historic memory, and American travel writings on Palestine. Only at the intersection of literature, history and politics does the traveller's lens adjust its focus.

While traversing 1967 Palestine, Bellow's travelling persona reflects on how politics and history powerfully intervene in the American literary imagination and literary critical discourse.<sup>121</sup> This preoccupation with history and politics reveals the highly politicised discourse of the American intellectual sphere during the 1960s and 1970s when '[e]verything reflects the significant event, for the significant event is beyond question historical and political, not private.'<sup>122</sup> Bellow, however, has marginalised the question of how literary (mis)representations often obscure the significant event which is politics and history; literary texts tend to complicate the distraction of the public in as many ways as they tend to reduce it.

The 1967 conflict constitutes one of these politically-charged moments when creative writers tend to echo the ideological constructs of their nations. Bellow cites the Israeli novelist, A. B. Yehoshua, who finds the intellectual's preoccupation with politics terribly disruptive, since it impedes the spiritual solitude that is crucial to the author's literary creation:

'It is true,' Yehoshua writes, 'that because our spiritual life today cannot revolve around anything but these [political] questions, when you engage in them without end you cannot spare yourself, spiritually, for other things. Nor can you attain the true solitude that is a condition and prerequisite to creation ... Rather, you are continuously summoned to solidarity, summoned from within yourself rather than by any external compulsion, because you live from one newscast to the next, and it becomes a solidarity that is technical, automatic from the standpoint of its emotional reaction.'<sup>123</sup>

To illustrate his aforementioned thought, Bellow points to Yehoshua's assertion that during the Six Day War, he 'felt himself linked to a great event, that he was within a historic wave and at one with its flow.'<sup>124</sup> It is the media, according to Bellow, that entangles the public and the intellectual in politics. The intervention of the media influences, in direct and indirect ways, both literary representations of events and critical responses to literary texts.

Bellow's representation of place is mediated by what he has read and heard rather than by what he has actually seen and experienced on the land. The internal design of *To Jerusalem and Back* does not follow any historical chronology or thematic focus. Instead, it is structured in the form of vignettes travelling back and forth in time and space, recounting the traveller's reflections on thoughts and opinions related to the question of Palestine as articulated in books he had read and conversations he had had with people along the way. The traveller cites literary or textual precursors who have travelled in the territories that he traverses, including literary writers such as Herman Melville, Mark Twain, A. B. Yehoshua; historians such as Bernard Lewis and Elie Kedouri; politicians such as Yitzhak Rabin and Teddy Kollek; and academics such as Jacob Leib Talman and Marshal Hodgson. Through these textual conversations, Bellow either confirms or dismantles the credibility and reliability of his precursors' thoughts on and representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For instance, while Bellow maintains distance when he questions Hodgson's positive views on Islam, his voice on numerous occasions is relatively undistinguishable from the anti-Palestinian and pro-Israeli



sentiments of Lewis, Talman, and Rabin. Edward Said situates Bellow's travel account in the orientalist context of the Western traveller who perceives and deciphers the periphery through the colonial gaze of experts: colonial officers or European literary precursors.<sup>125</sup> Part of a surge of travels to the Occupied Territories in the decade following the 1967 conflict, when the visibility of Palestinians could no longer be avoided or ignored, Bellow's *To Jerusalem and Back*, as Said maintains, 'gets its force precisely from this accepted, legitimated sort of representation.'<sup>126</sup> Whilst affirming the visibility of Palestinians, Bellow's narrative reassures a distracted US public by re-inscribing reality in the Occupied Territories as seen by the coloniser.

Bellow cites published opinions of some public figures about Palestine either to direct his staunch criticism of their ideas or express his vehement support of their views. A telling example is his position on Jean-Paul Sartre's rejection of the claims that the Arabs started the war of 1967. Sarcastically, Bellow asks: 'Did this influential thinker and prominent revolutionist know what he was saying?'<sup>127</sup> To dismantle Sartre's opinion, Bellow reiterates the Israeli authoritative narrative of a defensive war, resolutely confirming that it is Nasser who sparked the fighting by closing the Gulf of Aqaba and driving out the UN peacekeeping force. He continues: 'Nasser not only threatened the very existence of Israel but defied the governments of France, Great Britain, and the United States.'<sup>128</sup> Besides supporting a pro-Israeli American press, Bellow's commitment is further revealed in his staunch criticism of an emergent pro-Palestinian stance in the French media. Denouncing what he calls 'the French version of things,' Bellow condemns *Le Monde* for its post-1973 sympathetic attitude towards the Palestinians and for its audacity in calling the Israelis 'colonialists.' Because of this position, Bellow insists, French visitors and intellectuals are 'incomprehensibly incurious and ignorant,' since they fail to uphold their enlightenment responsibilities by siding with what he calls 'Arab feudalism' and 'Arab socialism,' rather than supporting Israeli liberal democracy.<sup>129</sup>

If Bellow's travel book says more about what others state than what he has seen in that contested land, one wonders what might be his purpose for writing the book? On different occasions, Bellow reveals that his book targets the US reading public and he completely approves of Bernard Lewis's opinion that 'Israel must win its struggle in the United States and it must have the support of American public opinion.' Bellow confirms that his travelogue is meant to educate an oblivious public and to bridge what seems to him an epistemic gap: 'At home [in America] the basic facts are not widely known.'<sup>130</sup> Two of these basic facts, according to Bellow, include the Arabs' rejection of the UN partition plan and the efficiency of their propaganda in advancing the 1948 expulsion narrative. Bellow's concluding remarks on a conversation with Jacob Talman establish the link between Israel and the US Jewish community:

The fate of Jewry in Israel and in the Diaspora is so closely linked, he says, that the destruction of Israel would bring with it the destruction of 'corporate Jewish existence all over the world, and a catastrophe that might overtake U. S. Jewry.'<sup>131</sup>

From the above, one might conclude that Bellow understands both the importance of US public opinion to the survival of Israel and the importance of the survival of Israel to the Jewish communities in the diaspora. He also understands how travel narratives shape images of, and attitudes towards, other territories: 'The Egypt of my picture is that of Edward Lane and other observers and travellers: It extends over the entire region—the Sudan and Ethiopia.'<sup>132</sup> If Said's post-1967 intellectual speaks truth to power, Bellow's travelling intellectual reiterates truth as invented by colonial settlers.

Bellow's *To Jerusalem and Back* fits nicely into what Veracini has described as 'perception transfer.' In this type of narrative, 'indigenous peoples are disavowed in a variety of ways and their actual presence is not registered.'<sup>133</sup> From this settler perspective, 'indigenous people are not seen, they lurk in thickets,' and their absence is often maintained by various forms of what Veracini has called 'narrative transfer.'<sup>134</sup> Bellow's sojourn in the newly

occupied West Bank city of Hebron, in East Jerusalem and in the Golan Heights is tainted by what can best be described as the invisibility of Palestinians. The effect of their absence can be traced in Bellow's observations on the abandonment of the land in these territories, which has given way to decay and wilderness. Hebron shimmers with aridity and barrenness and is waiting to be re-vitalised by its new settlers:

A Judean sun over the ribbed fields, the russet colors of winter, mild gold mixed with the light, and white stone terraces everywhere. Many times cleared, the ground goes on giving birth to stones; waves of earth bring forth more stone. The ancient fields are very small.<sup>135</sup>

Abandoned and neglected, Hebron appears as a vast space of petrified land that breeds nothing but stones, thus inviting the cultivating hand of the Euro-American settler.

While roaming in the West Bank, Bellow recalls images of desolate and empty Palestine from Herman Melville and Mark Twain. Long quoted passages from their works illustrate Bellow's return to established nineteenth-century accounts of Palestine instead of describing the contemporary scene. Describing the Valley of Jehosaphat, Bellow seems to visualise a biblical site through passages he has read in Melville's 1857 account, unfiltered by his personal experience:

Whitish mildew pervading whole tracts of landscape—bleached—leprosy—encrustation of curses—old cheese—bones of rocks,—crunched, gnawed, & mumbled—mere refuse & rubbish of creation—like that laying outside of Jaffa Gate—all Judea seems to have been accumulations of this rubbish ... no mass as in other ruins—no grace of decay—no ivy—the unleavened nakedness of desolation.<sup>136</sup>

Repeated quotations from Melville suggest the influence of nineteenth-century American travels in shaping Bellow's perception of Palestine. After his return to Chicago, towards the end of his book, Bellow again refers to Melville, while quoting Twain's *The Innocents Abroad*. To confirm his portrayal of the desolation of 'the now disputed territory,' Bellow seeks the aesthetic bliss of emerging

from the distraction of the present scene to the essence of the settlers' narrative, as initially stated by Twain in the often-quoted lines:

Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies ... Nazareth is forlorn; about the ford of Jordan where the hosts of Israel entered the Promised Land with songs of rejoicing, one finds only a squalid camp of fantastic Bedouins ... Palestine is desolate and unlovely.<sup>137</sup>

Bellow's pre-travel conceptualization of Palestine remains unaltered by his three-month sojourn in the land. His personal journey in *To Jerusalem and Back*, according to Francis Russell Hart, reflects 'a discovery of, and a thwarted retreat from, historic personality.'<sup>138</sup> Between a historic responsibility and a personal inquisition, the spectator in *To Jerusalem and Back* tends to re-enact the perception transfer of Melville and Twain as part of a discursive return to received wisdom and established narrative in the process of self-discovery.

But not all is 'desolate and unlovely.' Images of barrenness and desolation, which abound when Bellow describes the newly occupied lands, are set in contrast with the fertility and vibrancy of the kibbutz. Roaming in the kibbutz with the Israelis, John and Nola, Bellow emphasises the work of settlers in making the desert bloom. The kibbutz, with its dense groves of lemon and tangerines, 'was once dune land. Soil had to be carted in mixed with the sand. Many years of digging and tending made these orchards.'<sup>139</sup> Bellow develops this settler narrative in order to legitimate Israel's expansionism over more Arab territories in 1967 in terms of a defensive mechanism to protect the settlers' achievements on the land. On the few other occasions when the book describes landscape, it is only to show the labour of the Zionist settlers and legitimate their occupation of the land: '[i]n this unlovely dreamland the Zionists planted orchards, sowed fields, and built a thriving society. There are few successes among the new states that came into existence after World War II. Israel is one of them.'<sup>140</sup> Bellow's journey, both in its physical and discursive

forms, performs the diasporic intellectual's return in search of essence and purpose.

Integral to the strategy of disavowal in the narrative, Bellow remains as remote as possible from Palestinian Arabs. He seems never to have seen an Arab community. Only in passing does he comment on the inhabitants of the West Bank villages. On the single occasion in the narrative when Bellow describes Arabs of the West Bank, he divides them into two groups. They are either labourers in Israeli construction projects, or a group of terrorist adolescents who throw stones, bomb Israeli targets and challenge settlements. This second group is denied any connection to a legitimate resistance movement.

Not only does Bellow negate the physicality of Palestinian existence but also their intellectual presence. Among the many writers he cites in his travelogue, Bellow refers only to three Arab writers: Mahmud Abu Zulf, the editor of the Palestinian newspaper *Al-Quds*; Ellie Kedouri, a London-based Jewish Iraqi historian; and Mohamed Hassanein Heikel, the purveyor of Nasser's thoughts. Bellow's negotiation with those writers' views only serves to establish Zionist official narratives as indisputable truth. For example, Abu Zulf believes that the Israelis are to be blamed for impeding peace negotiations and for protracting conflict. Bellow's sustained efforts to ascribe the perpetuation of the conflict to the Arabs' refusal of the UN partition plan serves to dismantle Abu Zulf's argument and re-establish the Zionist position. While dismissing Heikel as a court poet singing the praises of Nasser, Bellow affirms Kedouri's remark on the ineffectiveness of applying 'Western measures and expectations to Arab intellectuals,' who still cannot 'dissociate themselves' from 'the traditional religious patriotism.'<sup>141</sup>

Within the tradition of American travels to Palestine, Bellow's *To Jerusalem and Back* extends and develops Melville's and Twain's 'perception transfer' across the 1967 conflict. Bellow's voyage to the newly-occupied territories of East Jerusalem and the West Bank shifts him from the disturbing

thoughts and attitudes of his diasporic existence to essentialist values and purposefulness embodied by the Israeli settler project. Bellow finds essence in a post-1967 Israel whose military triumphs and territorial expansion prove crucial to the re-invention of the Jew as a tough fighter. While Melville's and Twain's writings are recruited to legitimate the Zionist settler project, Bellow's own account contextualises and emphasises the centrality of the transformation to the Jewish civilisational mission:

After the victory of 1967 Israel could briefly think of itself as a military power. It could think of itself also, says Talmon in a manuscript he sent me, 'as one of the few countries in the contemporary jaded world with a sense of purpose.' This last I consider of first importance. The Israelis had war, and not the moral equivalent of war William James was looking for, to give them firmness. They had, in their concern for the decay of civilization and in their pride ... something to teach the world. The stunned remnant that had crept from Auschwitz had demonstrated that they could farm a barren land, industrialize it, build cities, make a society, do research, philosophize, write books, sustain a great moral tradition, and, finally, create an army of tough fighters.<sup>142</sup>

Framed in the context of the 1967 conflict, Bellow's version of events justifies Israel's military power and the emergence of the 'tough fighter' as necessary to maintain that 'sense of purpose' and guard against 'the decay of civilization.' Against this dual nature of post-1967 Israel as 'both a garrison state and a cultivated society, both Spartan and Athenian,' Bellow re-invents Melville and Twain's perception transfer of Palestine.<sup>143</sup>

The dual image of Israel takes on additional meaning when the traveller returns to America and starts visualising how a mental Israel has come to replace the material place he has traversed. As the title suggests, *To Jerusalem and Back* articulates a movement forward towards some sort of essence and then a return to a distracted Chicago. Emily Miller Budick points out the significance of narrating the journey back to Chicago, arguing that *To Jerusalem and Back* 'reveals aspects of a larger American tradition of thinking about Israel which resists the idea of Israel as a material place.'<sup>144</sup> Does Bellow, in *To Jerusalem and*

*Back*, carefully distinguish his travelling as an American from his travelling as a Jew in historic Palestine? Consciously or otherwise, Bellow's perspective fluctuates between his Jewish and American identities. As a Jew, he sees the modern, civilised society that the Zionist state has established on the ruins of Palestine. As an American, however, he sees Israel as a place associated with death and cold, a place to fight for but not to live in. Bellow contemplates:

I sometimes think there are two Israels. The real one is territorially insignificant. The other, the mental Israel, is immense, a country inestimably important, playing a major role in the world, as broad as all history — and perhaps as deep as sleep.<sup>145</sup>

To survive the distraction of the diaspora, a mental Israel is central to a Jewish American identity, looking eastward towards a Jewish state for 'a sense of purpose.'

### **Borders, Shifts, and Returns**

With the post-1967 annexation of Gaza and the West Bank, the 'Green Line,' as Veracini maintains, 'seemed increasingly to be erased as a meaningful border for all those – Arab or Jewish, colonized or colonizer – who lived in the geographical area under Israeli control.' While for Veracini the 'renewed meaning' that the Green Line has obtained after 1967 relates to its significance as a virtual border demarcating a settler colonial formation from a colonial one, this chapter has revealed how the Green Line has become firmly re-inscribed in Palestinian consciousness.<sup>146</sup> The persistent reality of their ultimate displacement, 'the dislocation,' as Said describes it, impresses upon writers a peculiar concern for re-drawing the very borders demolished by Israeli colonial expansion in order to re-define their national and historical experience across physical and metaphorical borders. Creating shared metaphorical maps, and guarding against the disappearance of Palestine, the 1967 defeat that erased Palestine from the world map has been literarily rendered as a site of becoming for Palestinian intellectual agency.

This chapter has explored representations of the events of 1967 by Edward Said, Sahar Khalifeh, Halim Barakat, and Saul Bellow and revealed the centrality of the June War to the writers' articulation of liminal spaces, thresholds, and shifts. Both Arab and Jewish American writers share a concern for the politics of the local in redefining their post-1967 identities. This concern is marked by backward movements, returns of sorts, towards some essentialist values. While Palestinians shift focus from a broad pan-Arabist consciousness to the specificities of their local experience, the Jewish American Bellow escapes the burdens of diasporic dispersion by embracing the purposefulness and essentialism of the Israeli settler enterprise. The construction rather than the dismantling of borders remains key to representing 1967 Palestine. If the 1967 war has produced a surge of writing, engaging with the agency of Palestinians and the urgency of their local experience, the next chapter explores how a greater visibility, escalated by the 1980s *intifada*, finds its way into Jewish American fiction.



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Kamal Abdel-Malek, *The Rhetoric of Violence: Arab-Jewish Encounters in Contemporary Palestinian Literature and Film* (London: Palgrave, 2005).
- <sup>2</sup> Anna Ball, *Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Feminist Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
- <sup>3</sup> Faisal Darraj 'Min Riwayat al-Hazeemah ila Hazeemat al-Riwayah' [From the Novel of Defeat to the Defeat of the Novel], 20 Jun. 2012, <<http://alolymp.niceboard.com/t390-topic>>.
- <sup>4</sup> Aziza Ali, 'Adab alNaksa [The Literature of the Setback],' *Alghad*, 12 June 2011.
- <sup>5</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, 'The Other Shift: Settler Colonialism, Israel, and the Occupation,' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 42.2 (2013): 29.
- <sup>6</sup> Eugene Rogan has argued that the demise of the pan-Arabist ideology is the main consequence of the defeat. See 'The Decline of Arab Nationalism,' in his *The Arabs: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 2009) 319-354.
- <sup>7</sup> Rashid Khalidi, 'The 1967 War and the Demise of Arab Nationalism: Chronicle of a Death Foretold,' *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War*, ed. W. Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2012) 284.
- <sup>8</sup> Edward W. Said, Introduction, *Days of Dust*, Halim Barakat, trans. Trevor Le Gassick (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1986) xxix-xxx.
- <sup>9</sup> Saleh Abu-Esba'a, *Filisteen fi al Riwayah al Arabiyah* [Palestine in the Arabic Novel] (Beirut: Palestine Liberation Organization, 1975).
- <sup>10</sup> Said, Introduction xxv.
- <sup>11</sup> Edward W. Said, 'Arabic Prose and Prose Fiction after 1948,' *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard U P, 2001) 49.
- <sup>12</sup> Tawfiq Al-Hakim, *Awdat al-Wa'i* [The Return of Consciousness] (Cairo: Maktabat Masr, 1972).
- <sup>13</sup> Al-Hakim 77-78.
- <sup>14</sup> Quoted in Fawaz Gerges, 'The Transformation of Arab Politics: Disentangling Myth from Reality,' in *The 1967 Arab-Israel War: Origins and Consequences*, ed. W. Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 293, 295. Gerges cites parts of the poem; a fuller translation by Abdullah al-Udhari, entitled 'Footnotes to the Book of the Setback,' is available on the *New Liberator Freedom's Journal* 4 Feb. 2011. Web. 20 Feb. 2012. <<http://thenewliberator.wordpress.com>>.
- <sup>15</sup> Said, Introduction xvi.
- <sup>16</sup> Gerges 296.

- <sup>17</sup> Ghada Al-Samman, 'Ahmil A'ari ila London' [I Carry My Shame to London], *Al-Jasad Haqibat Safar* [The Body Is a Suitcase: The Incomplete Works] (Beirut: Manshorat Ghada Al-Samman, 1996) 75.
- <sup>18</sup> Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, 'The Palestinian Exile as a Writer,' *Journal of Palestine Studies* 8.2 (1979): 84.
- <sup>19</sup> Jabra 86.
- <sup>20</sup> Jabra 86.
- <sup>21</sup> Quoted in Jabra 85.
- <sup>22</sup> Edward W. Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir* (London: Granta Books, 2000) 293.
- <sup>23</sup> Victor W. Turner, 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*,' 1964, *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, ed. Arthur C. Lehmann and James E. Myers (Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1989) 46-55.
- <sup>24</sup> Said, *Out of Place* 117.
- <sup>25</sup> Said, *Out of Place* 140-41.
- <sup>26</sup> Everett V. Stonequist, *The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Cultural Conflict* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961) 160.
- <sup>27</sup> Turner 46.
- <sup>28</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994) 11.
- <sup>29</sup> Said, *Out of Place* 293.
- <sup>30</sup> Edward W. Said, 'Representations of the Intellectual,' *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (New York: Vintage, 1996) 4.
- <sup>31</sup> J. M. Coetzee, 'Truth in Autobiography,' unpublished inaugural lecture, University of Cape Town (1984) 1.
- <sup>32</sup> Coetzee, 'Truth in Autobiography' 5.
- <sup>33</sup> Coetzee, 'Truth in Autobiography' 1.
- <sup>34</sup> Coetzee, 'Truth in Autobiography' 3.
- <sup>35</sup> Barakat studied sociology at the American University of Beirut. He received his Bachelor's degree in 1955 and his Master's degree in 1960. He received his PhD in social psychology in 1966 from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. From 1966 until 1972 he taught at the American University of Beirut. He then served as research fellow at Harvard University until 1973, and taught at the University of Texas at Austin in 1975-1976. From 1976 until 2002 he conducted research in the field of

society and culture at The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies of Georgetown University.

<sup>36</sup> Barakat has also published six novels and a collection of short stories. Translations of his fictional works have appeared in English, French, German and Japanese. They include *Days of Dust*, *Six Days*, and *Le vaisseau reprend le large*. His novel *Six Days* (Sittat Ayam, 1961) precedes the war of June 1967. It became a prelude to the later novel *Days of Dust* ('Awdat al-Ta'ir ila al-Bahr, 1969). His other works of fiction include *al-Qimam al-Khadra'* (Green Summits, 1956), *al-Samt wal-Matar* (Silence and Rain, 1958), *al-Rahil Baina al-Sahm wal-Watar* (A Journey between the Arrow and the Cord, 1979), *Ta'ir al-Hawm* (The Crane, 1988), and *Innana wal-Nahr* (Inana and The River, 1995).

<sup>37</sup> This symbolic representation is inspired by Wagner's opera *The Flying Dutchman*, whose hero has been condemned to perpetual exile, and can only be saved if he finds a woman who will be faithful to him until death. In order to search for that woman, the gods allow the Dutchman to go ashore once every seven years.

<sup>38</sup> Barakat, *Days of Dust* 163.

<sup>39</sup> Barakat, *Days of Dust* 26.

<sup>40</sup> Barakat, *Days of Dust* 67.

<sup>41</sup> Caroline Rooney, 'Egyptian Literary Culture and Egyptian Modernity: Introduction,' *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 47.4 (2011): 370.

<sup>42</sup> Halim Barakat, *Six Days*, trans. Bassam Frangieh and Scott McGehee (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1990) 3.

<sup>43</sup> Barakat, *Six Days* 3.

<sup>44</sup> Patrick Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,' *Journal of Genocide Research* 8.4 (2006): 387-409.

<sup>45</sup> Barakat, *Six Days* 70.

<sup>46</sup> Barakat, *Six Days* 3.

<sup>47</sup> Barakat, *Six Days* 42.

<sup>48</sup> Elias Khoury, quoted in Halim Barakat, *al-Eghtira'ab fi al-thagafah al-A'rabiyyah* [Alienation in Arabic Culture] (Beirut: Markaz Dirasa'at al-Wihdah al-A'rabiyyah, 2006) 157.

<sup>49</sup> Barakat, *Six Days* 7.

<sup>50</sup> Barakat, *Six Days* 120.

<sup>51</sup> Barakat, *Six Days* 120.

<sup>52</sup> Barakat, *Days of Dust* 96.

- 53 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 179.
- 54 Peter Dodd and Halim Barakat, *River without Bridges: A Study of the Exodus of the 1967 Palestinian Arab Refugees* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1968).
- 55 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 31.
- 56 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 5.
- 57 M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008) 248.
- 58 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 31.
- 59 Said, Introduction xxxii.
- 60 Said, Introduction xxi. Emphasis in the original.
- 61 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 47.
- 62 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 47.
- 63 For instance, a 2008 case study of the American University in Beirut investigating the impact of the 1967 war and its immediate aftermath, including the Israeli attack of the Beirut Airport (1968) and the events of Black September (1970), reveals students' belief that the university administration has impeded their freedom of action, speech, and political action. Those university students, according to the study, see 'the actions of Palestinian Fedayeen organizations as not only a means for regaining Palestine but as a programme for fighting imperialism in all its guises.' See Betty Anderson, 'September 1970 and the Palestinian Issue: A Case Study of Student Politicization at the American University of Beirut (AUB),' in *Civil Wars* 10.3 (2008): 261-280.
- 64 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 111-12.
- 65 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 29.
- 66 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 29.
- 67 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 154.
- 68 Nur Masalha, 'The 1967 Palestinian Exodus,' *The Palestinian Exodus 1948-1998*, ed. Ghada Karmi and Eugene Cotran (Reading, Ithaca, 1999) 63-109.
- 69 Masalha 100.
- 70 See Dodd and Barakat 54 and Jeremy Bowen, *Six Days: How the 1967 War Shaped the Middle East* (London: Pocket Books, 2004) 241.
- 71 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 4.
- 72 Barakat, *Days of Dust* 4.

<sup>73</sup> Barakat, *Days of Dust* 80.

<sup>74</sup> Barakat, *Days of Dust* 127.

<sup>75</sup> Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 187.

<sup>76</sup> Avi Shlaim, 'Israel: Poor Little Samson,' *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War: Origins and Consequences*, ed. W. Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 54. These three moves include the mobilization of two divisions of the Egyptian army along the border with Israel (13 May), expelling the UN emergency forces from Sinai (16 May), and the closing of the Straits of Tiran to prevent Israeli ships from sailing through the Gulf of Aqaba, thus blockading the port of Eilat (22 May).

<sup>77</sup> Shlaim 23, 41. However, Shlaim's argument is plagued with inherent contradictions and inconsistencies. For instance, he insists that territorial aims were not established or premeditated before launching the first strike, but the evidence he has provided supports the opposite. Shlaim elaborates on the Israeli officials' deliberations on and final approval of two operational plans, plans Atzman and Kadron (Hebrew names); the first called for the capture of the Gaza Strip and the southern flank of Al-Arish, while the second targeted the Gaza Strip and the eastern part of the Sinai peninsula up to Jabal Libni, maintaining that in both cases Israel 'envisaged holding the territory until Egypt agreed to open the Straits of Tiran' (41-42). Shlaim continues to show evidence of the ways in which Moshi Dayan modified the second plan to capture more of the Egyptian territory, disclosing his intentions to keep part of the conquered Egyptian territory along the strip, starting east of Rafah and down to Sharm al-Sheikh, after the war (42). He even goes so far as to cite deliberations among Israeli officials regarding the point inside Egyptian land at which their army should stop, as some were eager to proceed to the Suez Canal. Shlaim's uncritical pro-Israeli sentiments dominate his discussion. In the conclusion of the essay, he cites Dayan's dismantling of a Zionist tenet by stressing that Israeli wars with Arabs up to 1967 were wars of choice, only to conclude that the 1967 was 'an inescapable war of choice' (55).

<sup>78</sup> Nur Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (London: Zed Books, 2012) 154.

<sup>79</sup> Said, Introduction xxxi.

<sup>80</sup> Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>81</sup> Barakat, *The Arab World* 235.

<sup>82</sup> Here and henceforth, I use Sahar Kalifeh, *Wild Thorns*, trans. Trevor LeGassick and Elizabeth Fernea (New York: Interlink Books, 2003).

<sup>83</sup> Pappé 204.

- 84 Muhsin Al Musawi, *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel: Debating Ambivalence* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) 69.
- 85 Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* 5.
- 86 Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* 20.
- 87 For a good discussion of this mythic construct, see Alan George, "'Making the Desert Bloom": A Myth Examined,' *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 8.2 (1979): 88-100. JSTOR. Web. 20 May 2013.
- 88 Veracini, 'The Other Shift' 28.
- 89 Veracini, 'The Other Shift' 27, 29. Emphasis in the original.
- 90 Aryeh Arnon, 'The Links Between the Israeli and Palestinian Economies Since 1967: Between Imposed Integration and Voluntary Separation,' *Looking Back at the June 1967 War*, ed. Haim Gordon (London: Praeger, 1999) 81-82.
- 91 Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* 21.
- 92 Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* 48.
- 93 Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* 33.
- 94 Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine* 204.
- 95 Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine* 205.
- 96 Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* 49.
- 97 Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine* 205.
- 98 Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* 76.
- 99 Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* 69, 88.
- 100 Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* 29.
- 101 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (London: Penguin Books, 1990) 39.
- 102 Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine* 190.
- 103 Ibrahim Abu Lughod, 'Altered Realities,' *International Journal* 28.4 (1973): 666.
- 104 Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* 147.
- 105 Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns* 53.
- 106 Muhsin Jassim Al-Musawi, *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel: Debating Ambivalence* (Boston: Brill, 2003) 49.

- 107 Rogan, *Arabs* 341. Ilan Pappé also notes 'The change in American policy has often been attributed to the President's hawkish view of the Cold War and the effectiveness of the Jewish lobby' (Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine* 207).
- 108 Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society* (London: Pluto Press, 2006) 89-90.
- 109 The novel was first published in the United States in 1969. I cite here from: Saul Bellow, *Mr Sammler's Planet* (New York: Viking, 1970).
- 110 Bellow, *Mr Sammler's Planet* 12.
- 111 Bellow, *Mr Sammler's Planet* 41.
- 112 Bellow, *Mr Sammler's Planet* 250, 251.
- 113 Bellow, *Mr Sammler's Planet* 142.
- 114 Bellow, *Mr Sammler's Planet* 250.
- 115 Bellow, *Mr Sammler's Planet* 250, 251.
- 116 Bellow, *Mr Sammler's Planet* 251.
- 117 Said used this term in the designation of post-1967 Arab writing (Said, Introduction, xxviii).
- 118 Said, Introduction xxviii.
- 119 Saul Bellow, 'The Distracted Public,' *It All Adds Up: From the Dim Past to the Uncertain Future* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995) 161.
- 120 Christine M. Bird, 'The Return Journey in *To Jerusalem and Back*,' *Melus* 6.4 (1979): 56.
- 121 Saul Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976) 21.
- 122 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 21.
- 123 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 20.
- 124 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 21.
- 125 Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1992) 40.
- 126 Said, *The Question of Palestine* 40.
- 127 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 121.
- 128 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 121.
- 129 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 50-51.
- 130 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 115.

- 131 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 137.
- 132 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 45.
- 133 Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2010) 37.
- 134 Veracini, *Settler Colonialism* 37, 41.
- 135 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 131.
- 136 Quoted in Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 16-17.
- 137 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 159.
- 138 Francis Russell Hart, 'History Talking to Itself: Public Personality in Recent Memoir,' *New Literary History* 11.1 (1979): 200.
- 139 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 61.
- 140 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 159.
- 141 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 144.
- 142 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 135.
- 143 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 46.
- 144 Emily Miller Budick, 'The Place of Israel in American Writing: Reflections on Saul Bellow's *To Jerusalem and Back*,' *South Central Review: The Journal of the South Central Modern Language Association* 8.1 (1991): 59.
- 145 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 131.
- 146 Veracini, 'The Other Shift' 31.



## Chapter 3

### The 1980s *Intifada*: Limits and Beyond

Nothing need hide itself in fiction, but are there no limits where there's no disguise?

(Philip Roth, *Operation Shylock* 377)

One of the key achievements of the uprising is the fact that it has again confirmed the centrality of the Palestinian people in the conflict with Israel. In other words, it has reminded the world that the struggle is primarily one between Israel and the Palestinians, not between Israel and the Arab states. This is of particular importance after a period in which the Palestinians seemed to have been marginalized.

(Rashid Khalidi, 'The Uprising and the Palestinian Question' 505)

The previous chapters have demonstrated that the Palestinian struggle has been primarily a struggle for visibility, the visibility of both their historical presence and their subaltern narrative. In the second epigraph above, Rashid Khalidi argues that the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising in December 1987 has been widely understood as a Palestinian outcry after decades of marginalisation.<sup>1</sup> Confirming the presence of Palestinians on the other side of the divide, the *intifada*, according to Khalidi, has adjusted the focus of the conflict in the eye of a global public as one between Israel and the Palestinians rather than one between Israel and the entire Arab world. In so doing, the *intifada* reclaimed the Palestinians from the margins of world politics, forcefully reasserting their right to self-determination in a conflict in which 'shared space and unshared values,' to borrow a phrase from Graham Huggan, have escalated into violent conflict ever since Israel's expansion over the Palestinian territories of the West Bank

and Gaza Strip.<sup>2</sup> Defining Palestine – its lands, borders, peoples – remained central to that conflict.

How has the greater visibility of the Palestinians in the wake of the uprising found its way into Jewish American fiction? While the previous chapter has explored the centrality of the 1967 war to the emerging rhetoric of Palestinian nationalism and self-representation after the defeat of Nasser's pan-Arabist paradigm, this chapter examines how cultural structures continue to limit possibilities of literary dialogue with emerging unconventional discourses. Ever since their displacement both physically and rhetorically after the 1948 *nakba* and their 'ultimate dislocation' in 1967—to use Said's words—Palestinians had been severely marginalized.<sup>3</sup> The *intifada*, however, allowed a relative loosening of those limits and enabled an unprecedented Palestinian visibility in the Western media.<sup>4</sup> The impact of the uprising in media coverage, I argue, inspired Phillip Roth to write *Operation Shylock: A Confession* (1993), which articulates a plethora of voices, each claiming to know and possess part of the truth about Palestine and Palestinian identity.<sup>5</sup> The dialogism of these voices, however, might be said to remain incomplete, since their credibility often disintegrates at the boundary between fictionality and factuality. The incompleteness of a meaningful dialogical interaction among these subject positions parallels the incompleteness of the novel, final chapter of which remains unpublished. The production of a novel with a missing chapter echoes Roth's 'continuing preoccupation with the relationship between the written and the unwritten world.'<sup>6</sup> In *Operation Shylock*, the impermissible and the unwritten mediate privileged discourses through what appears to be too fictional and untrue. The plotting of a narrative with a missing chapter reveals the limits restricting the re-enactment of a meaningful heteroglossia. It simultaneously emphasises that what a narrative leaves out might be the most factual and most revealing of the dynamics that manipulate fictional history. Roth's writing of the events of the 1980s opens itself to what lies within the fissures of the text as

well as to 'the play of history beyond its edges': 'the unconscious that is history' as Pierre Macherey once put it.<sup>7</sup>

Against the historical backdrop of the 1987 Palestinian uprising, I will explore Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock: A Confession* as both a response and a reaction to the cultural limits that restrain writers' attempts to represent emerging discourses in the wake of the *intifada*.<sup>8</sup> Bakhtin's theory of dialogism usefully exposes how, in Roth's novel, a constellation of voices and counter voices are permitted and manipulated through the contingency of the historicity of fiction and the fictionality of history. The interventions of a Palestinian voice through the character of George Ziad as well as a counter-Zionist ideology as propagated by Roth's imposter Moishe Pipik, illustrate a multiplicity which, however, fails to achieve meaningful dialogical interactions. The intervention of the two positions is limited by the narrator's interference, which destabilises the credibility of both characters, thus rendering their dialogism incomplete.

Amidst unfolding events in January 1988, *Operation Shylock* narrates the journey of its central character, 'Philip Roth,' to Israel proper and the Occupied Territories in the immediate aftermath of the Palestinian *intifada*. 'Roth' travels eastwards to interview the Israeli novelist Aharon Appelfeld in Jerusalem and to attend the trial of John Demjanjuk, 'the man alleged to be Ivan the Terrible of Treblinka.'<sup>9</sup> During his time in Jerusalem, 'Roth' encounters his double, impersonated in the character of Moishe Pipik, who has usurped the identity of the well-known Jewish American novelist in order to disseminate his own ideology of a counter-Zionist project named Diasporism. Pipik's Diasporism calls for the return of Ashkenazi Jews to their European lands of origin, creating space for diasporic Palestinians and thus resolving a forty-year-long conflict. 'Roth' also meets his Palestinian friend, George Ziad, who returns from exile in the West to join Palestinian national activism during the uprising. In the course of these events, Roth is recruited by Smilesburger, a Mossad officer, to 'Operation Shylock,' an espionage mission to Athens aiming to gather

intelligence about 'Jewish anti-Zionist elements threatening Israel.'<sup>10</sup> In the context of striking intersections between fiction and history, the novel interweaves the voices of three Philip Roths – the author, the central character and the imposter – into the complex tapestry of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. To avoid the confusion that may result from dealing with three Roths in this chapter, I will hereafter follow Harold Bloom's reference schema in his *New York Times* review of Roth's novel: the author of *Operation Shylock* will be referred to as Philip Roth, the protagonist in the novel as 'Philip Roth,' and the imposter as Moishe Pipik, the name assigned to him by 'Philip Roth' in the book.<sup>11</sup>

In their readings of *Operation Shylock*, critics have paid little attention to the *intifada* as a major historical event informing Roth's literary representation. For Andrew Furman, the representation of a Palestinian character in Roth's *Operation Shylock* illustrates the emergence of a new 'Other' in Jewish American fiction. Without reference to the uprising, he explores the ways in which Roth both 'resists and reaffirms' conventional Zionist discourse in *The Counterlife*, then 'resists it once again in *Operation Shylock* by creating American Jewish literature's first significant Palestinian character.'<sup>12</sup> Debra Shostack's detailed study of 'countertexts' and 'counterlives' in Roth's fiction marginalises the *intifada* whilst emphasising the Holocaust as central to discussions of history in the novel.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, Sylvia Fishman completely overlooks the repercussions of the Palestinian uprising in Roth's novel whilst simultaneously affirming the novel's viability for a New Historicist reading.<sup>14</sup> 'Operation Shylock,' as Fishman argues, 'gives a graphically corporeal form to "the new historicism" and "cultural poetics," which highlights the complex connection between literary works and the culture out of which they grow.'<sup>15</sup> The following analysis of Roth's *Operation Shylock* develops Fishman's argument further and restores its New Historicist perspective by situating the negotiation of text and context within the social heteroglossia that emerged in the wake of the *intifada*.

### 3.1 Bakhtin's Dialogism

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism engages with the concepts of polyphony and heteroglossia, and can usefully be utilized to reveal how Roth's *Operation Shylock* presents only a limited dialogical interaction between 'authoritative discourses' and the heteroglossia of unconventional discourses that emerged with the *intifada*.<sup>16</sup> What might appear to be a representation of dialogical interaction with an emergent Palestinian voice and an anti-Zionist stance often disintegrates into a mere polyphony of conflicting voices whose truth value is eventually deconstructed by the narrator's intervention. Bakhtin conceives of the novel as a platform for the interplay of distinct and sometimes conflicting discourses.<sup>17</sup> The concept of polyphony proves central to Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, which he associates specifically with the literary genre of the novel. For Bakhtin, as David Lodge explains, a polyphonic novel is a 'novel in which a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects, without being placed and judged by an authoritative authorial voice.'<sup>18</sup> However, a polyphonic novel is not necessarily dialogical, particularly when a given voice is privileged with greater credibility and consistency than other voices. According to Bakhtin,

at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present ... [A]ll languages of heteroglossia ... are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views ... As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another and be interrelated dialogically.<sup>19</sup>

The characters in the novel represent vantage points on a particular subject or event, reflecting and refracting the social heteroglossia which produces them. In this context, Bakhtin links dialogism with the concept of heteroglossia, which marks 'a shift of emphasis towards social languages rather than individual voices,' and a move away from the limits of polyphony to the broader tensions

of cultural and social forces.<sup>20</sup> While polyphony primarily signifies a multiplicity of equally valid voices, heteroglossia necessarily involves a degree of clash and power relations. The novel, then, becomes a discursive site where the tension between 'unifying, centralizing, centripetal forces of verbal ideological life' and 'the current of decentralizing, centrifugal forces,' between the privileged monologism of authoritative discourse and the heteroglossia of unprivileged discourses, is most clearly articulated.<sup>21</sup>

Bakhtin represents the official and authoritative voice in terms of monologism and insists on the role of political, social, and historical powers and contexts that frame and support a particular narrative of events. According to Bakhtin, 'authoritative discourse ... demands our unconditional allegiance ... It is indissolubly fused with its authority – with political power, an institution, a person – and it stands and falls together with that authority.'<sup>22</sup> In the settler colonial context of post-*intifada* Palestine, that of Roth's novel, heteroglossia is materialized in, as well as limited by, the necessary tension and contestation between a hegemonic centre and a subordinate margin, a centripetal settler narrative and a centrifugal Palestinian counter-narrative.

For Bakhtin, social heteroglossia is appropriated by the author in the novel primarily through the rhetoric of the narrator and the direct speeches of the characters. While the narrator usually represents 'a particular point of view on the world and its events,' 'highly particularized *character zones*' are formed by 'fragments of characters' speech,' 'hidden transmission,' or allusion to stated points of view. The character zone constitutes 'the field of action for a character's voice, encroaching in one way or another upon the author's voice.'<sup>23</sup> Central to Bakhtin's dialogical tension is the conceptualisation of the speaking person as an 'ideologue' and his words as 'ideologemes,' conveying a particular view of the world and of events.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the ideological positions communicated by the narrator and the character zones, a heteroglot novel usually engages with what Bakhtin has called, 'inserted genres,' including 'diaries, confessions, and journalistic articles.'<sup>25</sup> It follows, then, that what

novelists 'insert' into, and what they exclude from, the rich tapestry of their texts are equally significant. *Operation Shylock* is replete with allusions to published interviews, op-ed articles, and travel diaries through which social heteroglossia enter the world of the novel.

Explaining the mutual relation between author and narrator in creating two levels for articulating meaning, Bakhtin writes:

The author manifests himself and his point of view not only in his effect on the narrator, on his speech and his language ... but also in his effect on the subject of the story ... Behind the narrator's story we read a second story, the author's story; he is the one who tells us how the narrator tells stories, and also tells about the narrator himself. We actually sense two levels at each moment in the story; one, the level of the narrator, a belief system filled with his objects, meanings and emotional expressions, and the other, the level of the author, who speaks (albeit in a refracted way) by means of this story and through this story.<sup>26</sup>

In plotting the narrative, Roth, however, complicates the diffusion of heteroglossia in many ways: first, by blurring the boundaries between the character zones; second, by giving the narrator his own name; third, by creating a third Rothian consciousness represented by the double who impersonates the fictive Roth.

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism pays more attention to discourse than to action, thus shifting focus away from 'seeing' action to 'hearing' the different ideological positions embodied in the characters' speeches. To this end, he has borrowed the word 'orchestration' from musical terminology in order to describe the process of appropriating and organizing the social heteroglossia of a given socio-historical context in the text. Emphasising the role of discourse in the novel in representing existing ideological positions, Bakhtin explains that 'it is impossible to represent an alien ideological world adequately without first permitting it to sound, without having first revealed the special discourse peculiar to it.'<sup>27</sup> In representing the contested terrain of the Palestinian Occupied Territories, Roth has permitted the Palestinian to speak from the

restricted space allowed for him in the novel. For Bakhtin, the text's internal tensions necessarily echo the external tensions of prevailing cultural discourses. Fictional representations, as he has emphasized, reveal the dialogical interaction between discourse in the novel and the social heteroglossia of the world outside.<sup>28</sup> 'What is needed,' writes Bakhtin, 'is a profound understanding of each language's socio-ideological meaning and an exact knowledge of the social distribution and ordering of all the other ideological voices of the era.'<sup>29</sup>

In order to understand the dialogical tension between *Operation Shylock* and the social heteroglossia that produced it, it is useful to survey US media coverage of the Palestinian uprising from its inception in December 1987 to the publication of Roth's novel in 1993.

### **3.2 The 1980s *Intifada* and the Heteroglossia of US Media Coverage**

The *New York Times* coverage of the Palestinian uprising demonstrates the emergence of two unconventional discourses: Palestinians were permitted to speak for themselves and an unprecedented critical view of Israel found expression. This anti-Israeli stance reached op-ed pages for the first time. The allusion to Woody Allen's op-ed article in *Operation Shylock* illustrates the novel's dialogical interaction with this emergent rhetoric. Publicised news of Israeli violence towards stone-throwing Palestinians provoked Allen to write: 'I am appalled beyond measure by the treatment of the rioting Palestinians by Jews ... Am I reading the newspaper correctly?'<sup>30</sup> This op-ed article, issued in the *New York Times* on 28 January 1988, generated harsh criticism among pro-Zionist readers, who denounced Allen's view as that of a self-hating Jew. While Roth himself has been criticised as a self-hating Jew for his critical depiction of the Jewish American community, he, unlike Allen, has been reluctant to condemn Israel for its policy towards the Palestinians. This reluctance is reflected in the novel in the way that Allen's critique is introduced through Ziad, while 'Roth' seems oblivious of, and unconcerned with, this op-ed piece,



thus downplaying an emergent dissident attitude towards Israel in the Jewish American public sphere.

A growing dissension among the Jewish American community, which seems to have started with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 but remained covert, was eventually publicised with the uprising in 1987. Khalidi argues:

However bad American media coverage of Palestinian matters may seem today, it is not as abysmal as it once was, in particular since the watershed events of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the ensuing siege of Beirut during the summer of 1982, and the Palestinian *intifada* which began in December 1987. The consequence of both events was a more critical view of Israel in the media—or, rather, the first hint of a critical view of Israel.<sup>31</sup>

Like Khalidi, Jonathan Marcus, BBC diplomatic correspondent, has noted how ‘the *intifada*, and more specifically its regular reporting on prime-time television, heightened a feeling of unease that for many American Jews began at the time of the Lebanon invasion.’<sup>32</sup> He confirms Khalidi’s contention that the *intifada* encouraged the public voicing of Jewish American criticism of Israel. In ‘Soul-Searching,’ issued in the *New York Times* on 8 May 1988, Albert Vorspan commented on the televised scenes of Palestinian youths hurling stones at heavily equipped Israeli troops who were firing back at them. The mythical image of an Israeli David fighting an Arab Goliath, he reported, had clearly and unequivocally been subverted. Prime-time television, Vorspan reported, projected how ‘Israelis now seem the oppressors, Palestinians the victims.’<sup>33</sup> In consequence, he continued, a critical attitude towards Israel was emerging among the Jewish American community:

American Jews are traumatized by events in Israel. This is the downside of the euphoric mood after the Six Day War ... Now, suffering under the shame and stress of pictures of Israeli brutality televised nightly, we want to crawl into a hole.<sup>34</sup>

Paradoxically, the media coverage that made Vorspan and other Jewish Americans want to disappear, has carved a niche for Palestinian self-representation.

The *intifada* proved central to the volubility of Palestinians, who found their way from the relatively inconspicuous pages of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* to the *New York Times*. On 18 September 1988, the *New York Times* published an interview with the Israeli Arab novelist, Anton Shammas, whose novel *Arabesque* (1986), written originally in Hebrew, has generated wide critical acclaim.<sup>35</sup> The interview appeared two years after the publication of the novel and, more interestingly, was entitled 'An Arab Voice from Israel,' suggesting the emergence of a new voice. A *New York Times* review of 'A Search for Solid Ground,' a television programme reflecting the perspective of mainstream Israelis on the Palestinian uprising, criticizes the monologism of the panel's outlook. The reviewer, Walter Goodman, found the intervention of the American Palestinian Edward W. Said, who is permitted to criticise the documentary for making it seem 'that Israelis are suffering more than Palestinians,' inadequate to redress the balance.<sup>36</sup> On 21 July 1990, the *New York Times* reported the staging of a Palestinian theatrical production dealing with the 1987 uprising in Jerusalem. According to this report, the increasing space permitted in Jerusalem to a Palestinian cultural articulation of the uprising provides evidence of what might be considered a move forward.<sup>37</sup> In the wake of the *intifada*, Palestinians came to be heard from directly and their presence could no longer be veiled.

Mahmoud Darwish's poem 'Those Who Pass Between Fleeting Words' particularly illustrates the far-reaching force of an anti-colonial Palestinian voice, which echoes powerfully in the colonizer's most remote enclosures:

O those who pass between fleeting words  
Carry your names, and be gone  
Rid our time of your hours, and be gone  
Steal what you will from the blueness of

the sea and the sand of memory  
Take what pictures you will, so that you  
understand  
That which you never will:  
How a stone from our land builds  
the ceiling of our sky.<sup>38</sup>

In Darwish's poem, Palestinians are rooted in Palestine and its landscape; both are written into each other's indelible history while everything else, including settlers and the injustices of their occupation, becomes fleeting, passing and defeated. The *intifada* has empowered the Palestinian poet with an anti-colonial voice as he insists that settler colonial history must sink into oblivion and disappear into 'memory.' The poem is replete with metaphors of temporality, rendering the settlers' stay as a temporary sojourn in the settled, and by no means empty, Palestinian soil. The power of the new Palestinian sentiments, as clearly expressed by Darwish, made the former Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir quote the poem with outrage in the Knesset, clearly illustrating how Zionist settler colonial discourse could no longer marginalise an intelligible Palestinian voice.

Not only was it becoming apparent to US readers that Palestinians actually exist, but also that these subalterns can speak, since they were starting to be heard from directly. Since the uprising, as Said once observed, 'Palestinian spokesmen [had] been on television, [had] been interviewed by the radio, [had] been quoted extensively by newspapers.'<sup>39</sup> On 10 June 1990, the *New York Times* issued a report entitled 'In a West Bank Town, a Quiet Dialogue Between Settlers and Palestinians,' by the Arab American, Youssef Ibrahim.<sup>40</sup> The article discusses the possibility of dialogue between representatives from the Efrat settlement in the West Bank and its neighbouring Palestinian villages. Both sides across the divide have articulated a shared concern for the rising urgency of cross-cultural interactions. In reaction to the mediation of the Israeli Peace Now movement, they emphasise that unmediated dialogues are becoming

increasingly imperative. Reporting from a West Bank contact zone, Ibrahim writes:

So far, by all accounts, both sides have surprised each other only with the depth of their stereotypical images of each other. But they have managed, barely, to rectify those a bit. To the Palestinians, the settlers no longer appear as a monolithic group of gun-toting religious fanatics but as people concerned about a peaceful resolution of the conflict. To the settlers, the Palestinians have emerged as a distinct people from Arabs, with deep roots in this land and a firm conviction that they have a right to a nation here.<sup>41</sup>

Here, during the course of a direct dialogue, coloniser and colonised are able to re-assess stereotypical images and monolithic constructs of otherness. While, for settlers, the encounter has destabilised stereotypes of militant and religious fanatics, it affirms the presence of Palestinians as an autonomous group, eligible for self-representation. Not only does the report illustrate the possibility of dialogue with Palestinians, but it also reveals an Arab perspective intervening in US media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This discursive shift inspired Roth when writing *Operation Shylock: A Confession*, a novel set in January 1988 with action that shifts between Israel and the West Bank. How does this famous American writer respond to the Palestinian uprising and to the increasing dissention among diasporic Jews towards Israel? Bakhtin's theory of dialogism helps to unpack how the failing heteroglossia of the novel proves central to understanding the limitations of the discursive space permitted to these unconventional discourses. In more specific terms, the emerging voices of the Palestinian and the anti-Zionist are countered by cultural limits and institutional agency that make Roth's response both important and revealing. These cultural limits and institutional agency, which are responsible for the exclusion of the final chapter from the published version, also restrict dialogical interaction with emerging Palestinian and anti-Zionist voices. Roth's orchestration of competing voices reveals links between writing fiction and the limits that politics imposes on cultural expression. The

incompleteness of the novel parallels the incompleteness of its dialogism and unveils the centrality of the unspoken to meaningful dialogism.

### **3.3 Philip Roth's Dialogical Interaction with a Palestinian Voice: From 'Permission to Narrate' to 'Permission to Dissimulate'**

In reaction to the increasing visibility of Palestinians in the US media, Roth introduces the unprivileged voice of the Palestinian intellectual George Ziad. The encounter between Ziad and the narrator, 'Philip Roth,' in Jerusalem reveals them to be old acquaintances, who studied together at the University of Chicago during the mid-fifties (before the 1967 War), as 'Roth' read English while Ziad earned a degree in Religion and Art. The openness of both diasporic characters to friendship in the remote space-time of exile contrasts sharply with the suspicion and insecurity that involves 'Roth's' encounter with Ziad in Jerusalem. Here, where racial divides and colonial conflicts demarcate the space inhabited by the old friends, the Palestinian approaches while the diasporic Jew withholds his hand and backs off. Immediately after 'Roth' has realized who that Palestinian other is, the two embrace, but their mutual tolerance has annoyed an Israeli woman who starts shouting at Ziad, describing him as a 'stone-throwing Arab consumed by hatred.' Ziad explains the Israeli woman's act of defining a Palestinian in terms of Western epistemological dominance over the 'other,' that is, the Palestinian in this particular context. In a clear reference to a legacy of orientalist and colonialist discourses informing the woman's reaction, Ziad reflects: 'Another expert ... on the mentality of the Arab. Their experts on our mentality are everywhere, in the university, in the military, on the street corner, in the market.'<sup>42</sup> Through the voice of a Palestinian, the US author explains what his Israeli character can never understand, that mutual understanding is unattainable under an exclusivist, one-sided dialogue.

Roth illuminates Ziad's position through dialogical interactions with other characters who represent different, if not opposing, ideological positions

regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As soon as the Israeli woman has left the scene, Ziad redefines himself, confiding to his old friend things he had never told before. In so doing, Ziad frames his national identity in terms of a return to a geographically and historically bounded experience: a Palestinian from Jerusalem who fled to Cairo in the aftermath of the *nakba*, lived a life of exile in the US, and now has returned to Ramallah. 'Roth's' surprise at finding out about his friend's Palestinian origins echoes the protracted silence of the Palestinian who '*wanted to forget all that.*'<sup>43</sup> Ziad explains his silence in the fifties as an act of chosen amnesia to escape the burdens of dispossession, humiliation, death, and nostalgia. However, the *intifada* has enabled the Palestinian character to break silence and narrate his traumatic memories of the 1948 events. Only after the sudden appearance of stone-throwing Palestinians resisting colonial settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip does Ziad revisit the history of the *nakba* to redefine his Palestinian identity:

It was not something I talked about in 1955. I wanted to forget all that. My father couldn't forget, and so I would. Weeping and ranting all day long about everything he had lost to the Jews: his house, his practice, his patients, his books, his art, his garden, his almond trees—every day he screamed, he wept, he ranted, and I was a wonderful son, Philip. I couldn't forgive him his despair for the almond trees. The trees particularly enraged me. When he had the stroke and died, I was relieved. I was in Chicago and I thought, 'Now I won't have to hear about the almond trees and the house and the garden are all I can think about. My father and his ranting are all I can think about. I think about his tears every day. And that, to my surprise, is who I am.'<sup>44</sup>

The uprising has shaken off the chosen amnesia that dominated Ziad's exile in the West in the wake of the 1948 War. Returning to Palestine and to his father's memories of their Palestinian house, books, art, garden, and almond trees, Ziad formulates a new identity defined firmly in terms of rootedness in the land and in the collective national memory. Revisiting the past proves pivotal to the discursive construction of a national identity, particularly in times of political crisis.

Central to Roth's representation of a Palestinian voice is the concomitant dispute about whose role is more valued in times of national crisis: the intellectual or the guerrilla fighter? The intellectual or the stone-throwing activist? As a Palestinian intellectual, Ziad laments the futility of his words in resisting occupation: 'The occupier has nothing to fear from a civilized fellow like me.'<sup>45</sup> While Sylvia Fishman has drawn attention to the resonance between the names of the Palestinian character Ziad and the Palestinian intellectual Edward Said, a more substantial connection can be based on their shared origins and similar educational histories. Underscoring the fundamentalist character of Ziad, Fishman has gone further by suggesting that the name Roth has chosen for the Palestinian 'echoes the sound of Jihad, the holy Islamic war against the state of Israel.'<sup>46</sup> In fact, Ziad shows commonality with Said in his questioning of the hegemony of the coloniser's narrative. For Ziad, the absence of a Palestinian counter-narrative is maintained by institutional agency, thwarting Palestinian intellectuals by silencing, marginalising and destabilising their voices:

What do I do? I teach at a university when it is not shut down. I write for a newspaper when it is not shut down. They damage my brain in more subtle ways. I fight the occupier with words, as though words will stop them from stealing our land. I oppose our masters with ideas—that is my humiliation and shame. Clever thinking is the form my capitulation takes. Endless analyses of the situation—that is the grammar of my degradation. Alas, I am not a stone-throwing Arab—I am a word throwing Arab, soft, sentimental, and ineffective, altogether like my father.<sup>47</sup>

In these moments of self-definition, Ziad is not only given a voice to narrate his story but also permitted to enter the character zone of the Western privileged writer/narrator, defining the diasporic Jew, 'Roth,' in relation to Israeli settlers. According to Bakhtin, '[t]hese zones are formed from the fragments of character speech [*polurec*], from various forms for hidden transmission of someone else's word, from scattered words and sayings belonging to someone else's speech.'<sup>48</sup>

Invading the character zone of 'Roth,' Ziad contrasts the superb cultural production of Jews in the diaspora with the mediocre arts and minor literature of an Israeli state built on military force and a 'Machiavellian' ethos:<sup>49</sup>

What have they created like you Jews out in the world? Absolutely nothing. Nothing but a state founded on force and the will to dominate. If you want to talk about culture, there is absolutely no comparison. Dismal painting and sculpture, no musical composition, and a very minor literature—that is what all their arrogance has produced. Compare this to American Jewish culture and it is pitiable, it is laughable. And yet they are not only arrogant about the Arab and his mentality, they are not only arrogant about the goyim and their mentality, they are arrogant about you and your mentality.<sup>50</sup>

One wonders if this comparison articulates the position of a Palestinian intellectual or an assimilated Jewish American. Is it Ziad voicing anti-colonial Palestinian thoughts or is it Philip Roth, the Jewish American novelist, pronouncing an increasingly strong, post-*intifada* discordance towards Israel? This is a telling example of how character zones overlap in the text, thwarting the representation of consistently particularised ideological positions. In an indirect reference to the uprising and the increasing anger of the Palestinians, 'Roth' expresses his shock at the transformation Ziad has undergone between 1955 when they first met and their second encounter in 1988. In addition to the distinct spatial and temporal frames of their two encounters, changes in the political scene of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have had a strong impact on their relationship. In the first encounter, the traumatic memory of the 1948 dispossession and the subsequent exile of Ziad and his family translated into silence and determination to assimilate in the diaspora. However, following the uprising, their second encounter reveals a Palestinian voice engaged in narrating national history. Surprised by Ziad's emotionally-charged and powerfully expressive voice, 'Roth' wonders: 'how could that be Zee, how could this overweight, overwrought cyclone of distress possibly have been the cultivated young gentleman we all so admired for his suavity and his slick



composure?'<sup>51</sup> Here, one finds the narrator intervenes in the conversation to undermine the logic and credibility of Ziad's argument.

In so doing, the novel shows the uprising to have influenced Palestinian intellectual discourse negatively, suggesting its vulnerability to polemics and rage. Although Ziad's publishing of his essay, 'The Zionist Blackmailing of American Jewry,' echoes the increasing visibility of Palestinian writers in the West after the uprising, the narrator intervenes to downplay the relative impact of the discursive space permitted to a Palestinian attempt to narrate the nation: 'all that publishing the essay had achieved was to leave him more degraded and enraged and ground down.'<sup>52</sup> The narrator, then, continues to dismantle the rational consistency of Ziad's diatribe:

each sentence delivered with an alarming air of intellectual wantonness, the whole a pungent ideological mulch of overstatement and lucidity, of insight and stupidity, of precise historical data and wilful historical ignorance, a loose array of observations as disjointed as it was coherent and as shallow as it was deep—the shrewd and vacuous diatribe of a man whose brain, once as good as anyone's, was now as much a menace to him as the anger and the loathing that, by 1988, after twenty years of the occupation and forty years of the Jewish state, had corroded everything moderate in him, everything practical, realistic, and to the point.<sup>53</sup>

Between these opposing descriptions, the logic and credibility of Ziad's argument and ideological position are brought into question. This 'intellectual wantonness,' the narrator maintains, is the natural result of 'the intoxication of resistance,' along with the 'hatred and the great disabling fantasy of revenge' which are consuming Palestinians. The narrator then concludes his deconstructive commentary by reiterating the Israeli woman's description of Ziad: an 'Arab consumed by hate.'<sup>54</sup>

The reliability of Ziad's discourse is violated not only through the narrator's interventions, but also by the mediation of the Jewish lawyer, Shmuel, who warns against the intrinsic unreliability of all Arabs and Muslims. By making reference to the Shi'ite principle of '*taqiya*' and the proverb '*Ad-*

*daroori lih achkaam* [sic]' [necessity has its own rules] as being part of the Islamic doctrine, Shmuel argues that deception and dissimulation are normalized in Islamic culture: 'there is in Islam this idea of *taqiya*. Generally called in English "dissimulation." It's especially strong in Shi'ite Islam but it's all over Islamic culture. Doctrinally speaking, dissimulation is *part* of Islamic culture, and the permission to dissimulate is widespread.'<sup>55</sup> Talking about Ziad and Kamil, a Palestinian lawyer whose younger brother is detained by Israeli forces, Shmuel confides to 'Roth' that '[d]issimulation, two-facedness, secretiveness—all highly regarded values among your friends ... they don't think the other people have to know what is really on their minds. Very different from Jews.'<sup>56</sup> However, this subversive intervention can easily be refuted, first, by the fact that George Ziad, as the name suggests, is Christian, and therefore does not understand or embrace *taqiya*. Second, although *taqiya* is a Shi'ite principle, it constitutes a deviant concept that forms a site of divergence and conflict between Sunni Muslims and some Shi'ite groups. Still, according to the demographic distribution of Shi'ites, only a minority Shi'ite group inhabited historic Palestine.<sup>57</sup> In the novel, however, the point is that Shmuel's insistence on Muslim dissimulation dismantles the possibility of meaningful dialogue with the Palestinians, since any dialogic interaction needs to be based on mutual transparency and reliability. According to Shmuel's logic, Palestinians cannot be trusted, thus any Israeli/Palestinian dialogue is doomed to failure. For the Jewish lawyer, Palestinians have 'the permission to dissimulate,'<sup>58</sup> which undermines the legitimacy of their claim for 'permission to narrate.'

In his representation of a Palestinian intellectual, 'Roth' occasionally affirms Shmuel's subversion of Palestinians' claim to permission to narrate. Reflecting on what he has described as the inherent inconsistency of Ziad's rhetoric and argument, 'Roth' suggests two possible explanations:

I kept hearing a man as out of his depth as he was out of control, convulsed by all his contradictions and destined never to arrive where he belonged, let alone at 'being himself.' Maybe what it all came down to

was that an academic, scholarly disposition had been overtaken by the mad rage to make history and *that*, his temperamental unfitness, rather than the urgency of a bad conscience, accounted for all this disjointedness I saw, the overexcitability [sic], the maniacal loquacity, the intellectual duplicity, the deficiencies of judgement, the agitprop rhetoric—for the fact that amiable, subtle, endearing George Ziad had been turned completely inside out. Or maybe it just came down to injustice: isn't a colossal, enduring injustice enough to drive a decent man mad?<sup>59</sup>

In this passage, Roth merely reiterates common tropes from colonialist discourse, which undermines the language of colonised people and the coherence of their articulation. The incoherence of the colonised is linked to their inability to control their instincts and passions and their 'incapacity to enter into the basic system of thoughts that make civilised life possible.'<sup>60</sup> For 'Roth', Ziad's temperament and the consumption of his language by 'mad rage' and 'temperamental unfitness,' irrevocably undermine his argument with 'maniacal loquacity', 'intellectual duplicity' and 'agitprop rhetoric.' This lack of coherence, whether as a result of intrinsic cultural deficiencies or the consequence of colonial injustices, eventually dismantles the credibility of Palestinian writers and intellectuals, especially those who, like Ziad, have returned from diaspora to re-narrate the contemporary political scene from a Palestinian perspective. The violence of the Palestinian intellectuals' words and thoughts only mirrors the violence of their stone-throwing *shabab*. For both 'Roth' and Shmuel, the rhetoric of Palestinians promises nothing but failing dialogics.

'Roth' further undermines the Palestinians' rhetoric of the right of return by questioning their attachment to the land. The rage in Ziad's argument suddenly subsides when he expresses his longing for Chicago, imagining America as a Utopia where Palestinians and Jews could live peacefully together. In stark contrast with the utopian appeal of America, the Palestinian Ziad conceives of Israel as a ghetto, harbouring violent, intolerant, and inauthentic Hebrew-speaking Jews. This conception subverts the binarism

constructed by radical Zionists between Israeli *sabras* and diasporic Jews in favour of the ardent settlers of the land. For Ziad, diasporic Jews are superior to and more 'authentic' than Israeli Jews. Ziad also criticises the exclusionary attitude of the Israeli Jews who conceive of the rest of the world as 'goy.' For Ziad, this exclusionary state based on military power has impeded Jewish cultural and scientific productions: 'a state founded on force and maintained by force, a Machiavellian state that deals violently with the uprising of an oppressed people in an occupied territory, a Machiavellian state in, admittedly, a Machiavellian world.'<sup>61</sup> It fails to provide Jews with the aesthetic bliss of the diaspora where Jewish scientists, writers, and philosophers live and diligently contribute to the progress of human thought:

Here they are *authentic* ... And you there, you are 'unauthentic' ... What they teach their children in the schools is to look with disgust on the Diaspora Jew, to see the English-speaking Jew and the Spanish-speaking Jew and the Russian-speaking Jew as a freak, as a worm, as a terrified neurotic... And what the so-called neurotics have given to the world in the way of brainpower and art and science and all the skills and ideals of civilization, to this they are oblivious.<sup>62</sup>

Settlement on the land of Palestine, as Ziad observes, proves crucial to authentic Jewishness. Ziad here criticizes what Stuart Hall has described elsewhere as a 'backward-looking conception of diaspora,' seeking return to 'some sacred homeland;'<sup>63</sup> an imperialising and homogenising form of return 'for which the Palestinian people have paid so dearly and, paradoxically, by expulsion from what is also, after all, their homeland.'<sup>64</sup> Ziad criticizes the politicisation of Israeli school curricula, which disseminate mythic constructs that help cultivate racialized structures of feeling towards both Arabs and Jewish communities in far-flung diaspora.

Nevertheless, while emphasising the construction of a dialectical relation between superior Israeli settlers and inferior diasporic Jews, the novel almost completely silences racist attitudes towards oriental Jews in Israel. It is through the mouth of Ziad that the novel refers to Israel's exclusionist policy towards

Sephardic Jews: 'The pastoralization of the ghetto, George Ziad called it, the pasteurization of the faith. Green lawns, white Jews.'<sup>65</sup> *Operation Shylock* expresses through its Palestinian character what its diasporic novelist could not directly articulate: a critical view of the racist attitudes of white settlers towards oriental Jews inside and diasporic Jews outside the borders of the state. Here, Roth gives voice to a Palestinian not only to communicate a counter-narrative in dialogue with a conventional and well-established Zionist narrative, but also to criticize a state based on white privilege and racial zoning of its national space and political structure, a structure that excludes Arab Israelis as second-class citizens and Sephardic Jews as inferior to Euro-American groups.

Only through Ziad could Roth criticise the exploitation of the Holocaust in Israeli and Western media in order to perpetuate Zionist settler colonialism and expansionism. Ziad reveals the propaganda politics that underlies what he has termed '*Shoah* business,' calling attention to the evocation of the Holocaust to shift public focus away from Israeli invasions to Jewish victimisation. Since 1967, this *Shoah* business was well manipulated on an institutional level to justify Israeli expansionism:

The cynical institutionalization of the Holocaust begins. It is precisely here, with a Jewish military state gloating and triumphant, that it becomes official Jewish policy to remind the world, minute by minute, hour by hour, day in and day out, that the Jews were victims before they were conquerors only because they are victims. This is the public-relations campaign cunningly devised by the terrorist Begin: to establish Israeli military expansionism as historically just by joining it to the memory of Jewish victimization; to rationalize-- as historical justice, as just retribution, as nothing more than self-defense-- the gobbling up of the Occupied Territories and the driving of the Palestinians off their land once again. What justifies seizing every opportunity to extend Israel's boundaries? Auschwitz. What justifies bombing Beirut civilians? Auschwitz. What justifies smashing the bones of Palestinian children and blowing off the limits of Arab mayors? Auschwitz. Dachau. Buchenwald. Belsen. Treblinka. Sobibor.<sup>66</sup>

And it has continued long after 1967. This 'Shoah business' is meant to counterbalance televised news of the violence directed towards stone-throwing youths with constructs of Jewish victimisation invoked from Auschwitz. For Ziad, for example, '[t]here's no business like *Shoah* business.'<sup>67</sup> It interweaves mythic constructions of 'The Law of the Return,' 'The Ingathering of the Exiles,' and 'the Holocaust,' into a rich and complex tapestry of settler colonial narratives in order to justify invasion, violence and, most importantly, the expansion of settlements of one ethnic group at the expense of another seemingly inferior one.<sup>68</sup>

A telling example of this 'Shoah business' in *Operation Shylock* is the media exploitation of John Demjanjuk's trial in the wake of the uprising in order to counterbalance reports on Israeli violence towards stone-throwing Palestinians. The Demjanjuk story in the novel embodies the framing question of who is real as opposed to who is fictional. Demjanjuk is said to be Ivan the Terrible, the Ukranian who was 'recruited and trained' by Nazi Germans to 'staff the Belsec, Sobibor, and Treblinka extermination camps in Poland.' However, his Israeli lawyers claim that 'Demjanjuk and Ivan the Terrible were two different people.'<sup>69</sup> In the novel's treatment of the trial, Demjanjuk pleads to the court: 'I am not that awful man to whom you refer. I am innocent.'<sup>70</sup> Despite the ambivalence that might have distorted the factuality of the Demjanjuk story, the novel refers to the publicisation of the trial suggesting the exploitation of the Holocaust during the 1987 crisis.

In line with what Debra Shostak has described as a Rothian structure of 'countertexts' and 'counterlives,' *Operation Shylock* presents two trials; one is widely publicised while the other is appallingly marginalised. The careful juxtaposition of these two trials in the novel illuminates the institutional agency that manipulates public opinion by promoting representations of Jewish victimisation while concealing representations of Palestinian persecution at the very hands of these historical victims.

Cultural limits and institutional agency intervene to cloak in silence the trial of the young Palestinian who has been captured under false allegations in order to silence the anti-colonial activities of his elder brother, Kamil. Only because of his old friendship with Ziad has 'Roth' learned about the trial of Kamil's fifteen-year old brother. Instead of keeping his appointment with his cousin, Apter, 'Roth' chooses to drive to Ramallah with Ziad in order to

see with [his] own eyes the occupier's mockery of justice, ... to observe with [his] own eyes the legal system behind which the occupier attempted to conceal his oppressive colonizing, ... to visit with [Ziad] the army courtroom where the youngest brother of one of his friends was being tried on trumped-up charges and where I would witness the cynical corruption of every Jewish value cherished by every decent Diaspora Jew.<sup>71</sup>

Stories about the oppression of the Palestinians do not sell in Western media, as Ziad emphasises:

Don't tell me how the Palestinians are becoming accommodating. Don't tell me how the Palestinians have legitimate claims. Don't tell me how the Palestinians are oppressed and that an injustice has been done. Stop that immediately! I cannot raise money in America with that. Tell me about how we are threatened, tell me about terrorism, tell me about anti-Semitism and the Holocaust! And this explains why there is the show trial of this stupid Ukrainian—to reinforce the cornerstone of Israeli power politics by bolstering the ideology of the victim.<sup>72</sup>

In the particular context of Palestine, there is much more than permission to narrate, since institutional agency intervenes to promote a given narrative and blot out others. Pipik's audiotape cassette, which 'Roth' has found and transcribed for the readers, illustrates what the double has described as the monopolisation of Holocaust narratives by institutional intervention: 'The "survivors" all wrote books. You ever notice they're all the same books? *Because they're all copying from another book.* They're all the same because Jewish Control Central said, Here's the line on Auschwitz, *write it!*'<sup>73</sup>

The monologism of the authoritative narrative of the Holocaust illustrates Bakhtin's argument on how such strictly monological discourses embody 'authority as such, or the authoritativeness of tradition, of generally acknowledged truths, of the official line and other similar authorities.'<sup>74</sup> This observation is pivotal to this chapter's main argument on the intervention of institutional agency in representations of otherwise knowable history, foregrounding one (conventional) narrative whilst simultaneously silencing all others. Accordingly, meanings and images in fiction are more often than not limited and manipulated by external interventions, suggesting the impossibility of a representation that evolves from dialogical interactions between diverse and multiple narratives.

This authoritative discourse which severs the Palestinian uprising from its anti-colonial context finds expression in the novel on several occasions when the *intifada* is misrepresented as terrorism not resistance. While roaming in a bustling commercial street in Jerusalem, the protagonist laments the terror that the Israeli shoppers and customers have to endure. It has become a common scene in this market that 'an explosive device, hidden by the PLO in a refuse pile or a produce crate, [is] found by the bomb squad and defused or, if it [isn't], [goes] off, maiming and killing whoever nearby.'<sup>75</sup> *Operation Shylock* shows Israeli food markets to be targets for 'angry Arab mobs' and their terrorist attacks. Roth continues to normalise violence in the Palestinian educational system, suggesting that 'the first thing they teach at terrorist school is that human beings are never less heedful of their safety than when they are out gathering food.'<sup>76</sup>

This construction of the *intifada* in terms of violence confirms a prevailing Israeli discourse that renders the events as 'a law and order problem' severed from its 'historical and political context.'<sup>77</sup> It is represented as Palestinian acts of terrorism, occurring in a vacuum, thus extricating it from its colonial context. This construction of the Palestinian *intifada* in terms of



terrorism rather than resistance illustrates a Zionist rhetorical structure aiming at dehumanising this resistance movement. Said emphasises:

The entire tenor of Zionist and Western discourse about the Palestinians has been to reduce us to so problematic, eccentric, and unthinkable a level as to make our every effort to appear to be human only a confirmation of our dehumanized, permanently subaltern status. This has been the conceptual coefficient of the war against Palestinians led in the West by the supporters of Israel.<sup>78</sup>

This quotation clearly describes the case of George Ziad in Roth's novel. The appearance of Ziad is reduced in the novel to a problematic and dehumanised status whose 'dissimulation' renders his anti-colonial arguments necessarily eccentric.

The absence of a consistently credible Palestinian voice and the misrepresentation of the uprising can be linked to the absence of Palestinian landscapes in Roth's representation of 1988 Palestine. The bizarre lack of landscape imagery in *Operation Shylock* is not without implications. While driving with Ziad from Jerusalem to Ramallah, the reader might expect to hear from 'Roth' commentaries on and descriptions of Palestinian landscapes, of the famous terraced hills of Ramallah, Jerusalem's historical ruins and sites of decay. But, to the reader's disappointment, portrayals of nature and landscape in the narrative are notably absent. Neither an archaeological perspective – focusing on the Biblical ruins of Palestine – nor a colonial gaze – appreciating the imprints of a Zionist modernizing and civilizing enterprise – have been embraced to represent the land. Roth's conspicuous neglect of landscape in the novel involves overlooking the Palestinian re-invention of the stone in terms of nationalist and political meanings. The stone, which has long been connected to the Zionist fashioning of Biblical Palestine, has become a major trope in narratives of the Palestinian uprising. In Zionist discourse, the trope of the stone has proved pivotal to the construction of a settler colonial narrative. Drawing on archaeology, the founding Zionists of the nineteenth century

examined stones in search of inscriptions that would validate their claim to the land of Palestine. In the context of a colonial enterprise based on white privilege, Zionist narratives utilized the stone in the mythic construct of 'making the desert bloom' to justify a modernizing project apparent in spaces blooming with new buildings made of stones and concrete. With the outbreak of the 1987 *intifada*, the very stone, so deeply engraved in Zionist narrative, became both the weapon and the symbol of Palestinian popular resistance, confirming the popularity of the resistance and its rootedness in the land.

### **Palestinian Women and the Uprising**

Palestinian women are part of the absent landscape in Roth's novel. Despite prevailing discourses on the increasing engagement of Palestinian women in the national and the political scenes during the uprising, *Operation Shylock* fails to re-enact this emerging heteroglossia by marginalising both the presence and the activism of Palestinian women. 'The role of women was substantially altered,' Said observes. 'During the *intifada* ... women came to the fore as equal partners in the struggle.'<sup>79</sup> For Pappé, the central role taken by both rural and urban Palestinian women during the 1980s marks a significant difference between the 1987 *intifada* and the 1939 Revolt.<sup>80</sup> The 1980s movement was 'both a spontaneous initiative and a response to a call from men in leading national positions' which 'marked a significant break from past modes of political behaviour.'<sup>81</sup> However, this alteration in the social and political scene goes unrecorded in *Operation Shylock*.

Ziad's wife, Anna, is the only female Palestinian character to interrupt a male-dominated narrative. From her limited discursive space, Anna appears only to prevent her husband and son from engaging in the *intifada* instead of encouraging them to join the resistance movement. Anna was sent by her father to Washington University, where she met Ziad and married him. Upon returning to Ramallah, she resumed work by running a small workshop involved with the 'production of propaganda posters, leaflets, and handouts, an

operation whose clandestine nature took its toll in a daily dose of nagging medical problems and a weekly bout of migraines.’<sup>82</sup> When she eventually speaks, she articulates grave doubts and unsettling hesitations about whether ‘the survival of Palestinian culture, Palestinian people, Palestinian heritage’ is crucial to ‘the evolution of humanity,’ whether that ‘mythology’ is ‘a greater must than the survival of [her] son.’<sup>83</sup>

Anna’s bewilderment echoes a similar dilemma in Zelda Popkin’s *Quiet Street* (1951) when its central character, Ida Goldstein, articulates grave doubts about whether the creation of ‘a Nation, a State’ is worth sacrificing the lives of her children in 1948:

They will say to the little ones, ‘In 1948, we made a Nation, we made great history.’ Only I—’ she was whispering again—‘only I will remember once on a time, I had a beautiful daughter and a brilliant son. It will not count to them that I gave my children to make a State. But to me nothing will count except my loss to me.’<sup>84</sup>

For both Ida and Anna, the moot question remains: ‘now which, your living child or [the] State?’<sup>85</sup> Anna extends these questions in ways that undermine the Palestinian quest for self-determination and downplay the anti-colonial cause of the Palestinian uprising. She urges her husband to leave the West Bank and return to America:

A man with George’s brain, strangling on spurious issues of *loyalty*! Why aren’t you loyal ... to your intellect? Why aren’t you loyal to literature? People like you ... run for their *lives* from backwater provinces like this one. You ran, you were *right* to run, both of you, as far as you could from the provincialism and the egocentricity and the xenophobia and the lamentations, you were not poisoned by the sentimentality of these childish, stupid ethnic mythologies, you plunged into a big, new, free world with all your intellect and all your energy, truly free young men, devoted to art, books, reason, scholarship, to *seriousness*.<sup>86</sup>

Here, the portrayal of Anna, who is not willing to sacrifice personal glory for a nationalist cause, misrepresents the active role that many Palestinian women played during the uprising, as chronicled in numerous historical accounts of the

*intifada*.<sup>87</sup> A contrapuntal reading of a Palestinian narrative can restore the partial picture of Palestinian women that *Operation Shylock* presents. Sahar Khalifeh's *Bab el-Saha* [Gate of the Courtyard] (1990) offers a dialogical interaction with emergent gender and national discourses.<sup>88</sup> Since the availability of an English translation is a selection criterion for the Arab novels under scrutiny in this thesis, the fact that *Bab el-Saha* has not been translated into English constitutes a structural problem. However, the material it offers for a comparative study with *Operation Shylock* makes it useful here, and sheds light on this relatively little-known Palestinian novel. Khalifeh represents the impact of the *intifada* on the lives of three Palestinian women, Nazha, Zakiyyah, and Samar, who belong to a small community inhabiting the space around a courtyard (*el-Saha*) in the city of Nablus. Through the conversations and actions of these female characters, Khalifeh re-enacts and refracts the heteroglossia that emerged in the wake of the *intifada*.

The novel destabilises conventional discourses by placing Nazha, a Palestinian prostitute, at the centre of events. Nazha and her mother, Sakinah, who was also a prostitute and a suspected collaborator, are victims of a provincial society that fails to provide security for a widow and her vulnerable daughter. Despite the changes in the political scene, Nazha and her disreputable house have remained deserted and stigmatised until her brother, Ahmad, who has returned to kill her, is shot by an Israeli soldier and all the women of Bab el-Saha come to his funeral. The house, which is now vibrant with people, sparks the flame that will break the siege forced on the village by the Israeli occupation. When the *fedayeen* fail to burn the Israeli flag, Nazha leads a group of women through an underground canal to the Israeli flag beyond the gate where she lights up a Molotov cocktail and burns the flag. By defying the Israeli soldier who shot her brother and by burning the Israeli flag, Nazha has embraced the *intifada* and redeemed her past. For Khalifeh, the *intifada* is similarly redeemed by embracing society in its diverse totality, and particularly by embracing depraved women such as Nazha.

The early days of the *intifada* yielded unusual images of women in the streets, carrying, handing stones to Palestinian fighters, and throwing stones at the Israeli soldiers. Their growing visibility in the wake of the *intifada* earned them recognition in the 1988 Palestinian Declaration of Independence, which extended 'a special tribute to the brave Palestinian woman, guardian of sustenance and life, keeper of our people's perennial flame.'<sup>89</sup> Joseph Massad argues that 'the Intifada has created a new discursive space in which Palestinian women can challenge the dominant conception of Palestinian nationalist agency,'<sup>90</sup> one that has been often defined in terms of masculinity. In line with this argument, I suggest that in *Bab el-Saha* Sahar Khalifeh pushes the borders and stretches the limits of this discursive space by her subversive intervention in the construction of gender in national discourses during the time of the *intifada*. Khalifeh complicates these constructs by representing a Palestinian national narrative from diverse women's perspectives that often condemn their subjugation by a Palestinian patriarchal society under occupation. The double subjection of Palestinian women remains veiled in national discourses that celebrate their greater visibility and activism during the *intifada* while maintaining silence on their continuing marginalisation by a male-dominated society. As a subject of patriarchal dominance herself, Khalifeh wrote a novel to reveal how the 'intifada proved a catharsis for women's politics of identity in every walk of life,' suggesting the urgency of facing the 'double burden of a patriarchal society and the Israeli occupation.'<sup>91</sup>

The dialogic nature of *Bab el-Saha* is revealed through the diversity of perspectives engaged to redefine a national discourse at a time of political crisis. By representing events from the unusual perspective of a prostitute, Khalifeh provides a more dialogic picture than would otherwise be possible in mainstream discourses, one that embraces not just women but those who are not usually accepted by social norms. *Bab el-Saha* opens with the funeral of an unnamed old woman and closes with the funeral of Nazha's brother, and between the two funeral scenes the trajectory of Nazha's character develops

from exclusion to integration in the provincial society of Bab el-Saha, particularly after her participation in the uprising. '*Intifada* funerals,' according to Kanako Mabuchi, 'were indeed a place and occasion where the idea of community was reinforced, while also serving as an outlet for political nationalist sentiments.'<sup>92</sup> The funeral in *Bab el-Saha* replaces the familiar scene of the wedding in most pre-*intifada* narratives. While the wedding trope represents the union of man and woman and signals the desired union of the national citizen with a national territory, the funeral in *intifada* narratives accentuates the frustration of the conjugal/national union. In contrast to the opening funeral scene, which marks the absence of the socially rejected Nazha, the final scene of her brother's funeral shows how her house has become a space where women take the lead in breaking their double imprisonment and asserting their forceful presence. 'Nazha,' writes Amal Amireh, 'redeems herself at the end by joining the intifada, and the intifada is redeemed by embracing Nazha.'<sup>93</sup> Khalifeh's narrative complicates our understanding of the uprising by re-inventing the *intifada* funeral as a site for dialogical negotiations with, and the political empowerment of, vulnerable and subaltern women.

*Bab el-Saha* subverts a dominant national discourse in which the land of Palestine has been metaphorically represented as a fertile woman raped by foreign occupiers. Khalifeh's representation destabilises this long-established trope by representing women as humans rather than abstractions valued either in symbolic relation to the homeland or for their fertility and productivity.

Through the character of Zakiyyah, a divorced Palestinian woman and a prominent midwife, the novel negotiates with a prevailing discourse that constructs women as '*manabit*,'<sup>94</sup> the soil that contains, nourishes and reproduces the society. Zakiyyah is described by other characters as 'the mother of all youths.'<sup>95</sup> In the novel, Khalifeh subverts the politicisation of marriage and childbearing by nationalist discourses, which celebrate women's agency in the 'national work' while overlooking the violence and social injustices befalling them in a patriarchal society. Zakiyyah uses simple obstetric tools to deliver

babies, and at a time of national crisis, she uses these very tools for surgical interventions to rescue Palestinian *Shabab*.

In this context, 'the mother of all youths' gives birth to and prevents the death of Palestine. Behind this national image, however, lies the story of a divorced woman who finds herself obliged to work and provide for her daughters in a society which allows men's injustices to continue. Zakiyyah reveals how the events of the 1980s have increased the demands on Palestinian women, whose engagement in national work has added more pressures and concerns to their parental responsibilities in the home:

What do you want me to say? You want me to say that now women throw stones, deliver babies, hide *fedayeen*, and demonstrate? Understood. But their concerns have increased; their old anxieties remain unresolved and their new ones are yet many; in addition to their domestic worries of pregnancy, delivery, breastfeeding, and household chores, women now share concerns for dispersed *shabab* moving from mountains to meadows, from summer heat to winter cold.<sup>96</sup>

Despite their active national roles during the *intifada*, women's struggles with a male-dominated society remain marginalised in both national discourse and literary representations. In the face of prevailing *intifada* discussions that idealize the national struggle, Zakiyyah calls attention to the psychological needs and social concerns of Palestinian women.

According to Sherna Berger Gluck, 'the fate of Palestinian women is bound up with the direction of both the external struggle with the Israelis and the internal struggle for a pluralist, democratic society.'<sup>97</sup> In this context of internal and external struggles, Zakiyyah, Samar, and Nazha find themselves battling on both fronts. Samar's story intersects with the stories of Nazha and Zakiyyah, illustrating a case in which women fall victim to rigid conventions of honour and integrity unresponsive to the special conditions of living through a national crisis. Samar represents educated, working women who, despite their economic independence, remain subject to domestic violence. Her life is a series of escapes from the confines of the house to the relative freedom she enjoys

within the university environment, the society of community service, and research fieldwork. Inside the house, however, Samar retreats to a refuge on the house roof. There, she enjoys a time and a place of her own where she can reflect on the present and its complexities, and dreams of the future and its possibilities. Collecting data for a research project on how the uprising has transformed Palestinian women, Samar insists on involving Nazha. While visiting Nazha to complete the questionnaire, a curfew forces Samar to extend her visit to nine days. Upon her return, Samar, who has survived the oppression of the occupier now faces the violence of her brother who beats her severely for staying long outside the house. Echoing Spivak's argument on the double subjection of women in colonised societies, Khalifeh, in creating her female characters, 'draws parallels between the oppression experienced as a result of occupation and the oppression of women in a patriarchal culture showing the double burden that women must endure under occupation.'<sup>98</sup> In the course of events, the novel draws attention to how the *intifada* should transform and eventually redress social as well as colonial oppressions. If the 1967 defeat has formed a rite of passage for the Palestinian intellectual, the *intifada* has brought about a rite of passage for the Palestinian woman, marking a shift from domesticity to national activism in the struggle against occupation. Along the same line, if the exiled intellectual has challenged the erasures of Palestinian borders in 1967, the Palestinian woman has challenged the borders of the house during the *intifada* and joined the crowds on the streets in their popular resistance movement.

However, Khalifeh's critical response and sceptical stance are not typical of the Palestinian literature that dealt with the *intifada* in the few years following its outbreak. As Ami Elad-Bouskila notes,

During the period of the *intifada*, Palestinian society is portrayed in its literature as patriotic and unified, free of internal divisions. It is depicted as espousing national and personal values, struggling, respectful of those who carry the burden of the *intifada* and glorifying its fallen.<sup>99</sup>



But this is not the case in Khalifeh's representation. For Khalifeh, the *intifada* will not achieve its aims until it shakes off conventional social constructions of men and women and embraces society's most heterogeneous groups and classes.

### 3.4 Philip Roth's Dialogical Interaction with a Counter-Zionist Discourse: Representing Diasporism

While Khalifeh's little-known narrative serves to restore the visibility of Palestinian women on the political scene, which *Operation Shylock* overlooks, 'Roth's' imposter voices a counter-ideology to restore the historical consequences of political Zionism. Not only does the representation of a Palestinian voice illustrate Roth's engagement with social heteroglossia, but the textual space he makes for the articulation of an anti-Zionist ethos also refracts the increasing discordance among diasporic Jews towards Israel. Roth complicates this counter-discourse by representing a radical anti-Zionist ideology called Diasporism, as envisioned and articulated by Moishe Pipik, the imposter, 'Roth's' double, who has been usurping the identity of 'Philip Roth' in Jerusalem.

Intended as a counter-discourse to Zionism, Diasporism calls for the resettlement of Ashkenazi Jews in their European countries of origin.

Propagated as a redemptive ideology, Diasporism is meant to

rebuild *everything*, not in an alien and menacing Middle East but in those very lands where everything once flourished, while, at the same time, it seeks to avert the catastrophe of a second Holocaust brought about by the exhaustion of Zionism as a political and ideological force.<sup>100</sup>

Pipik undermines the political materialisation of an ideology based on territoriality and ethnicity, maintaining that 'Zionism undertook to restore Jewish life and the Hebrew language to a place where neither had existed with any real vitality for nearly two millennia.'<sup>101</sup> He continues to explain his ideological project:

The great mass of Jews have been in Europe since the Middle Ages. Virtually everything we identify culturally as Jewish has its origins in the life we led for centuries among European Christians. The Jews of Islam have their own, very different destiny. I am not proposing that Israeli Jews whose origins are in Islamic countries return to Europe, since for them this would constitute not a home-coming but a radical uprooting ... For those Jews, Israel must continue to be their country. Once the European Jews and their families have been resettled and the population has been halved, then the state can be reduced to its 1948 borders, the army can be mobilized, and those Jews who have lived in an Islamic cultural matrix for centuries can continue to do so, independently, autonomously, but in peace and harmony with their Arab neighbours. For those people to remain in the region is simply as it should be, their rightful habitat, while for the European Jews, Israel has been an exile and no more, a sojourn, a temporary interlude in the European saga that it is time to resume.<sup>102</sup>

The social heteroglossia that enters the novel through Pipik is illuminated by the dialectical self/other relationship that connects 'Roth,' the protagonist, with his double. For 'Roth,' Pipik is a materialisation of his own otherness: 'a version of me so absolutely not-me,'<sup>103</sup> 'my Jerusalem counterself.'<sup>104</sup> This self/other relationship reflects the freedom that Roth, the author, can be said to have enjoyed in the discursive space inhabited by the double. Elaine Safer argues that '[i]n *Operation Shylock*, Roth, with comic irony, uses the concept of the double to reassert postmodern scepticism about identity of the self, about the metafictional aspects of history, and about the many faceted view of factual evidence.'<sup>105</sup> However, the plurality that the double conveys is only one facet of his intervention. A more important function has been revealed by D. M. Thomas, who asserts that 'Roth's double permit[s] him to explore territory that, even for a Jewish writer of notable courage and independence, must still seem impermissible.'<sup>106</sup> The double gives voice to what Roth himself cannot articulate more clearly: criticism of European Israelis. His presence expresses the rising need to push the limits and increase the margins for the articulation of emergent unconventional discourses, particularly those which reconfigure the relationship of diasporic Jews to the Israeli homeland at a time of political crisis.

The time/space that Pipik chooses to promote Diasporism reveals the subversive implications of his ideological project. Inventing Diasporism, Pipik is 'inspired to pursue its implementations by the example of Theodore Herzl, whose plan for a Jewish national state had seemed no less utopian and antihistorical to its critics some fifty-odd years before it came to fruition.'<sup>107</sup> Pipik unpacks his project in the city of Jerusalem during the first days of the Palestinian uprising, a time of great unrest and political turmoil that challenges the security of Israel. He also chooses to usurp the identity of a famous Jewish American novelist as a medium to ensure a greater resonance for Diasporism. In so doing, he emulates the medium that Theodor Herzl once utilised to disseminate the ethos and aspirations of political Zionism through his 1902 novel, *Altneuland*.

### **3.5 'The Written and the Unwritten World' of *Operation Shylock*: Dialogism and the Missing Chapter**

*Operation Shylock* incorporates factual narratives through what Bakhtin has termed 'inserted genres,' such as 'diaries, confessions, journalistic articles' and other materials.<sup>108</sup> These include allusions to Woody Allen's op-ed article, published interviews Roth had with the Israeli novelist Aharon Appelfeld, and textual material from Leon Klinghoffer's travel diaries. The interview with Appelfeld illustrates Roth's use of inserted genres in his literary representation of the Palestinian uprising. One of the motives behind 'Roth's' visit to Jerusalem in the novel is to interview Appelfeld. The fictional text, then, includes selected parts of the interview, which was conducted in reality and appeared in the *New York Times* on 28 February 1988. The inclusion of this interview in *Operation Shylock*, which is typical of Roth's craft of mixing reality with fiction, is crucial to understanding its inconsistent dialogics. It is useful here to highlight Appelfeld's pronounced position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in general and Palestinians in particular in order to understand the discursive function of his presence in the novel.

Appelfeld's body of work, as critics have observed, revolves squarely around the Holocaust and the historical exodus of Jews from Europe. More importantly, he has been criticised for his utter silence on Palestinians, not only in his fiction but also in the bulk of interviews he had, to which the interview with Roth is no exception. It is odd enough that this interview, although it was conducted in the midst of the uprising, includes no reference to the event. Answering a question, raised elsewhere, about his silence on Palestinians, Appelfeld insists: 'I am not familiar with the Arabs. For me they are an abstraction,' thus reiterating a conventional Zionist narrative which conceives of the land as emptiness and the Palestinians as absence.<sup>109</sup> In line with the widely publicised trial of John Demjanjuk of the Treblinka gas chamber, the voice of Appelfeld in the text illustrates a case of the '*Shoah* business,' whereby the Zionist construction of Jewish victimisation is re-circulated at a time when Israeli handling of the Palestinian uprising threatens the Israeli claims of ethical responsibility. The allusion to Leon Klinghoffer's travel diaries reaffirms structures of victimization whilst simultaneously uncovering the settlers' manipulation of these aesthetic artefacts as agents in the process of extending and disseminating ideological constructs. These texts are presented to 'Roth' by David Supposnik, a minor character who introduces himself as an 'antiquarian,' a 'dealer in old and rare books.'<sup>110</sup> Supposnik, who appears to 'Roth' as 'a colonial officer who might have trained at Sandhurst and served here with the British during the Mandate,'<sup>111</sup> seeks the assistance of the famous US novelist to present the little-known diaries of this pro-Zionist Jewish American to 'a worldwide audience.' He explains that the popularity of Roth's fiction, along with his committed engagement with the burdens of a Jewish American identity, would guarantee the critical and commercial success of the book, hence a wider distribution of a narrative of Palestinian terrorism: 'Only you can bring to these little travel diaries the compassionate knowledge that will reveal to the world exactly who it was and what it was that was murdered on the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* on October 8, 1985.'<sup>112</sup> The legacy of Klinghoffer to a

pro-Zionist public includes 'My Trip' and 'Travels Abroad,' two accounts replete with descriptions of modern Israeli spaces in sheer contrast with arid Palestinian quarters.<sup>113</sup> The intervention of Supposnik, the book dealer, to revive Klinghoffer's 1979 travel diaries in the wake of the *intifada*, illustrates the energy with which Zionist propagandists manipulate the representation of events. During the Israeli national crisis, reproducing the diaries of a 'defenseless Jew crippled in a wheelchair that the Palestinian freedom fighters shot in the head and threw into the Mediterranean Sea [sic]' is a telling example of how Zionists manipulate literary texts to disseminate particular representations.<sup>114</sup> The reproduction of Klinghoffer's diaries parallels the invocation of the Holocaust through the Demjanjuk trial. Both serve to foreground and disseminate constructs of Jewish victimization and Palestinian violence. The same tactics involved in the commission and promotion of Uris's *Exodus* are still at work, reaffirming Zionist control over the limited space permitted to counter-discourses, counter-lives and counter-selves.

If inserted genres contribute to Roth's strategy of authenticating the non-fiction illusion of the novel, the subtitle, 'A Confession,' further complicates the overlap of fiction and non-fiction in *Operation Shylock*. The narration of events, as well as landscape descriptions, are played down, leaving the dialogue and the discourse of the speaking subjects to take centre stage. What unfolds as a confession turns out to be a series of dialogues between the narrator and the other characters, obscuring rather than illuminating their respective ideological positions.

In response to emerging discourses, Roth's 1993 novel gives voice to the Palestinian as well as to the critical view of Israel. In *Operation Shylock*, Roth creates what Bakhtin calls an 'intentional and conscious hybrid:'

Every novel, taken as the totality of all the languages and consciousness of language embodied in it, is a *hybrid*. But we emphasize once again: it is an intentional and conscious hybrid, one artistically organized, and not an opaque mechanistic mixture of languages (more precisely, a mixture

of the brute elements of language). *The artistic image of a language*—such is the aim that novelistic hybridization sets for itself.<sup>115</sup>

The 'artistic image' of the novel's language is powerfully determined by authorial interventions as manifested in the selectivity, orchestration, and manipulation of voices, promoting one position while demoting another. The credibility and consistency of a Palestinian voice and a counter-Zionist position, as represented by the Palestinian, George Ziad, and the diasporic Jew, Moishe Pipik, are constantly destabilized by the interventions of the narrator. The unstable temperament of Ziad, the Halcion problem of the narrator, and the mental disorder of Pipik disrupt the validity and logic of their arguments, and eventually destabilize the heteroglossia of this seemingly heteroglot novel. One may conclude that Roth's novel is not structured on 'authentic heteroglossia but on a mere diversity of voices,' voices that are deflected and defeated by the irregularities intrinsic to their representation in the novel.<sup>116</sup> Here, one finds that, in *Operation Shylock*, Roth has created a literary hybrid of fiction and non-fiction, written and unwritten worlds.

The relation between the writing of fiction, history, and politics, which clearly accentuates the framing problematic of this thesis, proves central to understanding Roth's representation of the Palestinian uprising and the discourses that this event has generated. The world of the novel presents characters engaged with aesthetic expression and, given the socio-historical context of its setting, find themselves either agents in the process of epistemological hegemony or objects to the limits imposed on their cultural articulation. During his journey to Jerusalem, the central character 'Philip Roth' meets with two Israeli artists, Apter and Aharon Appelfeld. The conversations 'Roth' has with them reveal shared concerns with the ways fact and fiction, memory, and imagination, necessarily overlap and permeate narrations. 'Roth's cousin, Apter, who lives in Jerusalem, is an artist 'painting scenes of the Holy Land for the tourist trade.'<sup>117</sup> Apter tells 'Roth' stories about how he and his

paintings are treated by those who pass by his stall to purchase and more often to steal. The narrator, 'Roth,' comments:

In Apter's stories, people steal from him, spit on him, defraud and insult and humiliate him virtually every day and, more often than not, these people who victimize my cousin are survivors of the camps. Are his stories accurate and true? I myself never inquire about their veracity. I think of them instead as fiction that, like so much of fiction, provides the storyteller with the lie through which to expose his unspeakable truth. I treat the stories rather the way Aharon has chosen to understand the story concocted by his Catholic 'Jew.'<sup>118</sup>

For 'Roth,' the lies and fabrications in Apter's stories can be understood as ways to manipulate cultural limits, suggesting a possible medium to speak the 'unspeakable truth.' 'Roth's' interview with the real but fictitiously deployed Israeli novelist Aharon Appelfeld reveals a more complex approach by demonstrating how the intervention of imagination with memory in the creative work seems rather necessary in rendering a historical crisis that is too violent to be believed. Aharon explains how memory constitutes 'a minor element in the creative process' which usually approximates far more truths and a fuller understanding than can otherwise be possible by being 'faithful to reality.'<sup>119</sup> In the craft of literary construction, as Aharon has emphasised, 'to create means to order, sort out and choose the words and the pace that fit the work. The materials are indeed materials from one's life, but, ultimately, the creation is an independent creature.'<sup>120</sup>

Aharon's description of the creative process confirms Hayden White's argument about the emplotment of historical events through the aesthetic practice of storytelling in a given culture: 'to emplot events, means to organise and arrange them according to a recognisable story-type, which entails a reduction to the number of possible story-types available in a given culture.'<sup>121</sup> Narratives, thus, unfold not only what they articulate, but more importantly, the process of appropriating memory and reality through deliberate inclusions, exclusions, ordering, and reconstructions which in itself tells unspoken stories.

By choosing to narrate his personal memories of the Holocaust from the perspective of a young girl, Aharon, as he explains to 'Roth,' has created necessary distance and approximated 'the disorientation felt by people who were unaware that they were on the brink of a cataclysm.'<sup>122</sup> He expounds the process of manufacturing a fictionalised history:

The reality of the Holocaust surpassed any imagination. If I remained true to the facts, no one would believe me. But the moment I chose a girl, a little older than I was at that time, I removed 'the story of my life' from the mighty grip of memory and gave it over to the creative laboratory. There memory is not the only proprietor... The exceptional is permissible only if it is part of an overall structure and contributes to an understanding of that structure. I had to remove these parts that were unbelievable from 'the story of my life' and present a more credible version.<sup>123</sup>

Aharon's commentary on the process of writing fictional history illustrates how aesthetic artefacts are mediated by 'an overall structure,' an authoritative narrative as it were, that determines what is 'permissible,' and controls the 'creative laboratory' in a given society.

For the two Philip Roths, the novelist and the protagonist, writing the mission of 'Operation Shylock' has become the issue at stake 'during one of the more astounding episodes in Jerusalem.'<sup>124</sup> The failure to publish the final chapter, which supposedly details the operation Roth carried out for the Mossad, demonstrates the novelist's struggle with the limits of representation. The final chapter of the novel apparently negotiates the permission to narrate 'Roth's' espionage mission in Athens, suggesting the cultural restrictions that Jewish American writers face when it comes to representing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Before the publication of what promises to be 'a best-selling book,' Smilesburger, the Mossad agent, requests to inspect the manuscript of the final chapter that describes the 'Operation Shylock' mission.<sup>125</sup> For Smilesburger, the chapter contains 'information too seriously detrimental to his agency's interests and to the Israeli government to be published in English, let



alone in some fifteen other languages,' and must therefore be deleted.<sup>126</sup> The 'permissible' as defined by Smilesburger, the representative of institutional agency in the novel, is not determined by the historical 'accuracy' or the 'verisimilitude' of the written but rather by its compliance with the 'agency's interest.'<sup>127</sup> The question of the missing chapter suggests the incompleteness of the published version and implies that a fuller version has remained unwritten. Smilesburger suggests that 'Roth' should leave out the final chapter entirely instead of representing it as utterly contrived fiction:

'Here's a better suggestion, then. Instead of replacing it with something imaginary, do yourself the biggest favor of your life and just lop off the chapter entirely.'

'Publish the book without its ending.'

'Yes, incomplete, like me. Deformed can be effectual too, in its own unsightly way.'<sup>128</sup>

Smilesburger affirms that an incomplete story can be 'effectual' by its hinting to the omitted that is yet to be told.

If Uris's representations of the 1948 history oscillates between commission and omission, 'Roth's representation of the 1987 uprising fluctuates between autobiographical confession and contrived fiction. 'Roth' finds in this uncertainty that the reader is left with a way to manipulate censorship and a means to narrate untold stories that may not be otherwise permitted. After Smilesburger's disapproval of the final chapter, 'Roth' reflects:

Soon enough I found myself wondering if it might be best to present the book not as an autobiographical confession that any number of readers, both hostile and sympathetic, might feel impelled to challenge on the grounds of credibility, not as a story whose very point was its improbable reality, but—claiming myself to have imagined what had been munificently provided, free of charge, by superinventive [sic] actuality—as fiction, as a conscious dream contrivance, one whose latent content the author had advised as deliberately as he had the baldly manifest. I could even envision *Operation Shylock*, misleadingly presented as a novel.<sup>129</sup>

'Roth's' eventual decision to present an actual experience as imagined and fictionalised liberated his work from the restraints imposed on publishing by institutional agency.

What started as a 'confession' at the beginning of the novel has disintegrated into mere fiction at the end. The preface reads as follows:

I've drawn *Operation Shylock* from notebook journals. The book is as accurate an account as I am able to give of actual occurrences that I lived through during my middle fifties and that culminated, early in 1988, in my agreeing to undertake an intelligence-gathering operation for Israel's foreign intelligence service, the Mossad.<sup>130</sup>

The novel then ends with a note to the reader stating that:

The book is a work of fiction. The formal conversational exchange with Aharon Appelfeld quoted in chapters 3 and 4 first appeared in *The New York Times* on March 11, 1988; the verbatim minutes of the January 27, 1988, morning session of the trial of John Demjanjuk in Jerusalem District Court provided the courtroom exchanges quoted in chapter 9. Otherwise the names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. This confession is false.<sup>131</sup>

Between the preface and the closing note, the reader is left bewildered about the verisimilitude and fictionality of what the novel narrates about otherwise knowable history and real, yet fictitiously deployed, people.

The question of genre and the measure of truth entailed in its author-reader pact is an issue at stake in representing Palestine. While Said's *Out of Place* represents an autobiographical confession, Roth's *Operation Shylock* illustrates an example of a 'confessional fiction,' which J. M. Coetzee has described as 'a subgenre of the novel in which problems of truth-telling and self-recognition, deception and self-deception, come to the forefront.'<sup>132</sup> The fictionalization of historical events and real-life figures as well as the opacity, which results from the slippage, not only between author and author-protagonist, but between the three Philip Roths of the novel—the author, the

author-protagonist, and impostor—complicate the process of truth-telling and signal the author's textual evasion. The omission of the final chapter remains an untold truth, hinting to the possibility of the nonexistence of the operation it purports to unfold. *Operation Shylock* problematises the relation between truth-telling, ethical responsibility, and institutional censorship, by fictionalising a confession that would have extended its 'cost' to the reader who is eventually denied access to its details. In so doing, Roth stands on the edge between an unattainable historical veracity and a frustrated ethical responsibility. For Coetzee, 'the confessional enterprise' is 'one of finding the truth as of telling the truth; and in either case getting to the truth carries a threat.'<sup>133</sup> Roth engages with the intricacy of finding and telling truth, while being cautiously aware of the threat that 'ending the enterprise' might pose.<sup>134</sup> Hence, to the frustration of the 'confessor' or the reader, but to the 'privilege' of the 'confessant' or author and to the sustainability of his discourse, the confession remains incomplete and the slipperiness of its truth-value endures.

In Roth's novel, silence becomes a form of expression. Reiterating Macherey's queries, one wonders, what is the unspoken saying in *Operation Shylock*? To what extent is dissimulation a way of speaking?<sup>135</sup> In the face of limits and restrictions, the narrative reaches out to what lies beyond the pale by increasing the margin for what might be dismissed as inauthentic rhetoric. Through the 'lies' of Apter, the voice of the 'imposter,' and the 'vacuous diatribe' of the Palestinian intellectual,<sup>136</sup> *Operation Shylock* speaks the unspeakable and narrates untold stories that may not be otherwise permitted. Televised news of heavily armed Israeli soldiers chasing stone-throwing Palestinian youths had aroused the anger and antagonism of those who had long looked towards Israel as the epitome of morality in the Holy Land. Accordingly, an anti-Israeli discourse emerged in US media in the wake of the uprising, which takes a radical form in Pipik's ideological project of Diasporism. Underlying the mental disturbance of Pipik and the narrator's sustained deconstruction of the credibility and consistency of his anti-Zionist

arguments, a discourse that is by no means permissible within the borders of Israel's major metropolitan ally, is being voiced. In a similar vein, the inflamed rhetoric of Ziad, while being dismantled, articulates the emergent Palestinian voice whose anti-colonial discourse criticizes the nationalistic, expansionist, and ethnically exclusivist impulse of the Zionist settler enterprise that led to the invasion of Lebanon, to the expansion of settlements in the West Bank, and, in reaction, to the *intifada*. In this margin of uncertainty, Roth entertains a measure of freedom and a relative emancipation from cultural limits and power restrictions.

Engaging with the intervention of institutional agency in literary representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, *Operation Shylock* opens channels for the articulation of the impermissible whilst simultaneously pointing to the vulnerability of cultural artefacts to historical mayhem. While reading Klinghoffer's travel diaries, 'Roth' writes his interpretations and comments on the margins of the manuscript. The fusion of 'Roth's' scribbles with Klinghoffer's actual writing illustrates the susceptibility of cultural artefacts to external interventions that usually add to, reduce from, and (mis)interpret the original texts. The writer's intervention to orchestrate historical memory and factual materials is clearly illustrated in the conversation between Smilesburger, the representative of institutional agency, and 'Roth' the fictional novelist. In reaction to 'Roth's' design to weave the details of his journey into a piece of fiction, Smilesburger emphasises the illusory nature of representation: 'represent me in your book however you like. Do you prefer to romanticise me or to demonise me? Do you wish to heroise me or do you want instead to make your jokes? Suit yourself.'<sup>137</sup> 'Roth's' answer to Smilesburger's final appeal to conscience over the freedom to represent the real is left indeterminate, as illustrated by the white space that follows. According to Shostak, '[t]he reader is left poised between a silence that suggests agreement ... and a silence that suggests a rejection of "Jewish conscience" in favour of representing the world just as it exists.'<sup>138</sup> The relation between the aesthetic

process and institutional interventions in Roth's novel illustrates Said's argument that authors are 'very much in the history of their societies, shaping and [being] shaped by that history and their social experience in different measure.'<sup>139</sup>

While Appelfeld emphasises the selectivity and orchestration of facts, which underlie the creation of works of art, Roth hints at the facts hidden by these tactics in literary representations. In so doing, he affirms the call for the reciprocal concern with the fictionality of history and the historicity of fiction, which I have based on Louis Montrose's argument on the 'reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of history.'<sup>140</sup> There is a measure of truth in fiction and a measure of fiction in historiography. Fictional representations of the otherwise knowable history prove pivotal to understanding the dynamics of power and knowledge, of permission to narrate, of accessibility to archives that underpin representations. Contrapuntal readings of historical narrative and fictional history help provide a fuller understanding of both the factual accuracy and the historical mayhem of narratives.

Historical mayhem, institutional intervention, limits to representation, and the marginal space permitted to what has emerged elsewhere as Palestinian visibility contribute to the failed dialogism in the novel. Despite the three decades that separate Uris's *Exodus* from Roth's *Operation Shylock*, one wonders how far Jewish-American fiction has developed from Uris's monological representation in the process of creating room for a Palestinian presence. What Macherey has called 'the task of *measuring silences*, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged' helps explain how Roth's acknowledgement of silence distinguishes his representation of Palestine from earlier attempts by Uris and Bellow, by making it explicit that 'what the work *cannot say* is important.'<sup>141</sup> For Roth, it is the writer's responsibility to redefine the permissible: 'I hadn't chosen to be a writer, as I announced, only to be told by others what was permissible to write. The writer redefined the permissible. That was the responsibility.'

Nothing need hide itself in fiction.<sup>142</sup> Roth's manipulation of absence and presence, fictionality and factuality, dissimulation and verisimilitude, opens the text to the fissures that lie within and beyond its edges, thus redefining the permissible. The novel's incomplete dialogism, resulting from Roth's deliberate design, proves highly revealing of cultural, historical, and political limits that hinder a real dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis. Just as no one story predominates, no one ideological position or character zone remains strictly particularized, and uncertainty prevails, the incomplete text of *Operation Shylock* leaves one truth untarnished: there is no one history but histories yet to unveil; there is no one voice but voices to be heard.

If the 1987 uprising has contributed to the emergence of a Palestinian voice in the American public sphere, it is the writings of a Palestinian intellectual in the midst of US academia that put Palestine in the more universal context of postcolonial debates. An important aspect of Edward Said's 'interventions in the American public debate on the question of Palestine,' writes Rashid Khalidi, is 'his linking of Palestinian issues to larger, more general problems, such as decolonisation, the resistance to imperialism, the need for democracy, and the dangers of narrow, chauvinistic nationalism.'<sup>143</sup> Within this context, the next chapter responds to the marginalization of Palestine in postcolonial debates by exploring Palestinian representations of walking and returning as reinventions of traditions deployed by Zionist settler narratives. It suggests the Bakhtinian concept of the chronotope as a useful paradigm for understanding representations of postcolonial passages in the not-yet-postcolonial context of Palestine.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Rashid Khalidi is an associate professor of modern Middle Eastern history at the University of Chicago and the author of *Under Siege: PLO Decision Making During the 1982 War* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1986) and *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1997).
- <sup>2</sup> Graham Huggan, *Interdisciplinary Measures: Literature and the Future of Postcolonial Studies* (Liverpool: Liverpool U P, 2008) 11.
- <sup>3</sup> Edward W. Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir* (London: Granta Books, 2000) 293.
- <sup>4</sup> The Palestinian uprising came to be widely known by the Arabic word '*Intifada*.' In Arabic, the word *Intifada* is derived from the stems /nafada/ and /intafada/ which mean to 'move' and 'shake off.' The term was first used in a statement issued by Hamas and distributed in Gaza on 11 December 1987, in description of the Palestinian popular uprising. Immediately, the term came to be used on a larger scale by Arabic and Western media, more markedly so as it was widely circulated even among Israeli political and intellectual circles, as indicated by the title of a co-authored history book, *Intifada*, by the Israeli journalists Ehud Ya'ari and Ze'ev Schiff—published in 1990 by Simon and Schuster, the American publishing house which published Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock* three years later. As Edward Said noted, 'the word Intifada is the only Arabic word to enter the vocabulary of twentieth-century world politics' (Said, '*Intifada and Independence*,' *Social Text* 22 [1989]: 23).
- <sup>5</sup> Philip Roth, *Operation Shylock: A Confession* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993).
- <sup>6</sup> Philip Roth, *Reading Myself and Others* (New York: Vintage, 2001) xiii.
- <sup>7</sup> Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978) 94.
- <sup>8</sup> It is worth noting here that, before *Operation Shylock*, Roth wrote *The Counterlife* (New York: Vintage International, 1996)—first published in 1986 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York—a novel with scenes representing the protagonist's trip to Israel and the Occupied Territories. Since it was published before the Palestinian uprising, *The Counterlife* is beyond the scope of this chapter, which focuses primarily on representations of *intifada* and the consequent visibility of a Palestinian voice in Jewish American novels.
- <sup>9</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 17.
- <sup>10</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 358.
- <sup>11</sup> Harold Bloom, 'Operation Roth,' *New York Review of Books*, 22 April 1993.

- <sup>12</sup> Andrew Furman, 'A New "Other" Emerges in American Jewish Literature: Philip Roth's Israel Fiction,' *Philip Roth*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2003) 150.
- <sup>13</sup> Debra Shostack, *Philip Roth—Countertexts, Counterlives* (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 2004).
- <sup>14</sup> Sylvia Barak Fishman, 'Success in Circuit Lies: Philip Roth's Recent Explorations of American Jewish Identity,' *Jewish Social Studies* 3.3 (1997): 132-155.
- <sup>15</sup> Fishman 132.
- <sup>16</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel,' *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: U of Texas P, 2008) 344.
- <sup>17</sup> Bakhtin has paid dearly for his thoughts. His appreciation of the heteroglot novel, which embraces the dialogism of various and different ideological positions and challenges the monologism of the authoritative narrative, is the last thing that the Stalinist regime wished for. In 1929, largely for the subversive effect of his non-conformist thoughts, Bakhtin was sentenced to six years of internal exile in Kazakhstan.
- <sup>18</sup> David Lodge, *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1990) 86.
- <sup>19</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 291-92.
- <sup>20</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, 'The Hetroglot Novel,' *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov*, ed. Pam Morris (London: Arnold, 1994) 113.
- <sup>21</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 272-73. In Bakhtin's terms, centripetal and centrifugal are, respectively, the centralizing and de-centralizing forces in any language or culture.
- <sup>22</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 343.
- <sup>23</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 312, 316. Emphasis in the original.
- <sup>24</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 333.
- <sup>25</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 355.
- <sup>26</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 314.
- <sup>27</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 335.
- <sup>28</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 332.
- <sup>29</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 417.



- <sup>30</sup> Woody Allen, 'Am I Reading the Papers Correctly?' *New York Times* 28 Jan 1988. Op-Ed.
- <sup>31</sup> Rashid I. Khalidi, 'Edward W. Said and the American Public Sphere: Speaking Truth to Power,' *Boundary 2* 25.2 (1998): 168.
- <sup>32</sup> Jonathan Marcus, 'Discordant Voices: The US Jewish Community and Israel during the 1980s,' *International Affairs* 66.3 (1990): 549.
- <sup>33</sup> Albert Vorspan, 'Soul-Searching,' *New York Times* 8 May 1988.
- <sup>34</sup> Vorspan, 'Soul-Searching' n.p.
- <sup>35</sup> Anton Shammass, 'An Arab Voice in Israel,' interview by Gerald Marzorati, *New York Times* 18 September 1988.
- <sup>36</sup> Walter Goodman, 'Review/Television; Life Since the Intifada, As Viewed by Israelis,' *New York Times*, 16 January 1990. The review connects this programme to 'Days of Rage: The Young Palestinians,' broadcast four months earlier, which offers 'a sympathetic picture of the stone throwers and their families.' Goodman observes that 'Channel 13 has not put quite as much effort into adding balance to 'Solid Ground' as it did for 'Days of Rage.'
- <sup>37</sup> Sabra Chartrand, 'Jerusalem Journal; The Uprising Finds Its Way Into Art,' *New York Times*. 21 July 1990.
- <sup>38</sup> Mahmoud Darwish, 'Those Who Pass Between Fleeting Words,' *MER* 154, *Middle East Research and Information Project*. Translation from the *Jerusalem Post* 2 April 1988.
- <sup>39</sup> Edward W. Said, 'Intifada and Independence,' *Social Text* 22 (1989): 38.
- <sup>40</sup> Youssef M. Ibrahim, 'In a West bank Town, a Quiet Dialogue Between Settlers and Palestinians,' *New York Times* 10 July 1990.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibrahim, 'In a West bank Town' n.p.
- <sup>42</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 119.
- <sup>43</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 120. Emphasis added.
- <sup>44</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 120.
- <sup>45</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 121.
- <sup>46</sup> Fishman 149.
- <sup>47</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 121.
- <sup>48</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 316.
- <sup>49</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 135.

50 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 122.

51 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 123.

52 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 128.

53 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 129.

54 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 121.

55 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 145.

56 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 145-46.

57 The number of Fatimid Shiites in Palestine decreased during the reign of Salahuddin and remained a minority during the Ottomans' rule. With the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Shiites began to spread their beliefs in neighbouring countries. The announcement on 2 March 2006 of the foundation in Ramallah of a 'Higher Islamic Shiite Council in Palestine' and the immediate disintegration of the council provide evidence that this ethnic group remains a minority despite Iranian attempts to increase their numbers and influence on a wider geographical spectrum. See Brigitte Maréchal and Sami Zemni, *The Dynamics of Sunni-Shia Relationships: Doctrine, Transnationalism, Intellectuals, and the Media* (London: C. Hurst, 2013).

58 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 143.

59 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 152. Emphasis in the original.

60 David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of the Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham: Duke U P, 1993) 102.

61 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 135.

62 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 125.

63 Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora,' *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990) 235.

64 Stuart Hall, 'Thinking the Diaspora: Home-Thoughts From Abroad,' *Small Axe* 6 (1999) 5.

65 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 132.

66 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 132-33.

67 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 133.

68 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 135.

69 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 49.

70 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 50.

- 71 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 127.
- 72 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 133.
- 73 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 260. Emphasis in the original.
- 74 Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 344.
- 75 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 117.
- 76 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 118.
- 77 Said, 'Intifada and Independence' 30.
- 78 Said, 'Intifada and Independence' 31
- 79 Said, 'Intifada and Independence' 38.
- 80 Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2004)  
237.
- 81 Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine* 237.
- 82 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 150.
- 83 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 161.
- 84 Zelda Popkin, *Quiet Street* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2002) 160. The novel was  
first published in 1951.
- 85 Popkin 161.
- 86 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 160-61. Emphasis in the original.
- 87 See Pappé's *A History of Modern Palestine* 237-242.
- 88 Sahar Khalifeh, *Bab el-Saha* (Beirut: Dar alAda'b, 1999). The novel was first  
published in 1990. I cite here from the second edition, published in 1999. The novel has  
not been translated into English. The quotations are my own translations.
- 89 'The Palestinian Declaration of Independence,' 1988, Ministry of Information,  
State of Palestine, n.d. N.pag. The declaration statement was written by the Palestinian  
poet Mahmoud Darwish.
- 90 Joseph Massad, 'Conceiving the Masculine: Gender and Palestinian  
Nationalism,' *Middle East Journal* 49.3 (1995): 481.
- 91 Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine* 238.
- 92 Kanako Mabuchi, 'The Meaning of Motherhood during the First Intifada: 1987-  
1993,' unpublished M.Phil submitted to St. Antony's College, University of Oxford  
(2003) 91.

- <sup>93</sup> Amal Amireh, 'Between Complicity and Subversion: Body Politics in Palestinian National Narrative,' *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102.4 (2003): 761.
- <sup>94</sup> Massad 474.
- <sup>95</sup> Khalifeh, *Bab el-Saha* 7.
- <sup>96</sup> Khalifeh, *Bab el-Saha* 20.
- <sup>97</sup> Sherna Berger Gluck, 'Palestinian Women: Gender Politics and Nationalism,' *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 24.3 (1995): 13.
- <sup>98</sup> Suha Sabbagh, 'Palestinian Women Writers and the Intifada,' *Social Text* 22 (1989) 64.
- <sup>99</sup> Ami Elad-Bouskila, *Modern Palestinian Literature and Culture* (London: Frank Cass, 1999) 105.
- <sup>100</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 44.
- <sup>101</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 44.
- <sup>102</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 42.
- <sup>103</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 36.
- <sup>104</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 29.
- <sup>105</sup> Elaine B. Safer, 'The Double, Comic Irony, and Postmodernism in Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock*,' *Philip Roth*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2003) 111.
- <sup>106</sup> D. M. Thomas, 'Face to Face with His Double,' *New York Times Book Review* 7 Mar. 1993: 20-21.
- <sup>107</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 104.
- <sup>108</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 355.
- <sup>109</sup> Quoted in Eleanor Kilroy, 'Europe Embraces the Silences of Aharon Appelfeld,' *Mondoweiss.net*. 1 Jul. 2011.
- <sup>110</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 269.
- <sup>111</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 269-270.
- <sup>112</sup> Roth *Operation Shylock* 279.
- <sup>113</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 323-327.
- <sup>114</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 278.
- <sup>115</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 366. Emphasis in the original.

- 116 Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' 354.
- 117 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 57.
- 118 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 58.
- 119 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 86.
- 120 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 86.
- 121 Robert Doran, Introduction, Hayden White, *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory 1957-2007*, ed. Robert Doran (Baltimore: The John Hopkins U P, 2010) xxiv.
- 122 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 84.
- 123 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 86.
- 124 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 361.
- 125 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 359.
- 126 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 357.
- 127 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 377, 359, 357.
- 128 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 387.
- 129 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 360-61.
- 130 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 13.
- 131 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 399.
- 132 J. M. Coetzee, 'Confession and Double Thoughts: Tolstoy, Rousseau, Dostoevsky,' *Comparative Literature* 37.3 (1985): 194.
- 133 J. M. Coetzee, 'Truth in Autobiography,' unpublished Inaugural lecture, University of Cape Town (1984) 3.
- 134 Coetzee, 'Truth in Autobiography' 3.
- 135 Macherey 86.
- 136 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 129.
- 137 Roth, *Operation Shylock* 349.
- 138 Shostak 179.
- 139 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994) xxii.
- 140 Louis Montrose, 'Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture,' *The New Historicism*, ed. Veenser, H. Aram (Abingdon: Routledge, 1989) 20.

<sup>141</sup> Macherey 87. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>142</sup> Roth, *Operation Shylock* 377.

<sup>143</sup> Rashid Khalidi, 'Edward W. Said and the American Public Sphere: Speaking Truth to the Power,' *Boundary 2* 25.2 (1998): 170.

## Chapter 4

### Palestinian (Post)coloniality: Walks and Returns

Amidst these exorbitant images of the nation-space in its transnational dimension there are those who have not yet found their nation: among them the Palestinians and the Black South Africans. *It is our loss that in making this book we were unable to add their voices to ours.*

(Homi K. Bhabha, 'Introduction,' *Nation and Narration* 7, emphasis added)

#### 4.1 The Chronotope and Postcolonial Theory

Who can speak for, and who can speak about, the Palestinians? While the previous chapters have explored links between the politics of fiction writing and otherwise knowable history through comparative studies of representations of Palestine by Jewish American and Arab novelists across the events of the 1948 war, the 1967 war and the 1980s *intifada*, this chapter shifts focus to the ambivalent place of Palestine in postcolonial debates. As the epigraph to this chapter might suggest, Homi Bhabha, while acknowledging the persistent question of their case as a stateless nation, expresses pity for being 'unable' to add the voice of Palestinians to his collection of speaking subalterns.<sup>1</sup> Palestine, as Anna Ball has observed, 'remains largely "off-limits" in the realm of the postcolonial.'<sup>2</sup> Criticising 'the general absence of questions of Palestine from the postcolonial agenda,' Patrick Williams suggests an opportunity to 'reroute' and rescue the postcolonial from its current impasse by calling attention to Palestinian cultural production as viable material for nuancing postcolonial debates: 'As postcolonialists we are faced with, and are not analyzing ... the worst example of colonialism in the modern world. Time to reroute.'<sup>3</sup>

This chapter responds to the relative neglect of Palestinian literature in postcolonial studies by exploring counter-narratives and postcolonial formulations in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks* (2008) and Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2011).<sup>4</sup> It illustrates how Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope sketches ways for understanding Shehadeh's chronotope of walking and Abulhawa's chronotope of returning as postcolonial re-inventions of settler traditions. For both Shehadeh and Abulhawa, aesthetic artifacts are agents in the process of reclaiming Palestinian land and history. Their artistic reconstructions of their personal experiences perform acts of writing back, affirming their presence to a global English-reading public. For Abulhawa, the 'return' of the exile performs 'a synthesis of nation and territory, a re-suturing of the people and the land' as Salah Hassan has described it.<sup>5</sup>

Palestinian writers tend to respond to their historical experience of 'ultimate dislocation'<sup>6</sup> by showing a peculiar preoccupation with a national space clearly defined in temporal and spatial frames. This explains the chronotopic nature of their narratives. Bakhtin's concept of the literary chronotope offers a useful analytical tool to understand the negotiation between time-space as represented in Palestinian narratives and the various socio-historical contexts that produce and consume them. Bakhtin's chronotope – literally, 'time space' – refers to 'the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature.'<sup>7</sup> 'In the literary artistic chronotope,' Bakhtin elaborates, 'spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history.'<sup>8</sup> The settler colonial context of Palestine, the repeated displacements of Palestinians – first in 1948 and again in 1967 – and the consequent dispersal of Palestinians in internal and external diasporas suggest a powerful and conspicuous intersection of the temporal and the spatial in representing Palestine. Given the particular status of



Palestine as a settler locale, Palestinian literature is likely to generate nuanced chronotopic motifs in order to articulate Palestinian (post)coloniality.

The chronotopes of walking and returning are not defined in Bakhtin's essay, but seem highly significant and widely resonant in literature about Palestine. I will explore how walking and returning are significant in the mythic construction of the settler colonial narrative – the Zionist narrative in this context – and how these chronotopes are deployed by Palestinian writers to articulate counter-hegemonic narratives. I will examine the dialogism of space-time, effected by the return journey of the exile in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010), which rewrites Ghassan Kanafani's *A'aed Ila Haifa* (1969) [*Return to Haifa* (1984)], and Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks* (2008), which recounts memories of intermittent walks in the Ramallah hills across different historical contexts.<sup>9</sup> The historical and geographical specifications of this chronotopic analysis suggest ways for rerouting the postcolonial in order to understand postcolonial passages in a literature produced under an ongoing settler occupation.

The problematic limitations of the postcolonial in relation to the Palestinian context have stimulated a concern shared by Anne McClintock (1992), Ella Shohat (1992), and Joseph Massad (2000). In her critique of the reductive linearity and binarism inherited in postcolonial frames, McClintock links the Palestinian and the Irish colonial situations as two examples challenging postcolonialism:

Ireland may, at a pinch, be 'post-colonial,' but for the inhabitants of British-occupied Northern Ireland, not to mention the Palestinian inhabitants of the Israeli Occupied Territories and the West Bank, there may be nothing 'post' about colonialism at all.<sup>10</sup>

The linear and binary nature of the term 'post-colonial,' which obscures crucial geo-political distinctions and current continuities of imperial power, proves insufficient to accommodate the problems raised by the Irish and the Palestinian colonial contexts. Calling attention to 'a multiplicity of powers and

histories,'<sup>11</sup> McClintock indicates the need for '[m]ore complex terms and analyses, of alternative times, histories, and causalities' to deal with 'complexities that cannot be served under the single rubric "post-colonialism."' <sup>12</sup>

In agreement with McClintock's critique, Ella Shohat points out the obscuring of spatial and temporal significations, in addition to the blurring of positionality, as major 'pitfalls' of the 'post-colonial.' The failure of postcolonialism to distinguish between different styles of imperial and colonial dominations leads Shohat to wonder:

[i]f one formulates the 'post' in the 'post-colonial' in relation to Third World nationalist struggles of the fifties and sixties, then what time frame would apply for contemporary anti-colonial/anti-racist struggles carried under the banner of nationalist and racial oppression, for Palestinian writers for example, like Sahar Khalifeh and Mahmoud Darwish, who write contemporaneously with 'post-colonial' writers? Should one suggest that they are *pre-'postcolonial'*?<sup>13</sup>

In response to Shohat's rhetorical question, should one suggest that Khalifeh, Darwish, and other Palestinian writers perform postcolonial literary formulations in a not-yet postcolonial situation? While Shohat insists that 'the concept of the "postcolonial" must be interrogated and contextualised historically, geopolitically and culturally,'<sup>14</sup> Joseph Massad draws attention to the peculiar spatialities and temporalities produced by settler colonialism, rendering problematic a diachronic schema of colonialism, followed by postcolonialism. Addressing the ambivalence of the term 'postcolonial' in the Palestinian context, Massad explains how Zionist coloniality has discursively rendered itself postcolonial. He concludes that the Palestinian context in which the settler colonial power is unusually narrated as postcolonial – which he brilliantly calls a 'postcolonial colony'<sup>15</sup> – challenges postcolonial theory.

Between Shohat's 'pre-postcolonial' and Massad's 'postcolonial colony,' the 'rerouting' of the postcolonial has become increasingly imperative in negotiating the (post)coloniality of the Palestinian narrative. Palestine

challenges the postcolonial in two ways: first, it articulates a settler colonial locale as opposed to the colonial space produced by 'metropole colonialism';<sup>16</sup> second, it represents a situation where postcolonial formulations develop under occupation. Combined, these two features form the peculiarity of the Palestinian context, a peculiarity that suggests a situation proper to address Lorenzo Veracini's demand 'to focus on the possibility of post-settler colonial futures in a not-yet post-settler colonial world.'<sup>17</sup>

While Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia, as elaborated in the essay entitled 'Discourse in the Novel,' have been widely studied and recruited by postcolonial theorists, his conceptualisation of the literary chronotope has not received equal attention in postcolonial studies. This chapter puts Bakhtin's chronotope in the midst of postcolonial debates by exploring its potential in representing the national space of a stateless nation. There have been previous attempts. Anthony Guneratne, in 'The Virtual Spaces of Postcoloniality,' demonstrates the applicability of the chronotope to what he calls 'mongrel literature.'<sup>18</sup> In considering spatio-temporal constructions as mapped out in the works of Naipaul and Ondaatje, Guneratne contends that 'the mere borrowing of "chronotope" as a descriptive term belies both the importance of Bakhtin's idea and the validity of mongrel literatures as a means of exploring the substance of chronotopes.'<sup>19</sup> This position is useful in the way it combines, on the one hand, Bakhtin's dialogism with the postcolonial struggle against authoritative discourse, and his chronotope with the mongrel's – the postcolonial exile in the colonial metropolis – imagined return through spatio-temporal constructions based on vague memories. However, this position is insufficient, since it overlooks the political underpinnings of the imagined returns of those exiles and the significance of the fusion of time and space in their fiction.

A useful approach can be found in Paul Smethurst's exploration of the intersection of the postmodern, the chronotope, and the postcolonial in his chapter 'The Post-colonial Island Chronotope,' which analyzes a selection of

Caribbean responses to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.<sup>20</sup> Smethurst analyses this postcolonial island chronotope in Tournier's rewriting of Defoe's novel, whereby the legitimacy of the colonial enterprise is dismantled and the indigenous is given voice. Although Smethurst's discussion of other postmodern chronotopes are deeply de-politicized, it is the question of the postcolonial that recovers the politics of the chronotope in his analysis.

Although not indebted to Bakhtin, Doreen Massey's discussion of the politics of time-space proves useful for examining diasporic Palestinians' engagement with literary representations of national space. In her interdisciplinary approach, Massey has drawn from geography, gender studies, and physics in order to question Ernesto Laclau's dichotomous conceptualisation of space and time, emphasising the necessary dynamics of the temporal – dislocation, freedom, and possibility – for the interplay of politics in space. Discarding mutually exclusive dichotomies of the temporal and the spatial and embracing Albert Einstein's conception of time as a fourth dimension of space, Massey develops an alternative view of thinking in terms of a 'four-dimensional space-time,' suggesting that 'the spatial is integral to the production of history, and thus to the possibility of politics, just as the temporal is to geography.'<sup>21</sup> In so doing, Massey recovers the political register that is always in danger of being dislocated or displaced.

The politics of time-space can be clearly found in the heterotopia of the colony, whereby the space-time of colonial settlers is superimposed on the space-time of indigenous populations. Michel Foucault divides space into two main types: the utopias that designate 'a perfected form,' often 'unreal spaces,' and the 'counter-sites' of heterotopias.<sup>22</sup> 'We are at a moment,' Foucault states, 'when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of *a network that connects points and intersects with its own skin*.'<sup>23</sup> This network that he describes as 'the fatal intersection of time with space' echoes Bakhtin's concept of chronotopicity.<sup>24</sup> Foucault illustrates the intersection of heterotopias and heterochronies by citing the examples of such

sites as the museum, the library, and the fairgrounds.<sup>25</sup> For Shehadeh, the overlap of pre-colonial and colonial chronotopes in the Ramallah hills has created a heterotopic space that cannot be described in isolation from its political overtones. The image of settlers' pine trees intruding into terraces of olive plantations, which are intrinsic to the established flora of pre-colonial times, strikingly illustrates the heterotopic nature of the occupied Ramallah hills:

Now that I was thinking of pines I noticed others that were growing between the olive trees on the facing hill. All it took was for one tree to establish roots. Then when it seeded, its cones would open, spreading seeds from terrace to terrace, multiplying the pines at the expense of those trees that had been there long before them. Much as I liked pine trees they look like intruders, evidence of the abandonment of these hills to the forces of nature. They were dark green in colour as opposed to the blue-green of the olive trees, and they grew tall and large forcefully claiming the land where they struck root.<sup>26</sup>

Here, Shehadeh uses a highly allegorical language. Pine trees, like settlers, intrude upon local olive plantations, expand over more territory, and then claim a right to the land. In this context, a colonial chronotope intervenes in and attempts to displace a pre-colonial space/time, leaving the imprints of this intrusion on an irrevocably politicised nature.

Explaining the functions of the literary chronotope in relation to works of art from classical antiquity to the Rabelaisian novel, Bakhtin identifies some major generic chronotopes and other minor motivic ones. While generic chronotopes function as indicators of generic forms such as the adventure novel of ordeal, the biographical, the folkloric, and the idyllic chronotope, the motivic chronotopes are more oriented towards the thematic and socio-historical contexts of the time-space intersections. Germane to the argument advanced here is the use of the chronotope as a way to understand the dialogic tension between the text and its socio-historical context: 'Out of the actual chronotopes of our world (which serve as the source of representation) emerge the reflected

and *created* chronotopes of the world represented in the work (in the text).'<sup>27</sup>

Emphasising the representational potential inherent in the chronotope, Bakhtin writes:

[I]t is precisely the chronotope that provides the ground essential for the showing-forth, the representability of events ... All the novel's abstract elements ... gravitate toward the chronotope and through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imagining power of art to do its work. Such is the representational significance of the chronotope.<sup>28</sup>

This chapter reveals how a plethora of ideas, events, insights, emotions, and reflections are imagined, recollected, represented, and discussed through the chronotopes of walking and returning.

Bakhtin's theorisation of chronotopicity effectively renders the complexity and multiplicity of time-space interconnectedness through the dialogical interactions of several chronotopes in textual representations. In examining Palestinian narratives, it is this representational potentiality, dialogical capacity and generative energy that make Bakhtin's chronotopicity a useful framework for understanding the dialogic tension between diverse (post)colonial positions of enunciation which represent the complex and multiple diasporic experiences of the Palestinian characters. Palestinian novelists have used the chronotope's creative potential particularly for political purposes. The chronotope, for instance, is imported by Abulhawa to articulate her personal experience of dispossession in 1948 through representing the temporary return of her fictional character, Amal, from exile to Palestine. However, Abulhawa, as I show, complicates our understanding of return by representing the multiple returns of brothers and sisters who have taken separate routes after repeated displacements, first in the wake of the 1948 *nakba*, and again after the Arab defeat in 1967. In so doing, the novel describes different trajectories for the development of its Palestinian characters, whose distinct experiences reflect various possibilities for the interaction between

space and time in their multiple and far-flung diasporas. For the Palestinian novelist, the chronotope proves useful to express ties with land and nation.

In 'The *Bildungsroman*,' an essay published after 'Forms,' Bakhtin (with particular focus on Goethe's *Italian Journey*) demonstrates the usefulness of the chronotope for exploring the permeability of national space to human intervention. The emergence of space, Bakhtin maintains here, is effected by the interplay of national-historical times:

The ability to see time, to read time, in the spatial whole of the world and, on the other hand, to perceive the filling of space not as an immobile background, a given that is completed once and for all, but as an emerging whole, an event – this is the ability to read in everything signs that show time in its course, beginning with nature and ending with human customs and ideas.<sup>29</sup>

As a model of chronotopicity, Bakhtin analyses three characteristic features of Goethe's visualisation of time-space: the visibility of history in space; man's intervention in a given locality through discursive and physical practices; and the overlapping of the three time phases – past, present, and future – in any concrete perception of a given locality.<sup>30</sup> Bakhtin's reading of Goethe's travelogue offers useful guidelines to interpret the intervention of colonial history in the Ramallah landscape as represented in Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks*.

What Bakhtin identifies as the visualisation of a given locality through the prism of man's agency in Goethe's narrative reveals a shift away from earlier notions of space as emerging naturally over time. Postcolonial debates have considered the interplay between colonial powers, racial ideologies, and the construction of colonial space. According to these perspectives, multiple and perhaps conflicting historical, cultural, and ideological forces overlap, and leave their imprints on a given locality. (Post)colonial space, then, becomes a palimpsest with layers of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial inscriptions.

## 4.2 Raja Shehadeh and the Chronotope of Walking

My feet sink into the mud. I stretch out my hand, I grasp the ropes  
of rain, and I walk and walk and walk

(Elias Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* 539)

While Elias Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* closes with the narrator, Khalil, leaving the scene on a perpetual walk, Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks* recounts seven intermittent walks in the Ramallah hills defined by major historical events including the 1948 and 1967 wars, as well as the Oslo Accords in 1993. Using the word *sarha* – a word from the Palestinian dialect – in reference to his particular Palestinian walks, Shehadeh signals a deliberate deviation from traditional countryside walking, explored by Donna Landry in *The Invention of the Countryside*. Focusing on English literature between 1671 and 1831, Landry examines 'the pleasures of perambulations' and reveals ways in which walking writers have negotiated the impulse to botanise and the discourse of the picturesque.<sup>31</sup> Shehadeh's *sarhat*, I argue, suggest a re-invention of the walking tradition based on a politicized experience of walking. In his definition of *sarha*, Shehadeh stresses connotations of roaming freely, 'at will,' and 'without restraint.'<sup>32</sup> He elaborates on the implications of the word by recalling the meaning of its verb form 'which means to let the cattle out to pasture early in the morning, leaving them to wander and gaze at liberty.'<sup>33</sup> Going on a *sarha* implies 'wandering aimlessly, not restricted by time and place ... but not any excursion would qualify as *sarha*.'<sup>34</sup> We, then, understand that going on a *sarha* is walking without restraints, but not without purpose. Purposefulness as realized in the act of taking the cattle out to pasture forms a significant aspect of Shehadeh's re-invention of the walking tradition.

For Robert MacFarlane, who joined Shehadeh on a *sarha* through sites familiar to the readers of *Palestinian Walks*, and recounted his experience in a chapter of *The Old Ways*, Shehadeh's walks articulate 'inner voyages;' 'an explicitly political act,' 'a means of resistance,' and 'a method of telling and



discovering stories.’<sup>35</sup> Shifting focus away from Walter Benjamin’s conception of the *flâneur* who wanders aimlessly in the city, Shehadeh’s *sarhat* in the occupied space of the Ramallah hills reflect the writer’s determined engagement with politics in his description of Palestinian landscape. For Shehadeh, the *sarhat* he recounts are both cries in the face of silence and walks in the face of colonial restrictions. ‘As [he] shouted “S-A-R-H-A!” [he] felt [he] was breaking the silence of the past, a silence that had enveloped this place for a long time.’<sup>36</sup> The politics of Shehadeh’s walks resides not only on the physical performance of going on *sarha*, but also on the discursive act of writing these *sarhat* and breaking the silence of the subaltern voice.

Raja Shehadeh (1951-) is a Palestinian lawyer, writer, and political activist. He is the founder of the Human rights organization Al-Haq, and the author of several books including *Strangers in the House* (2002), *When the Bulbul Stopped Singing* (2003), *Palestinian Walks: Notes on A Vanishing landscape* (2008) and *A Rift in Time: Travels with my Ottoman Uncle* (2010). In an interview, Shehadeh explains the motives behind writing Palestine through telling untold (hi)stories of the private experiences of Palestinians:

During my tenure as co-director of Al-Haq I had always continued both my literary writing and my legal practice. I saw writing as a way of serving the cause of justice and human rights. Human rights reports reach a limited sector of the population and so have limited impact, but if you write something that touches more people and is mass-distributed, the impact is that much stronger. Books don’t get through to people solely by being read. If you’re affected by what you read, it becomes part of your experience and you take it in or feel it in a much stronger way.<sup>37</sup>

For him, his memoirs have reached a global public, ensured a greater visibility and left a stronger impact than his human rights reports.

The corpus of his memoirs suggests the intersection of private and public realms in his writing. Shehadeh’s literary oeuvre can be contextualised in the surge of works of a similar nature written mostly by diasporic Palestinian writers such as Fawaz Turki’s *The Disinherited: Journal of a Palestinian Exile*

(1972), Edward Said's *Out of Place* (1999), Ghada Karmi's *In Search of Fatima: A Palestinian Story* (2002), and Karl Sabbagh's *Palestine: A Personal History* (2006), to mention only a few. But why has the memoir lent itself as a literary medium for diasporic Palestinian writers in their narration of national history? Historical narratives as told by Palestinian writers have endured exclusionary measures by Zionist discourses and pro-Zionist institutions. This hegemonic tendency can be clearly illustrated in the deliberate exclusion of the Palestinian perspective from history textbooks in Israeli schools. To cite a piece of evidence, a *Haaretz* article published on 10 February 2012 stated that the head of the Education Ministry's pedagogical secretariat, Zvi Zameret, had banned a history textbook that presents Israeli and Palestinian narratives side by side.<sup>38</sup> Discussing the conscious employment of history textbooks in the construction of the Israeli collective identity, Eyal Naveh observes the ethnocentrism of history curricula at Israeli schools in the 1950s and 1960s, which stress the Zionist narrative, downplay diasporic life, and marginalise oriental Jews—not to mention Arabs and Palestinians.<sup>39</sup> Although history textbooks of the 1970s and 1980s responded to the need to shift away from uniformity and allow space for plurality by incorporating world history in addition to Jewish history, 'the difficulty of including "others" in the hegemonic historic narrative was still evident.'<sup>40</sup> In spite of the revisionist perspective of the Israeli new historians, the 1995 curriculum 'retained elements of the national-ethnocentric orientation' and the alternative historical consciousness barely had any resonance in the educational system.<sup>41</sup> This systematic exclusion of the Palestinian narrative partly explains Palestinian writers' shift in focus to the pedagogical function served by the alternative form of the personal memoir. Through this medium, they narrate the collective history of a nation through the private experience of the individual.

Published in 2008, Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks* is profoundly chronotopic.<sup>42</sup> This chronotopicity is forthrightly stated in the author's introduction to the book:

the seven walks described in this book span a period of twenty seven years. Although each walk takes its own unique course they are also travels through time and space. It is a journey beginning in 1978 and ending in 2007, in which I write about the developments I have witnessed in the region and about the changes to my life and surroundings.<sup>43</sup>

The narrator recounts his experiences on seven *sarhas*—intermittent walks in the Ramallah hills defined by major historical events including the 1948 and the 1967 wars and then the Oslo Accords in 1993. In the narrator's description, time and space merge into an inseparable unity, informing these walks both in their entirety as printed and circulated aesthetic artefact, and as separate, yet connected, instances of resistant political practice. The gaze of the displaced Palestinian conceives of the occupied Ramallah hills as a chronotope in which the settlers' imprints on the transformed landscape reveal the colonial legacy of Palestine and a present of new settlements increasingly invading the remains of Palestinian spaces.

Robert Spencer's reading of Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks* reveals how eco-criticism proves useful but insufficient to understand 'nature's mediatedness.'<sup>44</sup> He draws on David Harvey's conceptualization of 'historical-geographical materialism' and Eyal Wiegman's exploration of Israeli architecture targeting the enclosing and policing of Palestinian quarters. While Spencer focuses on Shehadeh's representation of the transformation of nature by the colonial present, my reading of Shehadeh's walks places the temporal and spatial specificities of Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope amid postcolonial debates to understand the relation between resistance, walking, and telling in the particular context of Palestine.

The purpose of Shehadeh's walks, both in their discursive and performative effects, is as multi-dimensional as the cultural, political, and ecological challenges facing Palestinian landscapes. According to Landry, Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks* 'insists upon one entailment of the semantic content of the picturesque – its critique of instrumental modernity in the guise

of settler-colonialism,' or rather, as I argue, a critique of settler-colonialism in the guise of instrumental modernity.<sup>45</sup> Despite efforts to articulate political protest, Shehadeh, as Landry argues, occasionally suspends his political commentary to 'value the aesthetic consolations of the landscape of decay.'<sup>46</sup> However, visiting and writing about historic sites and ruins like the *qasr* (castle), for instance, is not devoid of the political overtones of a textual rescue of the architectural taste and cultural glory enjoyed by what was once a civilised Palestinian existence. This textual rescue takes the form of a deliberate counter-narrative to what Barbara Parmenter has termed a predominantly Western ethnographic perspective, particularly on those occasions when Shehadeh makes direct reference to the 'vilification' of Palestinian land in the accounts of nineteenth-century Western travellers such as Herman Melville, Mark Twain, and William Thackeray.<sup>47</sup>

Revealing the political import of walking in Zionist discourse, Rebecca Stein argues that 'the *tiyulim* conducted by Jewish settlers were important technologies of settler nation-making which helped to re-write Arab Palestine as a Jewish geography.'<sup>48</sup> With particular reference to the rhetoric and practice of walking in Yizhak Ben Zvi's pre-1948 travel diaries,<sup>49</sup> Stein explains that:

the act of walking the land and establishing personal contact with its topography was a richly ideological practice. By bringing the Jewish hiker into intimate contact with the homeland, such travelling practices were thought to foster a powerfully tactile sense of national awakening, affording the Jewish walker with first-hand knowledge of both land and homeland. In the terms of the broader Zionist pedagogy in which they played an important role, *tiyulim* were deemed a crucial means of linking nature to nation, of connecting Jewish history in Eretz Yisrael to a set of Zionist political claims in the present, therein fortifying the latter.<sup>50</sup>

Ben Zvi has established links with the land and promoted national awakening not only through the practice of walking, but also through the pedagogical function achieved by the writing of these walks. Descriptions of *tiyulim*, which often connect Palestinian landscape to biblical history, legitimate the settlers'

claims to the land. Re-appropriating the effect of this Zionist tradition, Shehadeh's walks, in their discursive and physical forms, constitute a postcolonial re-enactment of a settler colonial practice, a political protest, and a reclamation of the vanishing Palestinian landscape. Shehadeh's first walk towards his ancestor's *qasr* turns into a long description of topographical sites and archaeological ruins bearing inscriptions of a shared Palestinian past. 'It was as though in this *qasr* time was petrified into an eternal present, making it possible for [him] to reconnect with [his] dead ancestor through this architectural wonder.'<sup>51</sup> In the face of occupation and colonial transformations, Shehadeh reclaims Palestinian space and reconnects with pre-occupation times by naming the sites and places he traverses with their Palestinian names, which include Marj Ibn A'mr (Jazreel Valley), Wadi El Wrda (the flower), A'yn El Lwza (the almond), abandoned *qasrs* and *a'rshs* (thrones). In so doing, Shehadeh redeems the Palestinian identity of the land and counters the effect of what Masalha has termed, the settlers' 'toponymicide' of Palestine, which aims at erasing Palestinian Arab names and replacing them with Hebrew toponymy.<sup>52</sup> Describing what he calls the cultural 'memoricide' of 1948 Palestine through the work of the Jewish National Fund under the guise of ecological concern, Pappé conceives of 'a metaphorical palimpsest at work there: the erasure of the history of one people in order to write that of another people's over it.'<sup>53</sup> With the metaphorical palimpsest in mind, Shehadeh's walks and the writing of these walks can be understood as a retrieval or a recovery of erased layers of inscriptions in defiance of settler colonialism, making them available to contemporary readers.

In his second walk, Shehadeh engages in politicised rhetoric in order to dismantle settler colonial manipulation of natural landscape and to interrogate settlers' claims for 'expropriating Palestinian lands for Jewish settlements.'<sup>54</sup> These claims are often based on the negation and the textual erasure of the indigenous population. A telling example of how Shehadeh writes back to the settlers' politicised discourse on the land can be found in his commentary on

settler narratives about the *natsh*, a thorny thistle, which has gained great popularity in Israeli courts and become a site of textual and judicial dispute between Palestinians and settlers. While on a walk in Wadi El 'qda (the knot), he observes 'several terraces down from the pine trees, halfway between the top of the hill and the valley, in a field full of the common thistle called *natsh* (Poterium Thorn), which was likely used to make the crown of thorns worn by Christ.'<sup>55</sup> In settler colonial discourse, the appearance of *natsh* is frequently cited by settlers, 'not least by Dani Kramer, the legal advisor to the Israeli military government,' as providing evidence on how a particular plot of land, where the *natsh* abundantly grows, is un-tilled and uninhabited. In Israeli courts, Dani manipulates this politicised discourse on the *natsh* in order to legitimate the expropriation of more Palestinian lands. Shehadeh wonders:

How often I have heard him stand up before the judge in the military land court and declare: 'But, Your Honour, the land is full of *natsh*. I saw it with my own eyes.' Meaning: what more proof could anyone want that the land was uncultivated and therefore public land that the Israeli settlers could use as their own?<sup>56</sup>

In Kramer's settler colonial mentality, the presence of the *natsh* is utilised to perpetuate the Zionist mythic construct of 'a land without people for a people without land.' Contesting this narrative, Shehadeh shows how the *natsh* dates back to the time of Jesus, whose crown of thistles bears witness to the natural botany of *natsh* on Palestinian land: '*natsh* is as plentiful in these hills as heather in the Scottish Highlands.'<sup>57</sup> He then explains the uses of *natsh* in a traditionally pastoral Palestinian society:

As the dry summer months advance the leaves eventually dry up and fall off, leaving humps of wiry mesh that farmers sometimes cut and use as a broom to clean coarse surfaces of pebbles and stone. It is also used to drain water and, because of its elasticity, as a substitute for a spring mattress by people who are sleeping out in the open.<sup>58</sup>

Shehadeh's intervention, here, performs rhetorical resistance by re-inscribing the *natsh* both in the natural flora of historic Palestine and in the practices of a traditional Palestinian society.

Apart from Shehadeh's rhetorical resistance, the practice of walking in colonial contexts is a political gesture, since the measure of freedom to ramble in space indicates the liberty enjoyed by the Rambler. The coloniser's limits to Shehadeh's perambulations can be further illuminated when read contrapuntally with Saul Bellow's walks as inscribed in *To Jerusalem and Back*. While Shehadeh's walks are increasingly hampered by colonial restrictions, Bellow's travelling persona roams freely, unrestrained by spatial demarcations. No place within the borders of what was once Shehadeh's country is inaccessible to Bellow, who enjoys walks from Jerusalem to the occupied West Bank; from a fenced-off kibbutz to remote Arab quarters. Unlike Shehadeh, but like many Israeli settlers, Bellow traverses the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and penetrates the peripheries of Arab quarters 'without anger, fear or insecurity.'<sup>59</sup> Checkpoints, highways, and Green Lines do not restrict his movement or interrupt the tranquility of his walks, but rather ensure the safety and security of his sojourn.

In contrast to Shehadeh, Bellow's walks in the West Bank town of Hebron reveal the freedom of movement enjoyed by the colonial settlers. While walking, Bellow describes Palestinian newly-occupied territories in terms defined by a prevailing colonialist discourse that pays homage to the language of Melville and Twain's ethnographic perspectives. Like Melville and Twain, Bellow registers his 'horror at the desolation' of Palestine.<sup>60</sup> For him, the Arab quarters in the West Bank are spaces of 'barrenness' and 'accumulations of rubbish.'<sup>61</sup> While walking in the West Bank, Bellow describes 'white stone terraces,' suggesting that the ground is so severely arid and barren that it 'goes on giving birth to stones.'<sup>62</sup> In the midst of barren Palestinian quarters, the spectator's eye is ravished by the fertility and prosperity of the new settlements. Describing the citrus groves in a kibbutz newly established in Hebron, Bellow

writes: 'the soil is kept loose and soft among trees, the leaves are glossy, the ground itself is fragrant. Many of the trees are still unharvested and bending, tangerines and lemons as dense as stars.' Bellow reminds the reader that this fertility is not intrinsic to the land but achieved by Jewish labour, as he emphasises: 'all this was once dune land. Soil had to be carted in and mixed with the sand. Many years of digging and tending made those orchards.'<sup>63</sup>

While Bellow's walks in the West Bank confirm tropes of a prevailing colonialist discourse, Shehadeh's walks perform an anti-colonial response. While walking, Shehadeh's commentary on the Ramallah landscape highlights a political protest of the settler's systematic confinement of Palestinian space. The vanishing of landscape as observed by Shehadeh is not a natural development over time. It is, rather, effected by settlers' circumscribing, transforming, and emptying of natural space. 'Arabs don't walk,' the Israeli settler notes, which Shehadeh takes as evidence of the Palestinians' lack of freedom to ramble without fear.<sup>64</sup> Walking in the Jerusalem wilderness, Shehadeh depicts the peripheralisation of East Jerusalem as a result of the settlers' construction of a wide highway, thus 'restricting its growth and separating it from the rest of the city.' Highways, usually seen as a sign of modernisation and urbanisation, contribute to the exclusion and peripheralisation of the Arab part of the city. For Shehadeh, '[h]ighways are more effective barriers than walls in keeping neighbourhoods apart. Walls can always be demolished. But once built, roads become a cruel reality that it is more difficult to change.'<sup>65</sup> Settlers' appropriation of the land, as clearly materialised in the expansion of colonial settlements and the construction of walls, highways, fences, nature reserves and checkpoints, further escalates the erosion of Palestinian landscapes and the imprisonment of Palestinian enclaves.

Despite settler attempts to shut the indigenes out of sight, Shehadeh's crossing of borders brings him face to face with the settler. The encounter heightens the tension between the colonial and the anti-colonial. When they first meet, the Israeli settler and the Palestinian indigene hide their inner



thoughts involving their denial of each other. 'My gaze,' the narrator states, 'wandered from him to the rock where he had balanced his *nergila* and where his gun also rested.'<sup>66</sup> The gun and the rock are respectively signs of colonial and pre-colonial times; the gun is emblematic of colonial authority and surveillance while the rock epitomises the natural, unappropriated land of a pre-colonial time. That image of the gun leaning against the rock symbolizes the merging of two national-historical times. This encounter brings face to face the settler who has the authority of the law and the gun on the one hand, and the colonized who has been dispossessed of both on the other. Such unequal power relations prevent an 'imagined *sarha*' in a (post)colonial time-space when the two could ramble freely without fear of each other, without one walking as 'master, leaving [the other] to walk as a criminal on a few restricted paths.'<sup>67</sup>

To the narrator's surprise, this encounter leads to a long conversation, breaking the monologism of one master narrative and creating room for dialogue:

I was surprised to be accosted by the settler. I had somehow not expected it, and was hoping to just slip by, unseen, unseeing, each to his own. But this was not to be. Not any more, not in the Palestinian hills in the spring of 2006.<sup>68</sup>

The walk then turns into ten pages of dialogue between a Palestinian internal exile and a colonial settler, allowing for the dialogic tension between two chronotopes: the colonial and the (post)colonial. The conversation reveals how each holds different perceptions of the very place where they met, known as 'Wadi Dolev' by the settler, and 'Wadi Dalb' by the Palestinian, which the occupier has enclosed as a nature reserve. Interpreting this systematic enclosure of vast spaces in Ramallah as nature reserves by Israel, the settler insists: '[w]e are protecting this spot. Except for us it would have been ruined.'<sup>69</sup> According to this colonialist narrative, it is the colonial settler who has rescued the neglected *wadi* (valley) and preserved its natural resources. However,

Shehadeh's counter-narrative reconstructs the pre-colonial state of the *wadi*, lamenting the vanishing landscape under occupation:

Let me tell you how things looked when this was truly a nature park. Before you came and spoiled it all. You could not see any new buildings, you did not hear any traffic. All you saw were deer leaping up the terraced hills, wild rabbits, foxes, jackals and carpets of flowers. Then it was a park.<sup>70</sup>

This encounter between coloniser and colonised brings to the surface the dialectics of various temporalities, pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial, without excluding any. The evocation of pre-colonial memory becomes an anti-colonial strategy.

The scene that brings together Shehadeh and the Israeli settler is reminiscent of the horse-riding scene in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, which brings together the English colonizer, Fielding, and colonized Indian, Aziz. Both scenes question the possibility of friendship between coloniser and colonised. Shehadeh writes:

I was fully aware of the looming tragedy and war that lay ahead for both of *us*, Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jew. But for now, he and I could sit together for a respite, for a smoke, joined temporarily by our mutual love of the land. Shots could be heard in the distance, which made us both shiver. 'Yours or ours?' I asked. But how could we tell? We agreed to disregard them for now and for a while the only sound that we could hear was the comforting gurgle of the *nergila* and the soft murmur of the precious water trickling between the rocks.<sup>71</sup>

Here, the narrator represents a time-space in which the occupier and the occupied are temporally united. Yet this chronotopic union is immediately shaken by the opposing forces of two wars, two cultures, and two histories which separate them.

In its (post)colonial venture, Shehadeh's memoir reveals a Palestinian re-mapping of the Ramallah hills. Expressing anti-colonial sentiments, Shehadeh refuses to consult a map of the area since it means, for him, submission to the

'ideological biases' of the cartographer.<sup>72</sup> Instead, he consults memories and mental maps:

I would much rather have exercised the freedom of going by the map inside my head, signposted by historical memories and references: this area where Abu Ameen has his *qasr*, that rock where Jonathan and I stopped and had a long talk. That hill over which Penny and I had a memorable walk.<sup>73</sup>

The discursive invention of space by settlers through maps and travelogues supports a more concrete and carefully planned re-production of space. The signs of settler colonial history could not be more visible than Shehadeh's description of settlers' mapping of the Occupied Territories by the construction of highways, walls, fences, and nature reserves. '[T]he impact of settler colonialism,' as Tracey Banivanua-Mar and Penelope Edmonds write,

is starkly visible in the landscapes it produces: the symmetrically surveyed divisions of land: fences, roads, power lines, dams and mines; the vast mono-cultural expanses of single-cropped fields; carved and preserved national forest, and marine and wilderness parks; the expansive and gridded cities; and the socially coded areas of human habitation and trespass that are bordered, policed and defended.<sup>74</sup>

The settlers' transformations of the Ramallah hills are so rapid that in the penultimate walk the narrator can hardly follow the route to the *qasr* which he has visited many times in his previous walks.

As he walks, Shehadeh's gaze moves from natural to architectural sites, observing the imprint of colonial history on Palestinian space:

Palestinians built their villages to embrace the hills not to ride them. This policy gave them protection from strong winds and severe weather conditions. The Israelis, with an eye on security and military advantage, took the hilltops. This is why the settlements stand out. One can tell by looking at the hills, a Jewish settlement from a Palestinian village.<sup>75</sup>

The architectural construction of Israeli settlements in comparison to Palestinian villages in the Ramallah hills illustrates Michel Foucault's

theorisation of the intimate relation between power and 'visual surveillance.'<sup>76</sup> The location of colonial settlements on hilltops offers a position of visual authority and guarantees control. 'The power exercised over those who dwell in [the visual field] is therefore non-corporal: it depends on spatial configuration rather than on the use of force.' The Ramallah hills, however, signify a peculiar case, since the restrictions imposed upon the indigenous population prevent them from reaching the hilltops and, therefore, from accessing that position of visual authority. For the settler observer, 'sight confers power,' and for the observed indigene, 'visibility is a trap,'<sup>77</sup> and this machinery of dissymmetry and difference is maintained by means of fences, checkpoints and walls which in effect 'strangle' the Palestinian-inhabited areas, to use Shehadeh's words, and separate them from each other.<sup>78</sup> The chronotopicity of the architectural design of colonial settlements is manifest in the rigid planning of houses in the settlements, in contrast to 'the unplanned Palestinian villages [which] have developed slowly over a long period of time and blend organically into the land.'<sup>79</sup>

In his walks, Shehadeh paradoxically moves forward to the past, to the rectitude of memories. He can neither accommodate himself in the colonial present nor find aspiration in the future. As he reads about settlers' plans for new settlements in the West Bank, Shehadeh 'felt a shudder of fear about the future: What if these plans were fulfilled right here next to where I lived? What would become of us? But reading is not like seeing.'<sup>80</sup> For Shehadeh, the otherness of the present Ramallah is defined against his memories of a familiar, yet vanishing Palestinian landscape. While nineteenth-century walks in Palestine were instrumental to the Zionist enterprise, aiming to establish the settlers' connection to land and to refashion the land according to Biblical geography, Shehadeh appropriates the Palestinian walk to challenge colonial power, decolonize history, and reclaim memory.

### 4.3 Susan Abulhawa and the Chronotope of Return

[E]very Palestinian today is therefore in the unusual position of knowing that there was once a Palestine and yet seeing that place with a new name, people, and identity that deny Palestine altogether. A 'return' to Palestine is therefore an unusual, not to say urgently fraught, occurrence.

(Edward Said, Foreword viii)

If the chronotope of walking in Shehadeh's *sarhat* articulates anti-colonial thoughts, Kanafani's *Return to Haifa* and Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* both engage the chronotope of return. While Kanafani tells of the return from the post-1967 Occupied Territories to Israel proper beyond the Green Line, Abulhawa narrates the return of the exiled Palestinian from far-flung Western diaspora to the Occupied Territories, revealing a history and a geography of Palestine transformed beyond recognition by settler expansionism.

The myth of a Jewish return to history and to Biblical land has been instrumental to the ideological construction of political Zionism. As propagated in Theodore Herzl's *Old New Land*, this mythic return establishes links with a particular agency realised in 'the creation of a "New society" and a "New Hebrew Man"' and based on 'a European Jewish civilising mission in the Middle East.'<sup>81</sup> Writing back to the settler colonial narrative, Abulhawa re-invents return as a Palestinian (post)colonial ethos articulating both the return of the exiled to the homeland in search of national identity, and the return of the diasporic writer to her national literary heritage as a site of inspiration.

A novel written in English by an American Palestinian, and published by a European publisher, *Mornings in Jenin* represents a discursive return: that of the Palestinian writer to a Western intellectual *milieu* after decades of marginalization and silence. In personal correspondence, Abulhawa explains the difficulty she had in getting her novel published, asserting that 'distribution in the US was therefore accomplished by publishing in Europe.'<sup>82</sup> Commenting on the status of the Palestinian writer in the West, Massad argues that diasporic

Palestinian intellectuals enter Western racialised discourse only through what he calls a 'discursive checkpoint,' where Palestinians become 'white objects' permitted to narrate but not without constraints; in other words they become 'white but not quite.'<sup>83</sup> Through this act of narrating the Palestinian nation in her novel, Abulhawa breaks through the 'discursive checkpoint' in the same way that Shehadeh's walks break through colonial boundaries.

For many Palestinians, Palestine is a space from which they are exiled, and for Palestinian writers, the discourse of return marks a crisis of intertextuality and adaptation; textual returns and re-enactments of sorts. Tara Collington puts the Bakhtinian chronotope within the frame of adaptation studies, suggesting its usefulness as a heuristic tool in the understanding of shifting cultural contexts in the process of adaptation. By examining the relationships between Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, its historical sources, and Michel Tournier's twentieth-century adaptation, *Friday*, Collington interprets the distinct chronotopes of the two novels within a colonial/postcolonial dialogism. Collington's model will be used here to analyse the chronotope of the return journey in Kanafani's *Return to Haifa* and in Abulhawa's 2011 retelling of Kanafani's narrative.<sup>84</sup> My aim is to explore the significance of chronotopic alterations as demonstrated by the two Palestinian narratives of return, which designate the immediate post-1967 period and its long aftermath respectively.

Published two years after the Six-Day War of 1967, Kanafani's *Return to Haifa* captures the experience of the displaced Palestinians of 1948 crossing the newly opened Green Line immediately after the 1967 conflict. The novel depicts the return of the Palestinian, Said, and his wife, Safiya, to Haifa after twenty years of displacement. During the 1948 exodus, the Palestinian parents were forced to leave behind their five-month-old son, Khaldun. Following its victory in 1967 and the subsequent annexation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Israel opened its 1948 borders to the newly-occupied territories, which enables Said and Safiya in the novel to cross the Mandelbaum Gate that separates East

Jerusalem from West Jerusalem in search of their lost son and abandoned home. At the Mandelbaum Gate, the return of the Palestinian family is marred by the reality of their colonised condition:

For twenty years I've been imagining that one day the Mandelbaum Gate would open ... but I never imagined that it would open from the other side. I never dreamed it would happen like this. So when they did open it, the whole thing seemed to me horrible and absurd and even, in a way, despicable ... I was crazy to tell you that every door should only be opened from one side and that if it's opened from the other side you have to keep on seeing it as closed. It's true.<sup>85</sup>

In Haifa, they find their house inhabited by a family of Holocaust survivors who have raised their son as a Jew, and given him the name Dov. An emotionally-charged encounter takes place between Dov, who has joined the Israeli army, and his biological Palestinian parents. The long-awaited reunion between son and father therefore takes the form of an encounter between coloniser and colonised.

Within the Bakhtinian framework, this encounter represents the chronotope of the threshold. According to Bakhtin, the chronotope of the threshold, which is 'highly charged with emotion and value,' and usually triggered by, and combined with, an encounter of sorts, is 'connected with the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life.'<sup>86</sup> Encountering the realities of occupation in its harshest images of a lost land and a lost identity, the returning Said has undergone a crisis, which leads to his questioning of some long-held conceptions of homeland. In this narrative, Kanafani represents the immediate post-1967 Palestine, bringing about the philosophical question of what constitutes the meaning of homeland. Pointing to the complexity of the issue, Kanafani's representation of the Hebraized Palestinian serves to allegorize the hybrid condition of colonial Palestine. After twenty years of Israeli settler colonialism, Palestine has become alien to diasporic Palestinians as much as the geographically-dispersed Palestinian diaspora have become alien to 'the land of sad oranges.'<sup>87</sup> The duality of the

name Khaldun / Dov parallels the duality of the name Palestine / Israel; each side across the colonial divide uses a distinct signifier for the same space. By this logic, the narrative's detailed description of the interior of Said's household in Haifa could be interpreted as a 'textual rescue,' an attempt to retain for future, further hybridised generations, the cultural memory of 'Palestine.'

In Kanafani's novel, Said's persistent questioning of the conception of 'homeland' illustrates the negotiation between the narrative and its socio-historical context. The Arab defeat in 1967 marks a radical change in the political position of both Kanafani and his fictional character, Said. Before the defeat, Kanafani was a committed purveyor of Jamal Abdul Nasser's ideology of pan-Arab unity, voicing his thoughts through the newspaper *al-Muharrir* (*The Liberator*), the most important apparatus for publicising Nasserist ideas outside Egypt.<sup>88</sup> Disillusioned by the failure of Nasser's pan-Arabist project, Kanafani 'began to realise that Arab nationalism and Palestinian nationalism did not necessarily overlap.'<sup>89</sup> Echoes of this change in Kanafani's position can be found in the development of his character, Said, who eventually approves of his son's engagement in armed resistance.

The mobility of *Return to Haifa* stands in contrast with what Joe Cleary has described as the 'stasis' and 'no-place' of Kanafani's earlier narrative, *Rijal fi ashams* (1963) [*Men in the Sun* (1998)]. The immobility of the characters of *Men in the Sun*, as Cleary has pointed out, demonstrates their 'inability to get beyond the border' and 'the lack of any available political strategy that might allow them to master political space.'<sup>90</sup> After the Six-Day War, a new conception of the 'border' emerged in Palestinian literature. While action in *Men in the Sun* centres around the border between two Arab states, Iraq and Kuwait, the border in *Return to Haifa* is within Palestine, marking the divide between the geo-political maps of post-1948 and post-1967 Palestine; between Israel proper and the Occupied Territories.

In a time-space distinct from that of Kanafani's narrative, Abulhawa dramatises the complexity and multiplicity of diasporic Palestinian identities



and their understanding of the meaning of homeland, which is constantly contested and redefined in relation to changing socio-historical contexts. *Mornings in Jenin* tells the story of expulsion and displacement of four generations of the Abulhija family from the tranquil pastoral landscapes of Ein Houd to internal and external diasporas. From Jenin to Jerusalem to Philadelphia and many other places, the dispersed siblings, Amal, Yousef, and David/Ismael take different routes and develop diverse chronotopic perspectives towards return. Stuart Hall's theorisation of Caribbean diasporic experience offers a useful framework to understand the Palestinian case here. According to Hall, '[t]he distinctiveness of [Caribbean] culture is manifestly the outcome of the most complex interweaving and fusion in the furnace of colonial society, of different African, Asian and European cultural elements.'<sup>91</sup> The African presence in Caribbean identity constitutes 'the site of the repressed ... the unspoken, unspeakable,'<sup>92</sup> and is often illustrated by the symbolic journey to a primordial homeland. Similarly, the return of the exile, whether actual or imagined, becomes a common chronotopic motif in Palestinian literature. For the exiled Palestinians, this return journey becomes a site of production where, as Hall has explained in a different context, they connect to traditions and genealogies to produce themselves anew.<sup>93</sup> Answering David's question of whether he is still an abstraction, Amal, his sister, posits: 'you and I are the remains of an unfulfilled legacy, heirs to a kingdom of stolen identities and ragged confusion.'<sup>94</sup> Thus, Amal's return journey reveals an attempt to reconnect with tradition and to redefine cultural identity in relation to locality. This return journey constitutes a third space where two chronotopes interact: one is centred in the memories of pre-1967 Palestine, the other resides in a present transformed beyond recognition.

The interaction between these two chronotopes constitutes a third space, a cultural interstice in which a third chronotope emerges. This third chronotope can be described in terms of Bhabha's third space, that is, 'the space of intervention emerging in the cultural interstices that introduces creative

invention into existence.<sup>95</sup> In this space-time, borders are not ends but beginnings, since characters experience the ongoing re-definition of Palestine as a result of the third space's intrinsic force, innovating and interrupting cultural identities. Bhabha notes: 'it is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricised and read anew.'<sup>96</sup> The third space becomes a space of enunciation in which meanings, signs, and texts are re-configured and read anew and intertextuality in Palestinian novels operates within these dynamics of the third space.

For Palestinian writers, the discursive strategies of intertextuality and adaptation perform virtual returns: re-enactments of sorts. The diegetic transposition of Abulhawa's re-enactment of Kanafani's narrative is clearly accentuated in the prelude to the novel, which portrays Amal's entrance into Jenin through an Israeli checkpoint in 2002. Almost three decades separate the return journey of Kanafani's character from Gaza to Haifa from Amal's journey from Philadelphia to the Jenin refugee camps. This alteration of the site of departure in the return journey brings forth a comparison between the circumscribed space allowed for Palestinians inside Israel and the geographic dispersal of their diasporic existence. Kanafani's hero associates home with household objects such as peacock feathers, roses, and family pictures, while Abulhawa's heroine connects Palestine with public historical monuments such as the Church of the Nativity and the Dome of the Rock. Unlike the immediate, individual and material memory of Kanafani's characters, Abdulhawa's diasporic narrative engages with distant collective memory.

A corollary to the Palestinian chronotope of return is the narrative's backward temporal motion, employing the retrospective impulse of flashbacks and back shadowing to serve as a fourth dimension of the represented spatiality. Encountering the homeland years after displacement, '[t]he petitions of memory pulled [Amal] back, and still back, to a home she had never known,'

marking just the beginning of successive flashbacks in the narrative.<sup>97</sup> As those exilic characters imagine space, '[t]ime [is] looping backward.'<sup>98</sup> This backward temporal movement of the Palestinian narrative, as clearly manifested in the return of the exilic character, lends itself to what Bakhtin calls 'historical inversion.' Through historical inversion, Palestinian exilic narratives liberate a fragmented history by reclaiming memories of a shared past. As an overriding narrative process in Palestinian exilic narrative, it compensates for a future that is 'somehow empty and fragmented—since everything affirmative, ideal, obligatory, desired has been shifted, via the inversion, into the past (or partly into the present); en route, it has become weightier, more authentic, and persuasive.'<sup>99</sup> Historical inversion is often interpreted as part of the colonised people's progressive endeavour to assert national identity; a quest for cultural decolonization. However, the chronotope of return in Palestinian narratives, defined by its backward motion into past memories, unsettles rather than affirms Bakhtin's assumption of the inevitable fullness of time. A fullness of time is unachievable in the Palestinian return to refugee camps, since the 'future can't breathe in a refugee camp ... the air is too dense for hope.'<sup>100</sup>

In Abulhawa's representation of return, the setting shifts from Kanafani's Haifa to the nearby space of the village of Ein Hod/Ein Houd. The history of this village during the 1948 war signifies resistance and return in the face of Israeli erasure. The Palestinians who were displaced from the village of Ein Houd near Haifa resettled near their original land and created a new Ein Houd mimicking their occupied village. The old site was reconstructed as a gallery for world artists and renamed Ein Hod.<sup>101</sup> The post-1948 dialectical space of Ein Houd / Ein Hod, as suggested by its double name, lends itself to Foucault's framing of heterotopia. The mirror analogy that Foucault uses to illustrate the dialectics inherent in the heterotopic space is manifested in the binary opposing sites of Ein Hod and Ein Houd. Upon his first return to Ein Hod, Yehya, Amal's father, reports the transformation of the village into an 'art gallery' for world artists, thus saturating the place with the heterotopias and the

chronotopias of their paintings.<sup>102</sup> 'Ein Hod was being settled by Jewish artists from France and was gaining a reputation as a secluded paradise.'<sup>103</sup> The image of '[m]odern sculptures dott[ing] the terrain' while '[a] few artists, mostly French Jews, worked outdoors on landscape paintings' is very much in resonance with Foucault's depiction of the heterotopic site of the Persian garden.<sup>104</sup>

For Foucault,

The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible... The traditional garden of the Persians was a sacred space that was supposed to bring together inside its rectangle four parts representing the four parts of the world.<sup>105</sup>

Ein Hod is heterotopic in two ways. As a world gallery, it is replete with paintings and artists from diverse geographical and cultural groups. Furthermore, it is heterotopic in relation to its post-1948 Palestinian reconstructed village. The settlers' creation of heterotopic sites in Palestine is also noted by Shehadeh. The colonial settlements in post-1967 Ramallah as described in Shehadeh's narrative exemplify heterotopias. Their symmetric construction as carefully planned, meticulously built, and firmly protected, stands in sharp contrast with the long-standing and randomly erected indigenous built environment. The refugee camp in Abulhawa's narrative, with its peculiar vertical growth, becomes heterotopic in relation to the expansionist world of the colonial settlers. While Abulhawa's novel presents the refugee camp with its inhumane conditions as a heterotopia, Shehadeh's depicts the colonial settlements in Ramallah with their unnatural architecture and exceptional policing as heterotopic. For both, Palestine has become a heterotopic space where pre-colonial, colonial and (post)colonial space times coexist and intervene.

Through the return of the exile, Abulhawa's novel shows the development that Amal's notion of national space has undergone: from

abstraction in the diaspora to geographical and natural associations after the return journey. In exile, Amal reconstructs Palestine by means of pictures hung on the walls of her Philadelphia house and some photographs of her dispersed family. These pictures are not devoid of chronotopic signification, as they introduce David to the Palestine of his siblings. As a result of this exilic experience, Palestine has become a de-territorialised space: a space-time that can be realized and reconstructed beyond geographical borders.

However, the dissolution of the geographical parameters to the image of national space in the exile's memory is counterbalanced by the powerful re-emergence of Palestine as a cultural force, counteracting the exile's impulse to assimilate into the dominant culture. At the beginning, Amal describes how she has 'metamorphosed into an unclassified Arab-Western hybrid, unrooted and unknown,'<sup>106</sup> adopting an American lifestyle in an attempt to assimilate into the dominant culture. Later, her conceptualisation of Palestine has acquired a stronger and more persisting power than before, suggesting an unusual trajectory in the context of processes of assimilation:

The divide could not have been greater, nor could it be bridged ... Palestine would just rise up from my bones into the center of my new life, unannounced. In class, at a bar, strolling through the city. Without warning, the weeping willows of Rittenhouse Square would turn into Jenin's fig trees reaching down to offer me their fruit. It was a persistent pull, living in the cells of my body, calling me to myself. Then it would slouch back into latency.<sup>107</sup>

Place has acquired a metaphysical meaning, functioning as a cultural force that pulls the diasporic subjects away from the assimilative impulse and back towards their original culture.

The dialogic interaction between past and present, abstract and concrete spatial preoccupations in Amal's imagination overlap with the two opposed forces at play in the formation of the diaspora identity: a nationalist, homogenising force and a de-centering, globalising one. Hall maintains that:

It is therefore important to see this diasporic perspective on culture as subversive of traditional nation-oriented cultural models. Like other globalizing processes cultural globalization is de-territorializing in its effects. Its space-time condensations, driven by new technologies, loosen the tie between culture and 'place.'<sup>108</sup>

This subversive element is manifested in the transformation in Amal's reaction to the city of Jerusalem when she returns from exile. When she first visits Jerusalem in the aftermath of 1948, Amal describes the powerful affective impact of the city's historicity:

Every inch of it holds the confidence of ancient civilizations, their deaths and birthmarks pressed deep into the city's viscera and onto the rubble of its edges ... it has been conquered, razed, and rebuilt so many times that its stones seem to possess life ... It sparks an inherent sense of familiarity in me—that doubtless, irrefutable Palestinian certainty that I belong to this land. It possesses me, no matter who conquers it, because its soil is the keeper of my roots, of the bones of my ancestors... I am a daughter of the land, and Jerusalem reassures me of this inalienable title.<sup>109</sup>

For Amal, the stones and rubble of post-1948 Jerusalem are replete with the history of familiar pasts that shores up her sense of belonging to a Palestinian identity firmly based on 'doubtless' and 'irrefutable' historical links to an 'inalienable title' to the land that is Palestine. However, when she returns to Jerusalem after living in exile for so long, the ruins and the sites of decay ravish Amal's eye, warning of how 'cold,' 'cruel' and 'undeserving' the city of Jerusalem has become.<sup>110</sup> The stones that seemed to possess life can no longer evoke the historical meanings or affective impact that Amal once appreciated. In her return journey, Amal redefines national space in relation to natural flora instead of historical monuments. For her, 'an olive tree in Jenin' has 'more history than the Old City walls. It's more beautiful, humble, and authentic than the chiseled stone here.'<sup>111</sup> Upon their return, whether actual or imagined, diasporic Palestinians are therefore ceaselessly contesting and redefining

cultural identity and national space when it comes to the narration of their nation.

While narrating return through the chronotopic perspective inhabited by David, Abulhawa extends the temporal frame of Kanafani's Dov over subsequent key events in the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict including the aftermath of the 1967 war and the 2002 Jenin massacre. This hybrid character of David embodies a matrix of intersecting chronotopes: that of the colonial settler, the oriental Jew and the Palestinian. Bearing the phenotypic features of his Palestinian parents, David/Ismael occupies an ambiguous position in Israeli society. He could also be seen as an Oriental Jew who, like Israeli Arabs, suffers from racial discrimination at the hands of Ashkenazi Jews in Israel. Between the conflicting forces of two national cultures and two ethnic groups, unequal in power, Ismael/David eventually agrees to inhabit the ambivalence of his liminality as a permanent space. Describing the chronotopic perspective of David as a liminal figure, the narrator tells us:

He knew the improvised history of modern Israel was not really his. The heritage that ran through his blood was vintage, yet somehow that, too, was not his. Fate had placed him somewhere between, where he belonged to neither.<sup>112</sup>

The nature of this third space where Ismael/David belongs becomes clearer towards the end of the narrative in the post he writes on Sara's website:

*I'll never be wholly Jew nor Muslim. Never wholly Palestinian nor Israeli. Your acceptance made me content to be merely human. You understood that though I was capable of great cruelty, so am I of great love.*<sup>113</sup>

Eventually, David is content with inhabiting a chronotopic perspective embracing both settler and indigene, coloniser and colonised, inclusive of their mutual visibility and shared humanity. Hence, David's return is a return neither to a lost history nor to an eroded geography but to the common destiny of humanity.

Abulhawa has complicated Kanafani's portrayal of the rifts that decades of occupation have created in Palestinian society. The encounter between father and son in Kanafani's *Return to Haifa* is replaced with two encounters between siblings in Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*. The rift is no longer between different generations but rather between brothers from the same generation. The first encounter shows two brothers with opposing political allegiances standing face to face across the colonial divide. But the chronotopic space separating the two brothers, David, the Israeli soldier, and Yousef, the displaced Palestinian, is much wider than the physical distance between them indicates:

Less than six inches separated their bodies, and in that space fit nearly twenty years, a war, two religions, a holocaust [sic], the Nakbe [sic], two mothers, two fathers, a scar, and a secret with wings flapping in the slow butterfly way.<sup>114</sup>

While separation and ambivalence have marked their first encounter, the second one at Bartaa checkpoint reveals the cultural crisis that will transform the identities of both David and Yousef. In this context, the checkpoint is the border that brings the ultimate separation between the two chronotopes inhabited by the two brothers. David stands on the hegemonic side that possesses access, power and surveillance, while Yousef remains in the shadows of internal exile, deprived of the most basic of human rights, that is, of the freedom to move in what was once his land.

*Abulhawa's Mornings in Jenin* represents the checkpoint as a highly intensified border where return to the land seems to be irrevocably thwarted by the settlers' occupation of the land. Checkpoints perform a chronotopic motif especially characteristic of Palestinian literature. In the particular context of the encounter between David and Yousef at the checkpoint, Abulhawa echoes the Bakhtinian combined chronotope by representing one site inclusive of the dynamics of two chronotopes: threshold and encounter. For Bakhtin, the chronotope of encounter is 'marked by a higher degree of intensity in emotions and values,' since it shows '[p]eople who are normally kept separate by social



and spatial distance can accidentally meet; any contrast may crop up, the most various fates may collide and interweave with one another.<sup>115</sup> Bakhtin has combined the motif of encounter with the chronotope of the threshold whose fundamental features are 'crisis and break in a life.'<sup>116</sup> The word 'threshold,' as meant by Bakhtin here, is 'connected with the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life (or the indecisiveness that fails to change a life, the fear to step over the threshold).'<sup>117</sup> Abulhawa renders this combined chronotope a site of contestation and separation. This experience leads both David and Yousef to test and redefine their national affiliations and political allegiances. The cultural crisis experienced by the two brothers after their second encounter at 'a checkpoint near the village of Bartaa,'<sup>118</sup> has transformed Yousef from a teacher of mathematics at the University of Bethlehem to a resistance fighter enlisting in the PLO. It has also sent David to a permanent liminal space where he seeks return neither to the dominant colonial group nor to the subordinate colonised group but to the liminal space of humanity. For Abulhawa, the checkpoint which restricts Palestinians' right of passage has become a rite of passage in which Palestinians redefine their national identity and assert their return to a shared past and a shared geography.

Khalid, Dov's brother who represents the resistance figure in Kanafani's work, does not appear physically but is portrayed through his parents' dialogue. In contrast to Kanafani's reluctance to portray a fighter, the resistance figure is given a more physical space in Abulhawa's work as a reaction to the growing role of the Palestinian resistance movements. Informing his sister, Amal, about his decision to join the PLO, Yousef has written in the letter he sent in 1968:

*I'm going to fight. It's my only choice. They have scripted lives for us that are but extended death sentences, a living death. I won't live their script ... The resistance is forming and eventually we will take back what is rightfully ours. You were born a refugee, but I promise I will die, if I must, so you do not die a refugee.*<sup>119</sup>

Towards the end of the narrative, Yousef is now eager to 'keep [his] humanity' after he has failed to 'keep [his] promises' to his sister, Amal, who has been shot in Jenin by an Israeli soldier.<sup>120</sup> Despite Yousef's promises, Amal died a refugee. After years of displacement, of exile in different Arab countries, of the insecurity of being hunted by Israeli soldiers, Yousef keeps 'a gun and solitary bullet' in his pocket.<sup>121</sup> Choosing to die is the only choice left to a disillusioned resistance figure. All that Yousef longs for is a space-time to embrace his memories and hopes, but '*time is immobile like a corpse and [he] lie[s] with it in [his] bed.*'<sup>122</sup> The impossibility of return, then, takes the form of death as the ultimate return to the land.

Sara, Amal's daughter, represents the second generation of diasporic Palestinians, who have not seen Palestine before occupation. After Amal's death, Sara and David return to the family house in Ein Hod, guided by their father's Jewish friend Ari Perlstein, and access the pre-1948 chronotope through Ari's memories. Similar to Sara, David, and Amal, hybrid Palestinians in their diverse yet overlapping cultural spheres, are constantly contesting and redefining Palestinian national space. The novel closes with the descendants of the first generation, Sara, Jacob, and Mansour, the children of Amal, David, and Huda respectively, living together in Amal's Pennsylvania house. The novel, then, presents the Pennsylvania house, free of military occupation and accommodating a culturally heterogeneous group – one American, one Israeli, and one Palestinian – as a microcosmic space-time for how Palestine should and could be. Those Palestinian exiles choose not to stay in Palestine, but refuse to be denied the right to return. The diasporic experience presented in the novel illustrates Hall's conception of a diaspora defined 'not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity.'<sup>123</sup>

The return of Abulhawa's diasporic characters illustrates a return to a space defined by mutual visibility and cross-cultural coexistence in terms that

destabilise the ethnic core upon which the return of Zionism is based. For Hall, Zionism involves a backward conception of diaspora and a homogenising form of return to a homeland firmly defined upon ethnic borders.

I use this term [diaspora] here metaphorically, not literally: diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the imperialising, the homogenizing, form of 'ethnicity'. *We have seen the fate of the people of Palestine at the hands of this backward-looking conception of diaspora—* and the complicity of the West with it.<sup>124</sup>

Palestinians, according to Hall, are objects of the epistemic violence inherent in the Zionist conception of return. *Mornings in Jenin* subverts an ethnically exclusive return of Zionist imaginings by constructing Palestinians seeking a Palestine inclusive of the necessary heterogeneity and diversity of humanity.

The returns of Abulhawa's characters and the walks of Shehadeh's persona perform postcolonial passages in a not-yet postcolonial space. This chapter has revealed the possibility of framing Palestinian literature in postcolonial debates, addressing the theoretical challenges posed by the peculiar case of articulating (post)colonial formulations while Zionist settler colonialism is still expanding. Drawing on Bakhtin's notions of literary chronotopes in relation to the portrayal of walking in Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks* and of returning in Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*, the chapter has sketched ways of challenging settler colonialism. Shehadeh's walks, as physical and discursive acts, perform a textual rescue of a pre-colonial space-time, protesting against settler colonialism and the landscapes of decay and imprisonment it produces. The chronotope of returning in Abulhawa's novel, meanwhile, illustrates the complex cultural processes urging Palestinian exiles ceaselessly to contest and redefine their cultural identities and national space. For Abulhawa, as for many exiled Palestinians, to narrate is to return. In their narratives, Shehadeh and Abulhawa therefore appropriate, subvert and rewrite

two common tropes in Zionist debates, walking and returning, for postcolonial ends.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Bhabha directs his criticism towards, what he has called, the 'high Saidian style,' notable in Said's writing particularly when speaking for the Palestinian cause. This Saidian high style, according to Bhabha, often 'sacrifices analytic precision to polemical outrage' (quoted in Joseph Massad, 'The Intellectual Life of Edward Said,' *Journal of Palestine Studies* 33.3 (2004): 15). Joseph Massad, in response to this criticism, points out that Bhabha, who, as a postcolonial critic, is presumably also anti-colonial, never describes the Zionist enterprise or Israeli occupation as having anything to do with colonialism, which leads him to call not for an end to Israel's colonization and occupation, but for a negotiated 'just and lasting peace' ('Intellectual Life of Edward Said' 15).

<sup>2</sup> Anna Ball, *Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Feminist Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2012) 4.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Williams, "'Outlines of a better world": Rerouting Postcolonialism,' *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium*, ed. Janet Wilson, Cristina Sandru and Sarah Lawson Welsh (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010) 91.

<sup>4</sup> Abulhawa's novel was first published in 2006 under the title *The Scar of David* (Summerland: Journey), then republished by Bloomsbury as *Mornings in Jenin* (2010). The paperback edition, from which I cite, appeared in 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Salah D. Hasan, 'Displaced Nations: Israeli Settlers and Palestinian Refugees,' *Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture*, ed. Fional Bateman and Lionel Pilkington (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2011) 193.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir* (London: Granta Books, 2000) 293.

<sup>7</sup> Mikhail M. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel: Note Towards a Historical Poetics,' *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) 84.

<sup>8</sup> Bakhtin, 'Forms' 84.

<sup>9</sup> Susan Abulhawa states in the author's note to the novel that the 'seed for this book came from Ghassan Kanafani's short story about a Palestinian boy who was raised by the Jewish family that found him in the home they took over in 1948' (*Mornings in Jenin* 327). While Abulhawa acknowledges that the inspiration for her character David came from Kanafani's *Khaldun / Dov*, I will focus here on another line of intertextuality, namely the return of the exile. The article goes on to reveal the rhetorical strategy of intertextuality, utilized by diasporic Palestinian writers, as a form of discursive return to Palestinian literary heritage.

<sup>10</sup> Anne McClintock, 'The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post-Colonialism,"' *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 87.

<sup>11</sup> McClintock 97.

- <sup>12</sup> McClintock 91.
- <sup>13</sup> Ella Shohat, 'Notes on the "Post-Colonial,"' *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 104. Emphasis added.
- <sup>14</sup> Shohat 111.
- <sup>15</sup> Joseph Massad, 'The "Post-Colonial" Colony: Time, Space, and Bodies in Palestine/Israel,' *The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks (London: Duke University Press, 2000) 340.
- <sup>16</sup> I use the term 'metropole colonialism' following Gabriel Piterberg's classification of the two main types of colonialism, namely, metropole colonialism and settler colonialism (*The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* [London: Verso, 2008] 53).
- <sup>17</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2010) 95.
- <sup>18</sup> Anthony A. Gunerante, 'The Virtual Spaces of Postcoloniality: Rushdie, Ondaatje, Naipaul, Bakhtin and the Others,' *Online Postcolonial Conference, 1997*, Dr. Ismail S. Talib (Department of English, University of Singapore). Gunerante explains his embracing of the term 'mongrel' in the context of Rushdie's 'delight' in the word as a 'term he [Rushdie] associates particularly with the grand melange that is India, but which can be applied more broadly to a polyglot state' (2). Yet Gunerante attributes more relevance to the term as used in 1996 by an Australian politician to describe 'the offspring of parents of mixed race;' 'a term which would easily encompass such freckled monsters as Joyce and Yeats in the same polyglot potpourri' (2).
- <sup>19</sup> Gunerante 8.
- <sup>20</sup> Paul Smethurst, *The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000) 235-41.
- <sup>21</sup> Doreen Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time,' *New Left Review* I 196 (1992): 76, 84.
- <sup>22</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,' trans. Jay Miskowiec) *Architecture* Oct. (1984): 3. This essay first appeared in French as 'Des espaces autres' in March 1967.
- <sup>23</sup> Foucault 1. Emphasis added.
- <sup>24</sup> Foucault 1.
- <sup>25</sup> Foucault 7.
- <sup>26</sup> Raja Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* (London: Profile Books, 2008) 45.
- <sup>27</sup> Bakhtin, 'Forms' 253. Emphasis in the original.

- 28 Bakhtin, 'Forms' 250.
- 29 Mikhail Bakhtin, 'The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism,' *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986) 25.
- 30 Bakhtin, 'The *Bildungsroman*' 34-41.
- 31 Donna Landry, *The Invention of the Countryside: Hunting, Walking and Ecology in English Literature 1671-1831* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001) 205.
- 32 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 2.
- 33 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 2.
- 34 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 2.
- 35 Robert MacFarlane, *The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot* (London: Penguin, 2012) 213, 220.
- 36 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 9.
- 37 Raja Shehadeh, 'Interview with Raja Shehadeh,' *International Review of the Red Cross* 94.885 (Spring 2012): 15.
- 38 Or Kashti, 'History Students Fight to Use Textbook Presenting Both Israeli and Palestinian Narratives,' *Haaretz* 10 Feb. 2012. The book under discussion in the article is written by professors Dan Bar-On, from Ben-Gurion University, and Sami Adwan, from Bethlehem University, as well as Israeli and Palestinian high school history teachers.
- 39 Eyal Naveh, 'The Dynamics of Identity Construction in Israel Through Education in History,' *Israel and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006) 252-53.
- 40 Naveh 257.
- 41 Naveh 266. The book in which Naveh's essay appears also includes a co-authored essay entitled 'The Psychology of Better Dialogue between two Separate but Interdependent Narratives' by Dan Bar-On and Sami Adwan—the Israeli and Palestinian professors whose project of a history textbook incorporating Israeli and Palestinian perspectives was banned by the Israeli Ministry of Education, as reported in the above *Haaretz* article.
- 42 *Palestinian Walks* was first published in 2007 by Profile Books. In this chapter I have consulted the 2008 version, in which Shehadeh added a seventh *sarha* to his earlier copy. Shehadeh was awarded the Orwell Prize for political writing in 2008 for this memoir.
- 43 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* xii.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Spencer, 'Ecocriticism in the Colonial Present: The Politics of Dwelling in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*,' *Postcolonial Studies* 13. 1 (2010): 43.

<sup>45</sup> Donna Landry, 'The Geopolitical Picturesque,' *Land and Identity: Theory, Memory, and Practice*, ed. Christine Berberich, Neil Campbell, and Robert Hudson (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012) 104.

<sup>46</sup> Landry, 'The Geopolitical Picturesque' 105.

<sup>47</sup> Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 10.

<sup>48</sup> Rebecca L. Stein, 'Travelling Zion,' *Interventions* 11.3 (2009): 334. The plural form of *ha-tiyul*: a Hebrew word that means walks or hikes.

<sup>49</sup> Yizhak Ben Zvi, an émigré to Palestine from the Ukraine who would later become a prominent Socialist Zionist leader and Israel's second president, wrote prolifically about his travels through Eretz Yisrael (The Land of Israel).

<sup>50</sup> Stein 335.

<sup>51</sup> Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 15.

<sup>52</sup> Nur Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (London: Zed Books, 2012) 10. Masalha added the term 'toponymicide' in reference to the Zionists' particular attempts to Hebraize Palestine, replacing Palestinian Arab names with Hebrew (biblical) names.

<sup>53</sup> Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) 225, 231. Pappé used the term 'memorycide' in reference to the systematic and scholarly work of the Israeli official Naming Committee and Jewish National Fund to de-Arabise Palestine- its names and geography, but above all its history.

<sup>54</sup> Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 53

<sup>55</sup> Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 53.

<sup>56</sup> Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 53.

<sup>57</sup> Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 53.

<sup>58</sup> Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 53.

<sup>59</sup> Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 33.

<sup>60</sup> Saul Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back: A Personal Account* (New York: The Viking P, 1976) 159.

<sup>61</sup> Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 16.

<sup>62</sup> Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 131.



- 63 Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* 61.
- 64 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 193.
- 65 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 105.
- 66 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 192.
- 67 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 196-97.
- 68 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 191.
- 69 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 195.
- 70 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 195.
- 71 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 203.
- 72 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 189.
- 73 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 189.
- 74 Tracey Banivanua-Mar and Penelope Edmonds (eds.), 'Introduction,' *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place, and Identity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010) 2.
- 75 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 161.
- 76 David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration* (London: Duke University Press, 1999) 16.
- 77 Spurr 16.
- 78 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 161.
- 79 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 161.
- 80 Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks* 161.
- 81 Nur Masalha, *The Palestinian Nakba* 180.
- 82 Susan Abulhawa, 'From Susan Abulhawa,' message to the author, 28 Dec. 2011. E-mail.
- 83 Joseph Massad, 'Palestinians and the Limits of Racialized Discourse,' *Social Text* 39 (1993): 108.
- 84 Ghassan Kanafani, 'Return to Haifa,' *Palestine's Children*, trans. Barbara Harlow (London: Heinemann, 1984) 99-138.
- 85 Kanafani, 'Return' 100.
- 86 Bakhtin, 'Forms' 248.

- <sup>87</sup> This phrase, which refers to Palestine, is the English translation of the title of one of Ghassan Kanafani's early stories, *Ard al-Burtugal al-Hazin* (1963), republished in 2001 in his *al-Atha'r al-Ka'milah* [The Complete Works] (Baghdad: al-Dar al-Wataniyah, 2001).
- <sup>88</sup> Stephen Wild, *Ghassan Kanafani: The Life of a Palestinian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975) 18.
- <sup>89</sup> Wild 21.
- <sup>90</sup> Joe Cleary, *Literature, Partition, and the Nation State: Culture and Conflict in Ireland, Israel, and Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 208.
- <sup>91</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Thinking the Diaspora: Home-Thoughts From Abroad,' *Small Axe* 6 (1999): 6.
- <sup>92</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora,' *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990) 230.
- <sup>93</sup> Hall, 'Thinking the Diaspora' 16.
- <sup>94</sup> Susan Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011) 270.
- <sup>95</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994) 9.
- <sup>96</sup> Bhabha 37.
- <sup>97</sup> Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 13.
- <sup>98</sup> Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 290.
- <sup>99</sup> Bakhtin, 'Forms' 147.
- <sup>100</sup> Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 136.
- <sup>101</sup> See Susan Slymovics's 'Discourses on the Pre-1948 Palestinian Village: The Case of Ein Hod/ Ein Houd,' *Traditional Dwellings and Settlement Reviews* 4.2: 27-37.
- <sup>102</sup> Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 46.
- <sup>103</sup> Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 48.
- <sup>104</sup> Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 318.
- <sup>105</sup> Foucault 6.
- <sup>106</sup> Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 173.
- <sup>107</sup> Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 175.
- <sup>108</sup> Hall, 'Thinking the Diaspora' 10.
- <sup>109</sup> Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 140.

- 110 Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 290.
- 111 Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 290-91.
- 112 Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 264.
- 113 Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 319-20. Emphasis in the original.
- 114 Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 99.
- 115 Bakhtin, 'Forms' 243.
- 116 Bakhtin, 'Forms' 248. Emphasis in the original.
- 117 Bakhtin, 'Forms' 248.
- 118 Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 104.
- 119 Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 120. Emphasis in the original.
- 120 Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 322.
- 121 Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 322.
- 122 Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* 322. Emphasis in the original.
- 123 Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' 235. Emphasis in the original.
- 124 Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' 235. Emphasis added.

## Conclusion

This study has explored representations of the geopolitical space of Palestine by Jewish American and Arab novelists within the emergent discourse of settler colonialism. While postcolonial theory, although useful, proves insufficient for assessing Palestine, the study has revealed the possibility of framing the Palestinian historical context within settler colonial studies. This shift towards the settler colonial framework aims to dismantle the assumption that Palestine presents an unprecedented situation defying comparative approaches. The settler colonial frame proves useful in recovering Palestine from the margins of postcolonial studies and also in opening up postcolonial debates to the particular cultural formulations and literary narratives emerging from settler colonial situations where postcolonial passages are likely to appear in not-yet postcolonial contexts.

Based on Patrick Wolfe's contention that settler colonialism is a structure, not an event, this project has examined structures of representation concerning Palestine. Extending Wolfe's argument, it has revealed the centrality of rhetorical structures to settler colonial contexts, particularly silence and articulation, omission and inclusion, commission and permission, archival narratives and history from below. My thesis has also confirmed and developed Lorenzo Veracini's assumptions on the agency of an absent presence, metropolitan or otherwise, in perpetuating constructs about colonial settlements. In the particular context of Palestine, this agency is clearly illustrated by Jewish American bestsellers that articulate the accepted wisdom of the settlers in order to legitimate their claims to the land. The discursive paradigm of absent presence/present absentee proved useful in showing how these aesthetic artefacts function as agents in the process of disseminating one version of history that achieves global acceptance whilst simultaneously

blocking alternative narratives from indigenes who have become absentees in their own land.

By reading fictional representations of Palestine alongside the otherwise knowable history of the 1948 *nakba*, the 1967 war, and the 1980s *intifada*, this project shifted focus away from strictly literary contexts to negotiations between literary texts, historical narratives, and media discourses. In so doing, 'Venturing into a Vanishing Space' has investigated the manipulation of fictional history through the intervention of institutional agency in order to promote one version of events and blot out others. By reading Arab counter-narratives of Palestine contrapuntally with Jewish American representations, the study has challenged the hegemony and 'epistemological achievement' of a historically inaccurate, but highly resonant, Jewish American version of Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

Representations of the 1948 war revealed how the 'logic of elimination' informed both the practice and the rhetoric of the Zionist settlers. The expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians from the land has been rendered by Leon Uris either as mere flight or as a response to the evacuation orders that Palestinians received from their Arab leaders. Uris represents the massacre of Deir Yassin as an exceptional act rather than as the epicentre of a premeditated structure of transfer, which promoted panic and stimulated the mass deportation of Palestinians from their land. Uris's novel reproduces the settlers' mythic constructs, unresponsive to the revisionist discourse of the Israeli new historians, and less receptive to dialogue with emerging Palestinian voices. Reconstructing the *nakba*, Elias Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* broke the Palestinian silence around these events and offered a detailed counter-narrative, engaging with settlers' rhetorical and historical erasures of the Palestinian past. Khoury's novel suggests an instance of the postcolonial act of 'writing back,' narrating the unspoken and replacing the monologism of the official Zionist narrative in Uris's fiction with the multiplicity of history from below.

In representing the 1948 war, when memory was traumatised, archives were classified, documents were stolen, and publishing was restricted, Arab and Palestinian writers were left with the only possibility of writing back. But this did not remain the case in the wake of the June War. Contrary to Arab writers' protracted silence following the events of 1948, post-1967 representations of Palestine articulate shifts and thresholds which have accelerated the forging of the new identity of both the Arab and Jewish American writer. Edward Said's intellectual trajectory, as narrated in *Out of Place*, reveals the centrality of the 1967 debacle in shaping his politicised discourse and critical endeavor. This intellectual shift resonates in the transition of Halim Barakat's fictional academic from disengagement to political commitment. Beyond the reverberation of metaphorical and real borders, Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* represents the grim and complex reality of the Occupied Territories, where economic deprivation forces West Bank workers to cross the Green Line in search for job opportunities in Tel Aviv. The novel articulates the enduring and unresolved dilemma over whether survival or resistance should matter more. Expressing a shared concern with the burden of diasporic existence, Saul Bellow's fictional protagonist in *Mr Sammler's Planet* looks eastwards towards the state of Israel to redefine his Jewish identity in terms of political and military power, while the travelling persona in *To Jerusalem and Back* reiterates mythic constructs about the emptiness of the land, thus justifying Israel's expansionism over more Palestinian territories.

The 1967 defeat produced a Palestinian literature articulating new possibilities of political and intellectual agency. This agency, however, found meaning in the local experience of Palestinians instead of the collective engagement of pan-Arabism. In this context, Palestinian writers imagined returns from internal and external exiles to a firmly defined national space. The war that simultaneously erased the remains of Palestine from the world map and pushed out the borders of Israel evoked a shared concern with returning to the politics of the local. For Arab and Palestinian writers, the experience of

defeat in 1967 became a rite of passage, heralding a transition from silence and disengagement from politics to politicised discourse and nationalist activism.

The greater visibility of the Palestinians in the aftermath of the 1987 *intifada*, however, comes up against cultural structures that continue to restrict the representation of this visibility in Jewish American fiction. Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock* reveals the tension between the centripetal powers of an authoritative voice and the centrifugal forces of emergent unconventional discourses. The heteroglossia of a Palestinian voice and an anti-Zionist position fails to enter into meaningful dialogical interaction with a hegemonic authoritative narrative, which predominates in the written world. Roth's concern for the unwritten and the veiled is illustrated by publishing a book without its final chapter, suggesting the extent to which the monologism of the 'official line' controls literary representations. The missing chapter illustrates the incomplete truth entailed in monologism, hints at the centrality of the unwritten and the unvoiced for a meaningful heteroglossia, and shows a move in the Jewish American novel from the unacknowledged silences of Uris and Bellow to Roth's acknowledgement of the absence of the unspoken. Reading Sahar Khalifeh's lesser-known *Bab el-Saha* alongside Roth's novel restores the unwritten role of the Palestinian woman to the literary picture of the uprising.

Challenging the Zionist settler narrative entailed in Jewish American fiction, this thesis ventures to demystify the otherwise knowable history of Palestine by opening the literary text to useful negotiations with counter-representations across the colonial divide. Contrapuntal readings have become increasingly imperative to reveal how some events receive peculiar glossing while others are deliberately marginalised or left out by writers. For instance, Bellow's representation of 1967 leaves out two important events: the destruction of the American spy ship, *Liberty*, by the Israeli Air Force, and the victory of the Palestinians in the battle of Karamah.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that this manipulation occurs because, while the first would have disturbed an emerging coalition between a settler project and its metropolitan ally, the other had

confirmed the visibility of the Palestinian as a 'young, vigorous, intelligent, self-sacrificing' fighter rather than a 'downtrodden displaced person.'<sup>3</sup> Through such demystifyingly contrapuntal readings, Palestine could prevail over the past and a new future might become possible.

This thesis has followed the passage of Palestinian narrative from silence to political engagement, to postcolonial re-invention of settler traditions. From a chronotopic perspective, the study has conceptualised the articulation of Palestinian (post)coloniality through narratives of Palestinian walks and returns appropriating and subverting two common tropes in Zionist settler narratives. Against the settlers' compartmentalisation of space and the subsequent immobility of the indigenes, Shehadeh's walks in occupied Ramallah perform reclamations of mobility, both physical and discursive, political protests and reconstructions of place. Likewise, Abulhawa's returns unsettle the mythic return of settlers and re-invent the tradition as crucial to Palestinian self-determination.

How can this argument be carried over to postcolonial debates in ways that might open up new avenues inclusive of the historical and cultural specificities of settler colonial contexts? If Caroline Rooney insisted on the discrete nature of settler narratives, arguing that the 'Southern African farm novel' constitutes 'a literary sub-genre,'<sup>4</sup> in what ways can postcolonial passages and formulations in these settler contexts be said to form a discrete narrative of postcolonial literature? To what extent can the paradigm advanced here be utilised to assess Palestine in comparative contexts with cultural perspectives from other settler situations, including Australia, New Zealand, and Algeria? It is hoped that such an emphasis might explain why settler colonialism continues to be resistant to decolonisation and interpret the reluctance of postcolonial studies to include the cultural enactments of meaningful postcolonial passages in these still colonized societies. One possible way is when structures of silence, which seem to be typical of settler colonial situations, are both revealed and contested, in order to demystify the past and



counterpoise the perspective of colonial settlers, who control the accessibility to archives and the permission to narrate. Challenging a monologic version of the history of Palestine, the study has unveiled a diversity of (hi)stories, confirming the notion embraced by Khoury's narrator: 'History has dozens of versions, and for it to ossify into one leads only to death,' the death of diversity, plurality, and cross-cultural dialogues across one of the world's most visible divides.<sup>5</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1992) 23.
- <sup>2</sup> For information on the Liberty event, see Jeremy Bowen, *Six Days: How the 1967 War Shaped the Middle East* (London: Pocket Books, 2004) 258-59, and for details on the battle of Karameh, see Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 2009) 346.
- <sup>3</sup> Wendy Pearlman, 'The Palestinian National Movement,' *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War: Origins and Consequences*, ed. W. Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2012) 142.
- <sup>4</sup> Caroline Rooney, 'Narratives of Southern African Farms,' *Third World Quarterly* 26.3 (2005) 431. Her study reads a water-colour painting of a Zimbabwean farm against canonical representatives of this subgenre to point out alternative farm narratives. Whilst the analytical framework offered by Rooney is strictly literary, my study highlights revealing negotiations between texts and contexts, emphasizing the historical specificity of each settler context. Rooney's study, however, might raise possibilities for reading uncanonical aesthetic artefacts from the kibbutz for insights into alternative histories and narratives of Palestine.
- <sup>5</sup> Khoury, *Gate of the Sun*, trans. Humphrey Davies (New York: Archipelago Books, 2005) 297.

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