

REVIEW OF WOMEN'S STUDIES



Enabling New Scholars

Birzeit-Bergen Workshops 2010-11

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Looking at the Interrogation of Palestinians
Lena Meari

A Regime of Uncertainty:
Rights of Residency in the Occupied West Bank
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Positioning the "I"-Subject – Reflections on Performance
and Knowledge Production During Fieldwork
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and the Persecution of Women
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Special Issue 1

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Introduction

Institute of Women's Studies

In November 2010 young Norwegian and Palestinian doctoral students, along with their faculty members from Bergen and Birzeit universities, gathered at the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University for their second annual collaborative workshop. What do Norwegian and Palestinian researchers and graduate students have in common and how have they enriched each other's research and thought and enabled new directions in scholarship in their fields? The publications in this volume, largely from that workshop, and the collaborative work that contributed to them, provide an answer and a model of fruitful academic collaboration.

At first glance, Norway and Palestine seem to be a study in contrasts: Palestine with its temperate climate between the desert and the (polluted) Mediterranean sea and Norway ringed by three northern, rather frigid seas, provide a striking physical example. But Norway is also one of the world's most prosperous economies, and Palestine one of its most dependent. And of course Palestine is non-sovereign and under occupation and Norway is an established state, although not unfamiliar with foreign occupation. But as we discovered, the concerns and issues of young scholars developing research frameworks, methodologies, and innovative research agendas are very much shared, particularly, but not exclusively when both are approaching research topics concerning Palestine.

In this special issue of the *Review of Women's Studies*, the Institute of Women's Studies is pleased to publish a selection of papers, most given initially as presentations at the 2010 workshop and then developed into chapters in doctoral dissertations. None of this would have been possible without the support (and vision) of the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) for this partnership, including scholarship support for the Ph.D. students that not only enabled their development as scholars, but will enrich the institutions to which they return, including Birzeit University.

The second NUFU/ Birzeit Women's Studies Institute/ Bergen University Workshop was held at Birzeit University 6-7 November 2010 and entitled "Strengthening the capacities of master's and doctoral students." The papers in this volume attest to its success. The NUFU supported doctoral candidates who gave presentations of their research and are published in this volume include: Lena Miari, Laura Adwan, Berit Angelskar and Dr. Bard Kartveit. Other

NUFU-supported Ph.D. student published here who could not attend that workshop are Nida Abu Awwad and Amira Silmi.

Five of the contributions in this volume address issues concerning Palestine, but all, we think, with wider implications as well, both for theory and for comparative ethnographies and analyses. In an excerpt from the introduction to her doctoral dissertation, Lena Meari vividly and innovatively draws our attention to the encounter between Palestinian political prisoners and their interrogators, and uses the Palestinian notion of *sumud* (steadfastness) to re-conceptualize issues of power and powerlessness, pain, recognition, spatio-temporalities and colonial intimacies, among others. Bård Kårtveit, drawing on his research in the Bethlehem region, develops the useful notion of a “regime of uncertainty” to delineate one of the “invisible parts of the occupation”: Israel’s control of Palestinian residency. Laura Adwan, in a searing and thought-provoking reflection on not only Iraqi refugees but Iraq under occupation, extends Agamben’s much deployed notion of *homo sacer*, the human who is outside the bounds of citizenship and can be killed freely, to that ravaged country and to Palestine – calling both “homeland sacer.” Nida Abu Awwad examines the global debate on the informal economy and, using the Palestine case, deepens the discussion through using the framework of colonialism. Reflecting on her roles as activist and researcher in Palestine, Berit Angelskar explores a critical issue in ethnographic research: the relation between the researcher and researched. And in our last contribution, Amira Silmi turns our attention to medieval Europe and thoughtfully examines the roots and development of the “witch-craze” through an analysis of a text by French historian Jules Michelet on the same.

Academic collaboration and exchange can be a breath of life for scholarship, particularly for those scholars working in isolated circumstances, but also for all who seek knowledge. This exchange has taken place in the Birzeit-Bergen workshops – and also in the many and varied interactions of doctoral candidates as they pursue their research in institutions outside their home country. The Institute of Women’s Studies hopes readers will enjoy some of the fruits of this collaboration in this special issue – and once again thanks NUFU for making it all possible. As we go to press, a third workshop, entitled “Enabling Future Researchers” continues the dialogue.

Editor
Ramallah, 15 October 2011

Foreword

University of Bergen

Let me first congratulate the contributors and editors of this special issue of the Institute of Womens Studies's *Review* for this fine publication. It gives me extra satisfaction when seen in the context of the history of collaboration between the University of Bergen and Birzeit University. There is no space for an extensive history, but let me, in my capacity as project leader in Bergen for two NUFU funded collaborative projects with Birzeit University, summarize some experiences from the two project periods, the first "Lower Jordan River Basin Programme" (1998-2006), and the current "Enabling Local Voices" (2008-2012). Annual reports from our programs will testify to the development of students, publications and effects on the departments involved. My intention here is both more general and more personal.

The Jordan River Basin project had a focus on resource management, contextualized within economic, political and ecological perimeters. The main objective of NUFU programs is to build research and competence, particularly among the Palestinians, but also Norwegians. I am happy to see the effects our program has had on the institutional building of a resource management capacity at the Department of Geography, through which Palestinian competence was developed and strengthened in the field of land use studies, and skills in the use of Geographical Information Systems and Remote Sensing were passed on to new generations of students. I am also thinking about the high number of master's students, particularly women, who are now working as teachers around Palestine, passing on their acquired knowledge to younger generations of Palestinian children.

Although a NUFU project by definition is meant to benefit the collaborating university there are many ways of linking such a project to the Norwegian partner institution. Several researchers from the University of Bergen took part in the activities, most of them during the entire project period. Many students and later Ph.D. candidates were trained through this very fruitful cooperation. This group of students became the core group in Bergen involved in a project financed by the Norwegian Research Council. This was "The Global Moments in the Levant" project, in which several of the students involved in the Lower Jordan River project continued their studies and increased their levels of competence to further improve the basis for Bergen-Bir Zeit collaboration. One of them, Dr. Nefissa Naguib, for instance, continued from her Ph.D studies to post. doctoral studies, and played a

decisive role in formulating the current project and has acted as the de facto project leader in Bergen.

Our current collaboration is with the Institute of Women Studies at Bir Zeit, under the project title, “Enabling Local Voices” and this special journal is one important result of our joint activity, and in particular of the 2010 workshop. “Enabling Local Voices” aims at strengthening the Institute of Women’s Studies, both through developing competence and through , providing possibilities for Ph.D and Master scholarships, as well as infrastructural support to the Institute. The journal shows some of the academic results of the collaboration. For other results we shall refer to our annual reports.

As we enter the final year of this collaborative program, we are looking forward to further academic production, and to a final international conference that hopefully will provide a basis for an international publication in which we can share our research results with a wider audience.

For me personally, I am grateful to have been privileged to have experienced this long period of interacting with Birzeit University and with various colleagues and students there. To be sure, I have benefitted far more from this interaction than I shall ever manage to return.

Bergen, 10 November, 2011.

Leif Manger, Professor
Department of Social Anthropology

Introduction to an Encounter: Looking at the Interrogation of Palestinians

Lena Meari

*Lena Meari provides us with a powerful excerpt from the introductory chapter of her doctoral dissertation. The themes and conceptual framework for her dissertation, entitled **Interrogating “Painful” Encounters: The Interrogation of Palestinians-in-Sumud**, were discussed at the 2010 workshop. In this excerpt, Meari develops her approach to understanding the “constellation of power” in the encounter between Palestinian political prisoners and their Israeli interrogators. She approaches the encounter “from the perspective of sumud” [steadfastness], which in the context of prison means ‘not to confess.’ Meari argues that sumud is a “revolutionary becoming” and shows how it operates to transform and re-interpret the space and time of the interrogation encounter. She also considers the interrogation encounter as a site of colonial intimacy and sexual politics. In her full introduction, Meari considers the rich philosophical and anthropological literature on the encounter, from Hegel to Fanon, and offers a critique of the dominance of liberalism, showing liberalism’s affinity to colonialism. Lena Meari is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis.*

Encounter...

It is a recurrent scene: they *encounter* each other in an intimate space, filled with a desk and two chairs—one to one (or one to many). Neither one is abstract to the other; each incarnates a particular place in a colonial configuration. The chairs around the desk are not equivalent; one is shorter and deformed to reinstate its position in that configuration. One person is free to move in the space, and the other is chained to the shorter deformed chair. Chained, one anticipates the next meal or beating while the other executes the power to design every single detail of his being: arranging his body, timing of his human functions, fulfilling his basic needs. One comes to the room rested, energetic and clean; the other comes drained, sleepless, and dirty from either a miserable solitary cell or from a yard

where he has been hung for long days and hours in a painful position with a filthy bag covering his head. Yet, the outcome of the encounter is far from being fully determined by the *appearance* of each one's place in this constellation of power.

What happens when the Palestinian *encounters* the Israeli colonizer in the interrogation room? What is the nature of this encounter? What does this encounter absorb from, and how does it radiate to, larger colonial relations? And what modes of subjectivity and forms of politics are enabled through the effects of this encounter?

I approach these questions from the perspective of *sumud*: a Palestinian mode of anti colonial being/becoming that constantly engages a process of de-subjectivation. In the interrogation encounter *sumud* means “not to confess”. The word confession, “*i'tiraf*” in Arabic, has a double meaning: *i'tiraf ila*—to confess to—in the theological and legal senses, and *i'tiraf bi*—to recognize the other. Consequently, in this double sense, to practice *sumud* in the interrogation “means” to refuse to confess to the interrogator and to refuse to recognize the interrogators and their embodied order of power. As will become clear throughout the ensuing pages, *sumud* has no fixed meaning, it incarnates a multiplicity of significations and practices. It is a constant “revolutionary becoming” which involves a complex web of relationalities.

The Interrogation-Encounter as an Ethnographic Site

Political captivity and mass incarceration of Palestinians that became prevalent after the Israeli occupation in 1967 have been studied from different perspectives by various ethnographers. Little detailed ethnographic attention however, has been given to the dynamics of the interrogation-encounter as a point of condensation for the colonial-encounter in which the singular isolated Palestinian encounters the Israeli interrogators face-to-face. In a chapter titled, “The Textual Formation of Subjects: Interrogation as a Rite of Passage,” Nashef (2008) considers the interrogation as a rite of passage into the captives' community. He engages in textual and contextual analysis of *The Philosophy of Confrontation Behind the Bars*, one of the fundamental books published on the issue of interrogation. Nashef considers the book as demarcating, “the bases of the processes of community and identity construction as perceived by the Palestinian national movement.”¹ He regards *Philosophy* as a manual for the novice political activist, “on how to behave, think, and feel in the moment of interrogation.”² My own engagement with the same book differs, in that it considers it as much more than a text. Through following various singular practices of *sumud* in the interrogation, I argue that the praxis of *sumud* exceeded and re-signified the political discourse as reflected in *Philosophy* and other texts—it instigated the culture of *sumud* and enabled its collective practice in the interrogation.

Peteet (1994) mentions the interrogation as one site in which Israeli violence and beatings prevail. She asserts that beatings “have been a part of the apparatus of domination since the beginning of the occupation, both in public and as an integral part of the interrogation process.”³ The Palestinian battered body becomes “the symbolic embodiment of subordination but also of the determination to resist and struggle.”⁴ Peteet focuses on the public beatings of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers, which became prevalent during the first Intifada. She reads these beatings as performances that involve an audience.⁵ The interrogation-encounter I am considering though, differs in that the Palestinian tortured by the interrogators is isolated from the community. Therefore, I argue it reveals different dynamics and insights regarding the relationalities of the *samed* self. Peteet is interested in the attainment and enactment of manhood and masculinity among Palestinian male youths in relation to ritualized beatings and detention. She analyzes the beatings and detention as rites of passages central to the construction of an adult, gendered (male) self with critical consequences for political consciousness and agency.⁶ She examines the gender dynamics of the Palestinian society that emerge within the context of the rite of initiation to manhood that she describes. She argues that, “A hierarchical male identity and notions of selfhood and political position are reaffirmed in these rites of passage.”⁷ My ethnographic material reveals that sexuality and gender as categories should be reconsidered. Peteet focuses her analysis on the body. She considers bodies as the most personal and intimate realm of the self. Bodies, Peteet contends, “are the most striking sites for the inscription of power and the encoding of culture.”⁸ About Palestinian bodies Peteet writes:

The battered body is a representation fashioned by the Israelis but presented by Palestinians to the West. To the Palestinians the battered body, with its bruises and broken limbs, is the symbolic embodiment of a 20th-century history of subordination and powerlessness- of “what we have to endure”-but also of their determination to resist and to struggle for national independence.

A representation created with the intent of humiliating has been reversed into one of honor, manhood, and moral superiority. But bodies do more than represent. Torture and beatings are ordeals one undergoes as sacrifices for the struggle (*qadiyyah*). It should be firmly stated that this argument in no way is meant to imply that Palestinians make light of physical violence. It is rather to try to understand how culturally they make sense of it. Displaying physical marks of violence, that one is usually powerless to avoid, stands as a “commentary on suffering” but also, I would suggest, as a commentary on sacrifice. As such they are poignant communicative devices. These displays are powerful statements belying claims of a

benign occupation and resonate with the honor that comes from unmasking and resisting.

My own engagement with the tortured body aims to challenge the hegemonic ontological status of the body. Further, by paying attention to relationality, I reveal how one exceeds the bounded body. The concern with the body also characterizes the ethnography, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*, by Allen Feldman. Feldman (1991) analyzes the expansion of the spheres of domination in Northern Ireland from the perspective of the body as a political institution. He examines the process of homogenizing bodies: “the body” Feldman states, “accumulates political biographies, a multiplicity of subject positions, as it passes in and out of various political technologies of commensuration. To analyze this ensemble of practices is to restage, outside of market contexts, the “Marxist” separation of value as an invariant structure (the body as political institution) from the thing-in-itself (the heterogeneity of particular bodies).”⁹ In the experiences of Palestinians-in-*sumud*, the focus is not the body but the will for, and the practice of, *sumud*. The interrogation is conceived as a “battle of wills”. Thus, *Sumud* heterogenizes the self as well as the interrogator vis-à-vis the Palestinian-in-*sumud*. *Sumud* also multiplies the spatiotemporality that each incorporates. Focusing on bodies led Feldman to conclude his chapter on the interrogation in Northern Ireland by stating:

In his cyclical and repeated movement from the street into the interrogation center, from the interrogation center into the street, from violence inflicted onto his **body** to violence inflicted by his **body** on others, the paramilitary remains locked within a demarcated continuum of corporeal mimesis, a serial circuit of **bodies** coded and recoded, folded and unfolded by violence given and violence received. This production and reproduction, this distribution and circulation of **bodies** formed and signified by violence and signifying through violence, constitute the vast economic enterprise and structure of exchange that is warfare in Northern Ireland.¹⁰

Feldman’s consideration of the body as a political institution reveals many insights regarding violence in Northern Ireland. However, the overemphasis on the body restricts the revelation of other aspects. The engagement with the Palestinians’ *sumud* in the interrogation as a relational concept and practice reveals that the *samed’s* reception of violence as reflected in torture, opens a possibility for going beyond what Feldman defines as the “continuum of corporeal mimesis”.

The Interrogation of Palestinians

Since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem in 1967¹¹, over 800,000 Palestinians have been arrested and interrogated by Israel¹². This figure constitutes approximately 20% of the total Palestinian population in the 1967 Occupied Palestinian Territory and 40% of Palestinian males. I argue that in the accounts of interrogation-encounters, one can read the shifting forms of colonial relations, political subjectivity and community, and the power technologies of the last four decades of Zionist colonization in Palestine. Metaphorically, I situate my self at the center of the interrogation-encounter and from there I turn my gaze into different directions to track multiple formations of power, the modes of subjectivity they constitute and the forms of politics they enable.

I consider each singular interrogation as reflective of the particular encounter of the Palestinian involved in it and simultaneously encoding the history of past, present and future colonial encounters. In my project, I thus attempt to approach the mosaic of the colonial encounter through echoes of fragmental encounters; that is through immersion in the minute details of singular interrogation-encounters. Unlike most accounts concerning interrogations, as reflected in legal, human rights and psychological discourses, I am not concerned with the use of torture in the interrogation and whether this torture is merely a “moderate physical and psychological pressure,” as Israelis claim, or if it violates human rights, as liberal human rights practitioners argue. Rather, I am concerned with the whole dynamics of the interrogation setting which includes the verbal acts that accompany torture in the interrogation sessions. The conversations that interrogators initiate, and Palestinians’ responses, or lack of responses, to these conversations, constitute a focus for this dissertation, revealing other aspects of this encounter, other than those highlighted by a focus on torture.

The interrogation-encounter generates relationships that involve multiple layers and different configurations of power. As such, it does not have only one material site (i.e. the interrogation centers). Palestinians and Israeli interrogators are the products and producers of a broader colonial condition and relationship. The nature of this relationship is constantly generated, embodied and transported with those involved in the encounter and endures beyond the material site of the interrogation and the particular actors engaged in it. There can be no definitive determinant as to where, when, and how relationships crystallize and articulate subjectivities and politics. Relationships have long-term impacts which are often understood only in retrospect. It is thus essential to trace the interconnections between multiple multi-sited relationships such as those of the interrogated Palestinian with multiple components of her self, with other Palestinians, the political organization, and the broader community, as well as with interrogators.

The interrogation-encounter is a revealing ethnographic site for analyzing

how Palestinians and Israelis have been mutually constituted throughout their colonial encounter. Both the *shabak* and the Palestinians have constantly engaged in studying and knowing each others in order to develop effective interrogation techniques and resistance techniques respectively. More importantly, the interrogation-encounter reveals how Palestinians-in-*sumud* have carved out a space for a mode of subjectivity and a form of politics that breaks with the predicament of the colonial dialectic through the cultivation of *sumud*. In the context of colonized Palestine, *sumud* has come to embody a whole range of significations, sensibilities, affections, attachments, aspirations and practices. To practice *sumud* in the interrogation means to refuse to confess. However, *sumud* is not a definable practice for there are as many ways to practice *sumud* as there are Palestinians in *sumud*. *Sumud* can be approximated as a Palestinian mode of becoming and orienting oneself in a colonial reality. It could involve the destabilization of the real and the metamorphosis of the body as I discuss elsewhere. *Sumud* is a constant revolutionary becoming and its significance lies in its non-conceptualized features; as such it constitutes a “magical” force.

At the surface, I perceive the interrogation-encounter as an epistemic space that absorbs and radiates political ideologies/discourses and relations. This enables me to read the shifting formations of the Israeli state as a colonial-liberal configuration¹³ as well as the transforming political discourses and practices of the Palestinian resistance movement/s. Beneath the surface, the interrogation-encounter is productive of multiple practices of *sumud* that escape containment within hegemonic liberal rationalities. I follow the resonances and echoes of *sumud* that haunt politics in colonized Palestine, even when *sumud* is not practiced largely by Palestinians, as is the case during the post-Oslo era.

The interrogation-encounter is productive of Israeli security measures, laws and regulations, as well as liberal public debates on the possibilities and limits of the use of torture and the measurement of pain. In this sense, the interrogation is not a state of exception where law is suspended. It is instead, a space instituted by legality, and is simultaneously constitutive of Israeli fabrications of the Palestinians as “security threats” as well as Israeli rules and (colonial) liberal debates. The interrogation is also productive of Palestinian political ideologies/discourses and practices, and of the practice of *sumud* as actualization of a mode of becoming that holds a possibility for escaping power as well as escaping hegemonic configurations of liberal politics. Additionally, the interrogation is productive of diverse Israeli and Palestinian political-cultural perceptions of torture, pain and body, multiple conceptions of space and time, and various discourses/practices regarding the Palestinian “tortured” subject.

The interrogation can be read as a stage of “liminality” for the arrested Palestinian¹⁴. Separated from the community in an underground center, the interrogation resembles a critical stage for the Palestinian. Unlike rites of passage performed among community members, the interrogation signifies a colonial

rite of passage that encompasses direct confrontation between ideologies, beliefs, value systems, and modes of being of the Palestinian-in-*sumud* and the Israeli interrogators within non-symmetric conditions that resemble and transform the colonial conditions themselves. The secretive, underground interrogation centers constitute a space where the Palestinian faces the *shabak* interrogators who have the power to control the details of the interrogation setting and the techniques employed. Yet, the practice of *sumud* destabilizes the colonial order and its power relations.

As a major agent of Israeli occupation, the *shabak* draws upon culturally and politically “overloaded” knowledge produced about Palestinians. This knowledge is informed by age, gender, political affiliation and religiosity of Palestinian activists. The knowledge produced by Israeli social scientists and the *shabak* about Palestinians is implicated in the perception of them as “security threats” and is employed in developing effective disciplining technologies and interrogation techniques. The interrogation techniques, which take place mainly through the isolation of the activist and the deployment of physical-psychological torture, aim to obtain confessions, extract information, recruit collaborators, form submissive subjects, and destroy the will to resist. In order for the interrogator’s power to be instated it needs to be repeated through the rituals of arrest and interrogation. The power of the *shabak* itself and the “state of Israel” it represents, is constituted through the reiteration of these rituals. However, the very reiteration of the rituals of power opens up, both the *shabak* and the state, to the possibility of failure in a way that often counters their objective¹⁵ and undoes the ways they present themselves.

Palestinian Theories of Confrontation: The Generation of Revolutionary Political Subjectivity

For Palestinians, arrest and interrogation have been central in the oral political culture, as well as the practices of activists and their supporting communities. Palestinian political parties have employed technologies of self formation aiming to cultivate *munadilin* (strugglers). In late seventies, the PFLP (the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) had systematically engaged with the interrogation encounter and had developed a “theory of confrontation”. This theory emerged out of collective practical experiences of activists in the interrogation and culminated in a book titled, *The Philosophy of Confrontation Behind Bars*. The perception of the interrogation as confrontation between two oppositional forces, the refusal to cooperate with the interrogators and to refrain from confession through practicing *sumud*, constitute a foundational aspect of this theory. Not merely analyzing the interrogation encounter, the theory further forms the ways in which it is perceived

and encountered by the cultivated *munadilin*. *Sumud*, as a potential employed in the theory of confrontation, and more importantly as diversely actualized by the assemblage of *munadilin*—the revolutionary becoming, constitutes a Palestinian relational political-psycho-affective subjectivity. It becomes an indefinable force representing the possibility of political agency outside the space of normalized forms of politics. *Sumud* is a constant revolutionary becoming under conditions of oppression which opens up a possibility for an alternative regime of being, for an ethical-political relational selfhood. It is a form of being/becoming that escapes the liberal rational politics inherent in colonial regimes. *Sumud* provides Palestinians with a possibility to defy the Israeli colonizers as well as Palestinians contained within the logic of liberal politics. In this sense, *sumud* is a “line of flight”.¹⁶

The cultivation of *sumud* in the interrogation involves the nurturing of a political relational subjectivity as opposed to the individual that liberalism needs and promotes.

***Sumud* and Multiplication of Spatiotemporalities**

How do we approach space and time within the interrogation encounter? Does the space of the interrogation incorporate Palestinians and *shabak* interrogators within a shared spatiotemporality? Do Palestinians themselves occupy a homogenous spatiotemporality? How do we comprehend the relation between past, present and future time in the interrogation and in general? Is it possible to perceive space outside the bounded territory of a nation-state? These questions will be considered throughout the dissertation from the perspective of *sumud*.

Time and space are deployed as main techniques in the interrogation setting in particular and the colonial order in general. Spatial contraction and temporal expansion: the techniques of the occupation are mimicked in the interrogation encounter. In order to subjugate the Palestinian, *shabak* interrogators demarcate the oppressive time of the interrogation as the only imaginable eternal time for the Palestinian. They also delineate the space of the Palestinian as the only narrow space of the cell. Through this employment of space and time and its reification through the interrogation techniques, the interrogators aim to lead the Palestinian to confess and consequently surrender as their only way to step out of this determined spatiotemporality. “You will get rotten forever in this cell until you confess,” the Palestinians are told by interrogators. The cultivation of *sumud* in the interrogation, however, affects a multiplication of space and time. Palestinians in *sumud* re-signify the interrogation’s space/time and multiply it. The narratives of Palestinians-in-*sumud* as bear witness to the ways in which while, for instance, isolated for a long time in a narrow cell or closet,¹⁷ they transcend the limits of the cell and explode its spatiotemporality.

Historicism as a specific formulation of temporality is employed as an interrogation technique. Historicism, according to Walter Benjamin (1968), “contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history.”¹⁸ Within this framework, history is perceived as an additive process. The interrogators repeatedly announce to the interrogated Palestinians that the historical sequence of events confirm the supremacy of Israel and its victorious and triumphant progressive trajectory over Palestinians and Arabs. “We gained the upper hand throughout all military confrontations with Arabs and Palestinians, this historical fact should lead you”, assert the interrogators, “to acknowledge the impossibility of defeating us and consequently to surrender and confess as there is no other option available.” This interrogation technique repeatedly deployed by *shabak* interrogators reflects a teleological conception of historical time that assumes the progression from the past to the future through the present. The present, in this logic, is perceived as a transition from the past to a predetermined future.

The logic of *sumud* works differently. To craft *sumud* is to conceive the present as the “time of the now”¹⁹ that is open for various possibilities. For the Palestinian-in-*sumud*, the present is not a time of transition in a sequence of past, present and future defeats. Rather, the present time of the interrogation is a now of confrontation and struggle. The present of each interrogation session is perceived as a space in which “time stands still and has come to a stop.” This conception “supplies a unique experience with the past” in which the Palestinian-in-*sumud* “blast open the continuum of history.”²⁰ That is, the political praxis of *sumud* constitutes an interruption of the reified conception of the continuity of history and its self-realization. Further, the Palestinian-in-*sumud*, like Benjamin’s angel of history, does not see the past as a chain of events, but gazing on the catastrophe and the debris of Palestine and from the hopelessness of the Palestinians whose lives were ruined, he recognizes a liberating awakening flash in the present. This is a different relation between past and present than the one established by historicists. The perspective of Palestinians-in-*sumud* does not only disrupt and explode historicist temporality, it also explodes historicist spatiality. The space for them is not the narrow space of the cell and Palestine in their accounts is not perceived as the shrinking parts that are left for them by the growing project of Zionist settler colonialism. Palestine, in the imagination of Palestinians-in-*sumud*, is whole Palestine.

In the Arcades Project, Benjamin (1999)²¹ elaborates on the relationship between past and present and reveals the relationship between history and politics, he writes:

It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present casts its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words: image is dialectic at a standstill. For

while the relation of the present to the past is purely temporal, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: not temporal in nature but figural <*bildlich*>. Only dialectical images are genuinely historical—that is, not archaic—images. The image that is read—which is to say, the image in the now of its recognizability—bears to the highest degree the imprint of the perilous critical moment on which all reading is founded.²²

Although Benjamin is concerned with temporality here, we can read a different relationship with spatiality in Benjamin’s account of the dialectical image at a standstill. Reflecting on the past and present for Benjamin, Lucero-Montano (2004) writes:

The political nature of the articulation of these two moments of the past and the present is clearly showed in thesis VI: “Articulating the past historically [...] means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger.” This danger, writes Benjamin, “threatens both the content of the tradition and those who inherit it.” [CH, thesis VI, 391] Benjamin understands by “those who inherit it,” the oppressed of history, those that are suddenly aware — through a historical consciousness-raising shock — of their “tradition,” the meaning of their hope, which is in danger of being forgotten. Here the awareness of danger has an ambiguous meaning: either “the spark of hope” is about to become extinguished or “the awareness that they are about to make the continuum of history explode.” [Ibid., thesis XV, 395] However, the consciousness-raising shock is linked to political praxis; by virtue of which the subject of tradition recognizes the sign of “a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past.” [Ibid., thesis XVII, 396] This means that there is a chance to introduce a revolutionary change into the present²³.

As I noticed, *sumud* as a revolutionary political praxis does not only shatter and disrupt temporality but also spatiality. We can read the practice of *sumud* as a political praxis of revolutionary becoming in the present of the interrogation—the now-time—that explodes the continuity of oppressive history as well as the oppressive spatiality imposed on Palestinians by the confiscation of their Palestine and their isolation in an interrogation cell. The image that Benjamin considers as the now in its recognizability in both a temporal and spatial sense is evident through the praxis of *sumud*. When the interrogator reiterates for a Palestinian-in-*sumud* that he should confess, as both the history of Zionist dominance of Palestinian territory and Palestinians is determined and the personal history of the interrogated is determined by his capture, the Palestinian continues to struggle and opens up the

terms of his and his people's spatiotemporality.

From the perspective of *sumud*, my project also considers another duplication of spatiotemporality: the Palestinian discursive time/space of the "nation-state" and the "non-state" time/space of "*sumud*". The formal political discursive and practical frame of post-Oslo, adopted by the Palestinian Authority, signifies a historicism—a teleological temporality of progression toward the spatiality of the "nation state". Dipesh Chakrabarti (2000) notices that historicism is reflected in a version of a European "stagist theory of history"²⁴. Within this version historicism came to non-European peoples in the nineteenth century "as somebody's way of saying "not yet" to somebody else."²⁵ In the colonial context of Palestine, the "not yet" is being posed in relation to establishing an independent state (on whatever part left of Palestine). The claim by the Palestinian elite of the post-Oslo Palestinian authority that Palestinians are engaging in building modern state institutions and consequently deserve the international recognition as a state, does not challenge the historicist claim, but rather, calls for its applicability. This applicability could not be perceived outside the borders of the territorial space of a state, regardless of which parts of Palestine this space entails. This logic can be read through the Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's political and economic plan. The plan is framed by the logic of building the institutions and the economic base for the Palestinian state that Fayyad wishes to announce. The plan embraces the liberal vocabulary of modern institutions, human rights, international law, and neoliberal economy²⁶. This new Palestinian discourse reflects a progressive teleology of heading toward an end represented in the establishment of a nation state on the shrinking space of Palestine. The logic of state building as opposed to the logic of resisting the occupation that *sumud* entails, is inevitably embraced within the frame of "recognition" associated with the discourse of international law and human rights and the establishment of modern institutions as the foundations and conditions for recognition by the "international community". The speech of the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas at the United Nation in September 2011 embodies this logic. It appeals to the United Nation member states to recognize a Palestinian state for, as he says, modern state institutions and security forces had been successfully established.

The logic of *sumud*, however, as a mode of being that refuses to surrender to power and aims to explode the present in order to open its revolutionary potential, adopts a different logic. The disillusionment of Palestinians throughout the "peace process" that followed Oslo led many to recognize the disciplinary nature of the Palestinian "yet to come" nation state and, more importantly, the possibility of a continuation of colonial domination amidst "illusional" national autonomy²⁷. The logic of *sumud* as a non-state force which escapes the trap of the teleology of progression and the politics of recognition and carves out an autonomous space for Palestinians complexifies and multiplies Palestinian space-time. Through actual situated practices of *sumud*, or the potential possibility of

sumud that haunts the current Palestinian reality, as the engagement with the everyday rather than the future, the dissertation illustrates the different logic and perception of space and time that Palestinians-in-*sumud* cultivate.

The multiplication of spatiotemporalities takes place among and across the actors of the colonial relationship. The new Palestinian “human rights” and psychological discourses that generate the Palestinian subject interrogated and tortured by the *shabak* as a liberal subject differ from the subject cultivated through *sumud*. The ethnographic focus on the interrogation-encounter allows me to reveal the formative role of situated political praxis and how the political discourses both constituted and emerged out of situated practices within the interrogation encounter.

Colonial Intimacies and Sexualities

The interrogation-encounter constitutes an “intimate” relationship between the interrogated and the interrogators. The interrogation reflects a space and time of proximity, closeness, and familiarity with the other. It involves a direct confrontational moment and a “form of care” to the other²⁸. The interrogation enables the reciprocal knowledge about the other and entails a deep concern for details regarding the shifting temperament and inner cognitive and affective states of the other. It is interesting to note that the working of the *shabak* and the personalities of *shabak* interrogators are secretive and unknown to the Israeli public; however, Palestinian political activists, particularly those who have undergone many interrogations in their life, are closely familiar with a large number of *shabak* interrogators.

The interrogation requires the intimacy of a room and the continued presence of both the interrogator and the interrogated in a way that involves a sensual attention to the other, the image of the other, the facial expressions, and bodily odors. Both sides put great effort in reading the invisible deep thoughts and affections of the other. Within the narratives of Palestinian activists there are constant references to interrogators referred to by “fake” names. The very naming of an interrogator provokes intimate memories for the activists. These “faked” names are almost always Arabic names, such as “Abu Nihad” or “Shawqi”, known to many Palestinian activists. The interrogation sessions are managed in Arabic—the activists’ mother language, in which interrogators constantly use proverbs and adages from the Arab culture such as *kul e’in tibki wala e’in immi tibki* (all eyes to cry but not my mother’s eye), used frequently by interrogators to convince activists to confess for the sake of their mothers, or in the case of religious activists, using verses from the Qur’an. One of the main techniques used by interrogators is “role playing” of the bad and the good interrogator. Some Palestinians state that in particular moments they believe that the interrogator is genuinely good and wants their interest. For

instance, Wisam asserts that one interrogator often visited his cell to convince him to quit smoking to protect his health. At these moments, Palestinians in *sumud* struggle within themselves to elicit antagonistic sentiments toward the interrogator in order to be able to practice *sumud*. The interrogation setting works primarily by separating the interrogated Palestinian from the whole world. I will discuss deeply in the dissertation that although separated, the Palestinian encompasses the traces of his/her relationships. Physically, the only person the Palestinian meets for periods of time that can extend to 90 days is the interrogator. This means that within the period of separation and isolation the only “material other” available is the interrogator. As for the interrogator/s, he spends a lot of time studying the details of the interrogated file and the features of his/her personality. The interrogator desires the recognition of his power, as this is his main tool to achieve his objectives. The question becomes what happens in the “intimate” encounter when the Palestinian constantly generate oppositional relationality toward the interrogator or divorces himself from that relation and refrain from any kind of cooperation through practicing *sumud*.

Sexuality, as one of the intimate dimensions of the subject, is constantly reconstructed and employed by colonial governance. Configurations of sexual regimes have been widely studied by colonial and postcolonial scholars interested in the sexual politics of colonial systems. Within interrogation encounters in general, including the one I am exploring, sexuality has always been employed as part of complex interrogation techniques. What is perceived as “sexual” interrogation techniques have been deployed by the *shabak* through the obsessive reiteration of the term “whore” to refer to interrogated Palestinian females or to female family members of Palestinian males, the threats to disseminate photos of naked bodies, to undress females, to unveil veiled women or the threat of rape (and actual rape) of the interrogated or one of their family members. Sexuality is also deployed by moving female interrogators to interrogate Palestinians, particularly Islamist activists. However, in order to analyze and understand the construction of sexuality within the interrogation-encounter we need to go beyond the narrow perceptions and definitions of the sexual developed within public debates. Within these circles, sexual interrogation techniques in general and what is called “sexual torture” in particular, elicit images such as the rape of an interrogated woman (or man) and naked bodies, like those disseminated in the photos from Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. This understanding of sexual torture does not help in perceiving the narrative of ‘Aisha with whom I had a long conversation about her attempted rape during the interrogation. ‘Aisha, never referred to her rape by *shabak* interrogators as an individual-private sexual act. She does not describe the rape act, neither her resistance to it, in sexual terms but in political ones. She states: “While resisting the interrogators and shouting NO, I felt I was struggling against all types of oppression the Zionists committed against Palestinians and Arabs.” The narrative of ‘Aisha cannot only be contained in sexual terms or in what is called “sexual torture”. Further, it cannot be contained in her own body. Her narrative is

perhaps the best reflection of the conception that the personal, the sexual, is political. Sexual techniques are entangled with other interrogation techniques and make no sense when perceived in isolation.

'Aisha's narrative, then, cannot be comprehended within the constricted definition of sexuality. It necessitates re-thinking and re-formulation of the concept "sexual torture" and a deep examination of the articulation of sexuality and politics. We need to re-examine how the logic of "sexual torture" works as a domination and oppression technique under colonialism, and more importantly, how it is perceived by different political actors. As Ann Stoler (2010) contends, sexuality is not a discrete regime in its own right. It entails the distribution of sentiments, the inner states and affective dispositions; therefore, Stoler suggests that we need to move from a focus on sexuality as a discrete form toward bodily comportment, sentiments, and intimacy. For Stoler, intimate relations are sites for the constitution of colonial relations. Within this theoretical frame sexuality is conceived as subscript for other forces and the term sexuality is removed from women's bodies. In this sense, sexuality and sexual torture go beyond the individual body and towards other social-political planes. This approach enables us to think about the violent intimacy of the interrogation-encounter in particular, and the colonial encounter in general, as a site in which bodies are intruded upon. It suggests that the intimate is not constricted to the domesticated sites studied by scholars of colonial studies and bodies are not reduced to sexuality. Yet, Stoler constricts her investigation of sexuality and colonialism to the perspective of the colonial rulers and colonial techniques. Reading sexuality from the perspective of the interrogated Palestinian, such as 'Aisha's, adds new insight to the order of colonial sexuality and the diverse ways in which it is conceived and confronted by the colonized. The interrogation-encounter then, constitutes a crucial site to investigate sexual politics and colonial intimacies.

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Endnotes

- 1 Nashef 2008: 16.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Peteet 1994: 36.
- 4 Ibid: 38.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid: 31.
- 7 Ibid: 43
- 8 Ibid: 32
- 9 Feldman 1999: 9.
- 10 Ibid: 146, emphasis added.
- 11 The Zionist colonial project in Palestine has a longer history beginning in the late nineteenth century and accumulating in 1948 through the establishment of the “State of Israel” as embodiment of this project. The occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem in 1967 is one stage in the constellation of the Zionist settler-colonialism in Palestine.
- 12 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2008).
- 13 Despite the corpus of literature about the foundational role of colonialism in the constitution of liberal modern states, some still consider the hyphenation colonial-liberal as contradiction. Through the formation of the “Israeli State” I illustrate the entanglement of colonialism and liberalism.
- 14 I am re-appropriating Van Gennep’s (1977) conception of rites of passage defined by him as having three phases: separation, transition luminal stage, and reincorporation.
- 15 See Judith Butler’s (1997) conceptions of reiteration, failure and agency.
- 16 I am borrowing this term from the philosophers Deleuze and Guattari. Lines of flight constitute creative and liberatory means available to escape regulative forces of control and domination. They are “Flows of deterritorialization” that could be re-territorialized by the forces of control.
- 17 *Al-Khazana* (closet) is a very small cell used as a torture technique by *shabak* interrogators.
- 18 Benjamin 1968: 263.
- 19 Benjamin argues that the historian who departs from historicism “stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary. Instead he grasps the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one. Thus he establishes a conception of the present as the “time of the now” which is shot through with chips of Messianic time.” Ibid.
- 20 I am re-appropriating Benjamin’s conception of the historical materialism. Ibid: 162.
- 21 Benjamin 1999: 388-389.
- 22 Benjamin 1999: 463.
- 23 Alfredo Lucero-Montano (2004).
- 24 Chakrabarty 2000:9.
- 25 Ibid: 8.
- 26 The Palestinian basic law promoted by the PNA states that the economic system adopted is the free-market economy.
- 27 The continuation of colonial domination within many post-colonial states is a well known phenomenon in the global south, yet the unique about Palestine is the material spacial-temporal coexistence of colonialism and a project of “state building”.
- 28 Adi Ophir (2007) provides a similar argument regarding torture.

A Regime of Uncertainty: Rights of Residency in the Occupied West Bank

Bård Kårtveit

Drawing on his extensive fieldwork in the Bethlehem region, Dr. Bård Kartveit of Bergen University describes one of the “least visible parts of the occupation”: Israel’s denial of residency to Palestinians. Tracing both the long-term pattern and the recent effects of new Israeli regulations, he analyzes, through three case histories, a “regime of uncertainty” where lives and futures are destabilized and put in jeopardy as families are separated, marriages not concluded and social ties fragmented. A version of this paper was presented at the 2010 workshop in Birzeit University.

Lina¹ was born in Chile, but came to the West Bank with her Palestinian mother at the age of four. In her late 20s she married a man from Bethlehem, and after few more years, she had three children who were all born in Bethlehem. However, according to the Israeli authorities, she and her oldest daughter were illegal residents, and in 2006 they were told to leave the West Bank or face forcible deportation. Faced with this threat, the family planned to go to Chile where Lina had some family members. For practical reasons, she had to leave, along with their three children, a few weeks earlier than her husband. While planning for her departure she was informed by the Israeli authorities that her youngest children, aged three and five, held Palestinian IDs, and therefore have to cross the border to Jordan at Allenby Bridge, near Jericho, while she and her oldest daughter, who were Chilean citizens, had to travel to Jordan through the Sheikh Hussein border crossing several hours further north. She tried to explain that she and her children had to pass through the same border crossing, that her two youngest children could not possibly travel to Jordan on their own. Her appeal was in vain, and she was told that these border regulations were a matter of Israeli security, and that they could not make an exception for her family.

After the start of the Second Intifada in September 2000, Israel’s occupation of the West Bank took on a new shape. Israel introduced a number of structural measures, imposing new restrictions on Palestinian movements and consolidating Israel’s territorial control on key parts of the West Bank. These measures included regulatory infringements on Palestinians right of residence, the building of more

settlements and the Separation Wall, as well as an elaborate system of checkpoints and roadblocks throughout the West Bank, and new restrictions on Palestinian movements between the West Bank and Israel (Falah 2005, Taraki 2008), including between the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Building on Foucault's notion of biopower (Foucault, Senellart et al. 2008), and Agamben's notion of the state of exception (2005), Sari Hanafi has argued that Israeli rule in the Occupied Territories should be understood not as a genocidal project, but as a spacio-cidal project in that it aims to destroy Palestinian living spaces (2009).

In line with Hanafi, I argue that these structural measures make up a central part of Israel's occupation, and that they constitute a politics of paralysis – a set of governmental techniques that serve to paralyse vital community functions, economic activities and social ties within the Palestinian community, and to sever ties between the West Bank and Israel – and the West Bank and Gaza – thus obstructing the emergence of a viable, contiguous Palestinian polity. Through individual stories, I explore how these measures have affected Christian Palestinians in the Bethlehem area, as members of a community with an economy highly depended on tourism, with relatively high educational levels, and with a long history of West-bound emigration (Gonzales 1992).

I conducted fieldwork for several three-month periods between 2006 and 2008. Since then, there have been significant developments. The policies of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and the Palestinian Authority government in the West Bank, of building Palestinian institutions while the occupation is still going on, have aimed to counter some of the destructive effects of the occupation within the fields of commerce and economic development. Though the merits of these policies are disputed, they have given room for some economic optimism in the Bethlehem area. In addition, a limited number of internal checkpoints and barriers in the Israel checkpoint regime has been dismantled or taken over by Palestinian security forces, significantly easing Palestinian movements throughout the West Bank. At the same time, the most paralysing aspects of the occupation are very much in place. Some of the most sinister tools available to Israeli authorities involve its bureaucratic control of Palestinian residence and mobility in the Occupied Territories. And after four decades, Palestinians are still presented with new measures that undermine their rights to residency on the West Bank.

Restrictions on residence in Palestine

In April 2010, the Israeli government proposed a new anti-immigration law that received some international attention. The proposed law, known as the "Prevention of Infiltration Bill", stated that anyone confronted by Israeli police

or army personnel, found without the “correct permits” to reside in “Israeli controlled areas”, could be charged with “illegal infiltration” and face up to seven years imprisonment before being deported by the Israeli authorities. The Anti-Infiltration Bill was an amendment to the Israeli Infiltration Law of 1954, enacted to prevent unauthorized arrivals to Israel from the West Bank (then under Jordanian control) or any neighbouring Arab States. Following the war of 1967, a military order of 1969 defined as an infiltrator any unauthorised entrant to the Occupied West Bank from one of the neighbouring states (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria). The proposed anti-infiltration Bill coincided with the introduction of Military Order 1650, expanding the definition of infiltrator. Like the proposed act, Military Order 1650 defines as an infiltrator any person who enters the West Bank unlawfully, or who is present in the West Bank and does not lawfully hold the requisite permit. Any person who enters the West Bank unlawfully may be sentenced to seven years imprisonment, and anyone residing in the West Bank without the right permits may be sentenced to three years in prison. Both types of infiltrators also face deportation to the Gaza Strip, with limited access to judicial review (al-Haq 2010). It should be mentioned that illegal residents are subject to other laws as well, such as the Israeli Entry Law, and if caught by Israeli authorities, a whole set of legal acts and military orders can be invoked to justify an individual’s deportation or imprisonment.

The proposed anti-infiltration bill provoked some international reactions, mostly because of its implications for immigrant workers and asylum seekers in Israel. On July 28, 2010, the anti-infiltration bill was temporarily withdrawn at the request of the Ministry of Defence (EMHRN 2010:1), and international voices were silenced. However, military order 1650, which hold the same dramatic consequences for illegal West Bank residents, is still in effect.

Dramatic as it sounds, this is not a new phenomenon. This Military Order falls into a long line of measures aimed at regulating access to Israel, and restricting Palestinian residence in the West Bank. And a brief look at this history is needed to understand the effects of more recent measures.

Since 1967, Israel has controlled the Population Register and determined Palestinians rights of residence in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. Under Israeli rule, Palestinians were given ID cards, indicating their place of residence within the territories, and allowing or banning their right to travel into Israel or to Jordan (Bornstein 2002, Makdisi 2008). Those who left the West Bank across the Allenby bridge border crossing to Jordan were required to deposit their identity documents with Israeli officials. In return they were given a card, valid for three years, which could be extended three times for an additional year. Residents who left the territories for work, study or other purposes, and who remained out of the territories beyond the expiration date of the card, were stripped of their IDs and rights of residence. Emigrants who returned after more

than three years abroad found that they were not allowed to resettle in their home communities (Kårtveit 2005). As a result of this policy, around 140,000 Palestinians who left to study or work had their residency rights revoked between 1967 and 1994 (The Guardian 11.05.2011). Following the Oslo Accords, and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, Palestinians who left the West Bank would no longer be stripped of their rights to residence, and Palestinians who had left the country after 1984 could apply to have their ID-cards and rights of residence returned. However, these applications had to be accepted by the Israeli authorities as well as by the Palestinian Authority, and Israeli authorities refused to return more than 2000 ID-cards a year. With the start of the Second Intifada in autumn 2000, the return of West Bank ID-cards was put on hold for several years (Kårtveit 2005, Makdisi 2008).

Since the start of the Israeli occupation, thousands of Palestinians have travelled to the Gulf states, to the Americas or to Europe in order to study, to work, and to save money before returning to the West Bank. Many of these emigrants have obtained citizenship in their host countries, before returning home to marry and establish a life for themselves in the Occupied Territories. Upon their return, most of these people have had to stay in their home communities on temporary visitor permits (Makdisi 2008). This means that they had to leave the country every three months to renew their visas, although some managed to get visitor permits for six months or one year at a time. Palestinian returnees who have brought foreign born spouses to the West Bank have had to go through the same process. For more than ten years, thousands of people have either left the country every third or sixth month, with the fear of being denied re-entry, or they have chosen to overstay their visas and stay illegally in the territories, with the constant fear of being caught and deported by the Israeli authorities.

These policies have affected families and individuals in different ways, and a few individual stories may illustrate the extent to which they can shape people's lives on the West Bank.

Lina

Lina, as noted earlier, was born in Chile in 1972. She is the daughter of a Chilean man and a woman from a Bethlehem family. Her mother and father divorced in 1975, and her mother brought her to Bethlehem the following year. After coming to Palestine, they first lived in a Catholic school and convent in Jerusalem. Lina's mother struggled to get a residence-permit, and in the early 1980s, they settled in Bethlehem as illegal residents. Because of her uncertain status, Lina had to move to a new school every year, in order not to be caught by the Israeli authorities and deported. The Church-based private schools in Bethlehem were very understanding, and tried to accommodate the family's special circumstances.

After finishing high school, Lina spent five years working as a maid for a Jewish-Argentinian family in Israel. In the late 1980s, her mother also married

a Palestinian pro-forma in order to obtain a *hawiyye*², an identity card allowing residency in the West Bank, for herself and for Lina – but Lina did not get one. In 1993, Lina travelled to Chile and stayed there for two years, marrying a Chilean. They separated, and Lina returned to Palestine, hoping that her daughter would get the *hawiyye* if she was born in Palestine. In 1995, her daughter was born in Bethlehem, but she was not granted the *hawiyye* either. From 1995-1996 they went back to Chile, but returned to Palestine after a year. When they returned to Palestine in 1996, they entered on a temporary visitors' visa that Lina had to renew every three months until 1999. In October 1999 she met John from Bethlehem, whom she married in February 2001. In late 2001 she and John had a daughter, Samantha, and in April 2003 they had a son, Hanna. Both Samantha and Hanna got the *hawiyye*, but her oldest daughter was still considered an illegal resident. From 2001 until 2004, Lina stayed at John's place in Bethlehem. As an illegal immigrant, she was forced to stay within the town limits of Bethlehem so as to avoid arrest and deportation.

In 2004 she went for a short trip to Chile, and on her way back, she got a three-month tourist visa for Israel, which included the Palestinian Territories. After her return, John took her Passport to the Palestinian Ministry of the Interior and had her visa extended to one year, with the agreement of the Israeli authorities. In autumn 2005, she had to leave for Chile again, and returned to have her visa renewed once more. After that, she had her visa extended again through the Palestinian Ministry of the Interior. Her last visa expired in June 2006, and through Palestinian officials, she was informed that Israeli authorities would not allow her to get any more extensions. She was also informed that her oldest daughter would no longer be allowed to go to school in Palestine, and that any school that accepted her daughter – an “illegal resident” would have difficulties with the Israeli authorities. John, being the legal resident of the family, tried to find out if he could legally adopt Lina's oldest daughter, as a way of getting a Palestinian *hawiyye* for her. He was told that this would not be accepted by the Israeli authorities. Under these circumstances, it became untenable to stay in Palestine, and in the fall of 2006, the whole family went to Santiago, Chile. None of them were eager to go, but if staying on in Palestine meant that Lina's daughter would not get an education, they felt that they had little choice.

As it turned out, Lina and her family were victims of a new set of Israeli border policies that were introduced in the spring of 2006. Those who had returned home after some years abroad, and who had been crossing the borders on tourist visas for years, were now denied re-entry to the West Bank. As a result, thousands of Palestinians found themselves stuck in Jordan, separated from their children and spouses who were living on the West Bank (Makdisi 2008). Some of these families faced the choice of staying apart or leaving their homes on the West Bank to settle somewhere else. These unannounced border practices provoked strong reactions among Palestinians as well as among internationals working in

the Territories. Throughout summer and autumn 2006, local and international NGOs launched the “Right to Re-entry” campaign, trying to bring international pressure on Israel to change their border policies. Faced with considerable international pressure, the Israeli authorities made some concessions. New orders were announced, allowing Palestinians without right of residence to renew their visas for up to a year at a time for a maximum of twenty-seven months, during which time they had to obtain a West Bank identity card (World Bank Technical Team 2007:5). However, a West Bank identity card could only be obtained with Israeli cooperation. When the 27 month period ended in spring 2009, only a few applications had been processed, and people were back to living on visitor-permits of three and six month durations, or staying as illegal residents. There are thousands of Palestinians who never trusted this bureaucracy to begin with, and who live “illegally” on the West Bank, under the constant threat of being caught and deported by Israeli authorities. And the areas within which these illegal residents can move around freely are defined by the presence of Israeli checkpoints. For long periods, when the West Bank has been dotted with checkpoints, this has left entire families confined within small geographical enclaves, severely limiting their mobility.

Father George

One of the families facing this problem is that of Father George, a parish priest in the Bethlehem area. He was born in Bethlehem, and has lived there all of his life, apart from a few years spent abroad while studying for his priesthood. He leads one of the oldest church communities in the West Bank, but it is also a small one, with less than 500 members left in Bethlehem. In the late 1990s he married a woman from Jordan, and they now live together in Bethlehem with their two sons. Since they became married, it has been made clear that the Israeli authorities would not allow her to obtain legal residence in Palestine. At first, she stayed on a temporary visitors permit, and visited Jordan every three months to have it renewed at the border. After several years of harassment and the constant threat of being turned back, she stopped crossing the border, and since 2002 she has lived illegally in Bethlehem, unable to leave town, or to see her family in Jordan. This is a strain on the whole family. Father George has a strong sense of commitment to his own parish, and if he leaves the country, he is afraid that the local church would be left without a priest. If this were not the case, Father George thinks he would have taken his family to Jordan in order to avoid the stress caused by his wife’s residential status.

Waseem

Not having the right papers can be a heavy social impediment as well. Waseem is a young man in his late 20s who lives in Bethlehem. His father is from the town, and his mother is a Palestinian refugee who grew up in Lebanon. His parents met

in Lebanon in the late 1970s, when his father worked as a doctor in a refugee camp, and his mother was a nurse. They married in Lebanon before moving to Syria and then to Jordan shortly after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. During the late 70s and early 80s, they had five children, one of whom was Waseem. In 1994, they all visited Bethlehem, and Waseem's father decided that they would stay. This was where he had grown up, where he had most of his family and life-long friends, and this was where he had plenty of family land and a house available for his family. There was one problem: he had been stripped of his Palestinian ID, and his children, having been born abroad, were not entitled to Palestinian IDs. Since then, the entire family has lived illegally in Bethlehem. Waseem's two sisters have married local men, and he wants to get married soon as well. After completing business studies at Bethlehem University, Waseem started a small business of his own in 2004, with a financial partner that enabled him to get the necessary business permits. After a slow start, he is now doing quite well. In 2008 he had paid all his debts from starting the business, and since then he has enjoyed a regular income of some 1200 - 1500 USD a month, three times the average salary in the area. In the summer of 2007, he started seeing a girl from Bethlehem. The two of them were very fond of each other, and they got to know one another quite well before telling their families.

On the face of it, Waseem seems to be good catch. He is a charming young man, well liked in the neighbourhood, and he belongs to a family of good standing. He has established his own business under trying circumstances, he makes more money than most of his peers, and his prospects are looking good. In spite of all this, the girl's family made it very clear that they would not allow her to marry Waseem. The reason for this, as stated clearly by her family, was that Waseem does not have a Palestinian ID. Waseem may well be a hard-working entrepreneur who will do well for himself. Nonetheless, being an illegal resident, he is seen by some as unfit to offer a safe and stable family life with social and financial security for a wife and their future children. To make matters worse, if the two of them were to marry, their children would inherit their father's rather than their mother's citizenship, making them illegal residents as well. Unofficially, people working in the Municipalities of Beit Sahour and Beit Jala estimate that there are at least four hundred people who live 'illegally' in each town. In Bethlehem itself, it appears more difficult to make such estimates. It is not easy for an illegal resident to convince a girl's family that you will be a stable presence and a reliable supporter of her and your children. After two years of trying to win over the girl's family, the two of them gave up, and decided to let go of each other.

Waseem has Jordanian citizenship, and he is confident that if he was living in Jordan he could probably do quite well building up a business of his own. And if the fact that if his status as an illegal resident makes him an unacceptable marriage partner in his own town, he says he will probably leave for Jordan in a few years.

Israel's control of the Palestinian Population Registry and its restrictions on Palestinian residence in the West Bank represent the least visible aspect of the occupation, and it is one that involves little use of military force. At the same time, these are measures that affect people's lives and restrict their freedoms and opportunities in dramatic terms. Since the Spring of 2009, the replacement of some Israeli checkpoints with Palestinian manned checkpoints along some of the main routes in the West Bank has made it easier for people like Waseem to leave their home districts, and possible to travel to other parts of the West Bank such as Ramallah. He may be denied access, but Waseem does not fear deportation at the hands of Palestinian forces.

However, this easing of movement restriction at a practical level is countered by legal measures such as Military Order 1650. Earlier, Palestinians without permits to reside in the West Bank faced the risk of deportation if caught by Israeli soldiers. Following order 1650, anyone found without the correct permits to reside in the West Bank could be charged with "illegal infiltration" of the Palestinian Territories, and face years in prison before being deported by Israeli Authorities. This significantly raised the stakes involved in travelling around the West Bank, and the legal threats associated with "illegal" residence on the West Bank. Time will show in what ways this military order will be implemented. In any case, the main force of such an order lies not in its actual enforcement, but in the constant threat of its enforcement.

Theoretically, under this Military Order, individuals like Lina - if she and her family had remained in Bethlehem - Father George's wife, who is Jordanian, and Waseem, could face up to three years imprisonment as illegal infiltrators if caught by Israeli authorities. However, there is little chance that this will actually happen. Israel has little to gain from wasting their resources on imprisoning a large number of Palestinians without legal residence. They are more likely to use this tool to target Palestinian 'foreign passport-holders' who are considered politically troublesome. However, having the legal threat of such proceedings hanging over one's heads can be a tremendous strain on ordinary individuals and their families. As such, Israeli policies on Palestinian residence on the West Bank represents a regime of uncertainty, leaving people in a legal limbo, with little or no formal rights to reside in the homeland, to establish their own businesses, and to start families of the own.

The regime of uncertainty and effects on women

Women are affected by this in a number of ways. Sometimes they may have lost their residence permit after having spent a few years abroad, and like Lina, live their lives within confined spaces in fear of deportation, with a husband who holds legal residency. However, the vast majority of short term individual

emigrants have been men, and they are the ones who most commonly return to settle in their hometowns after a few years abroad. As such, women are most widely affected by these residence restrictions as dependents.

They are the wives, daughters and mothers of returned migrants who hold no rights of residency, and as such, they face the risk of seeing their spouse or their primary source of financial support being taken away from them. Many of these women stay at home to take care of their houses and children, relying on their husband's income to support the family. For women whose financial well-being usually depends on their husbands, this adds an element of insecurity and vulnerability to their situation. For men who marry women who don't hold legal residency, the uncertainty of their wives status can be a heavy burden as well.

The lack of a legal residence can have a paralysing effect, restricting women's movements, and impeding any efforts towards personal advancement through education or employment, as was the case with Lina. On the other side, having a husband who holds no legal residence may serve as an incentive to seek self-empowerment and financial independence, since one cannot rely on an illegal resident as a stable provider. Nonetheless, overall, these residence restrictions have an overwhelmingly negative impact on women's lives, whether they affect their own residence status or that of their husbands.

As I mentioned in the beginning, legal restriction on Palestinian residence is only one of several measures that serve to limit Palestinians mobility, opportunities and sense of security within the West Bank. When combined, these measures have a devastating effect. As families and individuals, Bethlehem Palestinians try to adapt to these measures in various ways. They try to circumvent them, to minimize their damaging effects, and in some cases to escape them altogether by way of emigration. Among the Christians of Bethlehem, the hardships resulting from Israeli policies have strengthened an already powerful structural drive towards ongoing emigration, a drive to which internationally oriented, well-educated, middle-class Christians have been especially responsive (Sabella 2003, 2006, Soudah 2006). As such, through measures such as an arbitrary regime of residence restrictions, Israel's occupation serve to drain the community of some of its most resourceful and ambitious members. In general, these are measures that can be enforced under the radar of international media attention, and they are rarely the source of dramatic headlines and TV images, or diplomatic interventions from other countries. Nonetheless, they represent a tremendous strain on people's everyday lives, and an important driving force towards emigration. And their impact on local communities throughout the West Bank, and on dynamics of emigration within these communities deserves further attention.

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Endnotes

- 1 All names have been fictionalized to protect the identity of individuals
- 2 Hawiyye is the Arabic word referring to the Palestinian ID-cards that prove one's right of residence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The ID-cards are issued by the Israeli authorities, and indicate name, date of birth and

other personal information as well as regional belonging within the Palestinian Territories. For the Israeli authorities, the Hawiyye is a vital tool of population control, for Palestinians, a proof of one's right of residence, and a necessary companion on all travels within the Palestinian Territories. For more information, see Bornstein 2002.

‘Homeland Sacer’: A Nation to be Killed¹

Laura Adwan

In this paper, presented at the 2010 workshop, Laura Adwan, a Ph.D. candidate at Bergen University, proposes a new concept –homeland sacer – as the context for understanding the situation of both Iraqi and Palestinian refugees. Here she is both using and extending Agamben’s concept of homo sacer– those who may be killed with impunity – which has been increasingly deployed by scholars to understand the workings of sovereign power on stateless people, colonial subjects, refugees and all those who fall outside the boundaries of citizenship. Adwan explores how Iraq was turned into a homeland sacer – a nation where another sovereign power operates and destroys with impunity -- and details its consequences. In a parallel, “softer,” operation she argues that refugees have been turned into humanitarian victims without context.

I only left Iraq in 2007 when life in Baghdad became unbearable. We didn’t want to leave. Amjad, my son, used to repeat that he won’t leave Baghdad, he’d say that this is my home and I’ll die here... until that black night, I named it ‘Al-Layla Al-Laylaa’. It was one of those horrible nights, we were ready and dressed like every night, since the first days of the invasion of Baghdad, we’d never wear our pyjamas at night to be ready in case the Americans and the Iraqi militias supported by them come into the house.... That night, we saw the troops raiding every house in our neighbourhood, we could clearly hear everything, we heard them breaking into our house, we were told that if the American soldiers come in the house you have to freeze: make no movement, and bend your heads down, if you ever raise your heads and look at them, the soldier’s normal reaction will be to open fire and kill everyone standing in front of him. Whatever movement you attempt to make might be misinterpreted by the American soldier, he might suspect that you want to harm him and he is ready, the soldier will keep his finger on the trigger and he’ll shoot ... we were completely silent; I, my son and his wife, we all sat on the floor in the corner of our sitting room, turned our heads to the wall and didn’t look at them. They searched every room in

the house, every single corner, and we were trembling. My son told me, if they put the bag over my head to arrest me, don't resist them and don't try to remove it, just remain silent. We spent the whole night sitting on the floor while they turned the house upside down and left at 4 a.m. We waited till the morning came and took our already packed bags - we always had our essential things packed in case we had to flee to our relative's house which is in a quieter neighbourhood in Baghdad - but this time we headed towards Syria.

This is how Um Amjad described what she called in Arabic "Al-Layla Allayla'a", her last night in Baghdad. I met Um Amjad in Amman in November 2010 where she came as a refugee waiting for "resettlement to a third country",² she described vividly the invasion of her home by the American soldiers, with a trembling voice she moved twice from the sofa, where we were sitting in her tiny rented apartment in one of the poor districts in the so-called 'Eastern Amman' to show me in action how she, her son and her daughter-in-law spent that night squatting on the floor in the corner of the sitting room of their big Baghdadi house. While her son returned to Baghdad with his wife last year in spite of her numerous pleas to him not to go, she is still afraid to go back and witness the daily scenes of death, killings, fear and loss narrated by other Iraqis who, like her, were forced to leave Iraq and join more than two million Iraqi refugees in the nearby countries after the invasion of their homeland by the US-British led troops. Every refugee I met has her/his story to tell about the reasons that forced them out of their homes; stories of killings, kidnappings, torture to death, bombings, threatening letters and bullets to leave their houses and country, not only the horrible techniques that are aimed at the 'destruction of their bodies',³ but also massacres and acts of ethnic and cultural cleansing that is destroying the space that had been their homeland.

I discovered from my meetings with both Iraqi and Palestinian refugees that 'Homeland' is one of the main characters in their narratives. I thus wanted to understand the meaning of this violent uprooting of people from their homeland by means of military occupation and colonial control of the land and everything on and inside it, in the two cases mentioned here, the uprooting of what used to be the State of Iraq and the Palestinians' homeland.

Homo Sacer, Homeland Sacer

The refugees in these two cases became refugees as a result of being expelled from their homeland. The homeland was not only turned into a war zone, but a death zone where crimes against people and their belongings constituted the norm. These crimes "constitute the original exception in which human life is included

in the political order in being exposed to an unconditional capacity to be killed” (Agamben, 1998: 85). Agamben’s concept of the state of exception, is a state where sovereign state representatives may commit crimes against humans who no longer qualify as citizens and thus are pronounced *homines sacri* or ‘sacred’ human(s); i.e. a person who may be killed by anyone with impunity but not sacrificed, as per the use of the term in ancient Roman law.

I am extending this concept of Agamben here to refer to a larger state of exception that is imposed on a whole nation through an act of military occupation by foreign forces. It is a state where no rule is applicable, where ordinary order is suspended by a violent attack of a ‘sovereign’ power exercised against the homeland of another nation that no longer is deemed to be sovereign. The explicit justification to justify the act of homeland *sacer* may vary; it could be “*a land without a people for a people without a land*”⁴ or a land of “*rogue states*” or “*axis of evil*”;⁵ being named so, it will become the *sovereign sphere* and can be destroyed:

‘The sovereign sphere is the sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice, and sacred life – that is, life that may be killed but not sacrificed – is the life that has been captured in this sphere’ (Agamben, 1998: 83).

Agamben’s description of the acts of killing in the sphere assigned by the sovereign as a space of exception - where there are two sides: human life (*homo sacer*) and the sovereign state power - is exemplified in the cases of Palestine and Iraq where two nations were destroyed; their territory and everything on and in it controlled by an external sovereign who destroys and ruins by different means, resulting in people emptied from their political agency, that is bare life.

The ‘sacredness’ and ‘bare life’ here is not of an individual ‘man’ or ‘woman’ refugee, it is rather of his and her ‘homeland’ in which everything is put to death: the landscape, archeology, nature and people are named ‘sacred’ in the Roman legal sense of the word; they can be killed, destroyed or eliminated and reproduced in a new shape that serves the new sovereign needs. Iraqis and Palestinians will not necessarily face physical death; the war machine may kill, expel or imprison the bodies of the ‘sacred’.

I thus introduce the term *homeland sacer*, not to coin a term beyond Agamben’s as explained above, but in an attempt to bring the refugee problem into its relevant historical and political contexts. The events that culminated in mandatory Palestine in 1948 and those in Iraq in 2003 exemplify a clear case of *homeland sacer*, transforming existing nations’ homelands into ‘sacred’ and hence killable by a colonizing occupation power that excludes and replaces the original nation sovereign powers. The homelands of Palestinians and Iraqis are transformed into war-lands where nothing feels as it used to feel; a state of exception that throws human lives into an endless cycle of violence, reducing their lives to the space

between two words 'Leave or Die'. Two choices: the sweetest of which is still bitter. To leave would only mean to extend the state of exception, as Um Amjad describes how she was forced to leave her home by the invading soldiers; one leaves what he knows and loves for an unspecified place and uncertain future. Yet, the alternative life is overshadowed by death. I am using the term homeland sacer to explore the relation between the sovereign free states, the 'free' *People* living in their 'normal' ordered world whose leaders *took the decision* to use the force of law to 'defend their society' from *people*⁶ whom they announced as breakers of international law, terrorists, evil, non-democratic or even non-existent and thus are excluded from sovereignty and put to die. I have chosen to present here the Iraqi case as an example of this homeland sacer.

Iraq 2003: the spectacle of the guillotine

When 'modern' nation-states *decide* to exercise their sovereign power to protect their 'free' citizens from a potential evil enemy in another land, presented as being the homeland of a primitive and evil people who are far beyond citizenship and civilization, they (the modern States) turn the clock back several centuries to the pre-modern age when sovereign power was realized by death; dying, as Foucault (1977) said, 'the Damiens' way' referring to the 1757 public spectacle of the torture and execution of the regicide Damiens in France. The primitiveness and evil of the enemy remove him from the sphere of modernity and allow the use of the old violent and savage display of power that will serve to punish the condemned, as well as deter the rest of the primitives who are potential criminals, so re-assuring the public of modern nation-states that everything is under control.

The primitive body to be punished is presented as being too dangerous: it needs to be tamed, reduced to a bare body on which the sovereign will use corporal punishment, the form of punishment that can deter a primitive evil. The punishment of the Iraqi body did not only start in 2003, it was established by the sovereign law, UN resolution 661, issued on 6 August 1990 imposing sanctions and exposing the Iraqi nation to death,⁷ disease,⁸ rapid economic decline and nearly an end to any sort of human development. The invasion of 2003 then brought the excessive bombing and destruction of the institutions of the previous regime, exposing the inhabitants to atrocities that included death, expulsion and the systematic torture of prisoners, in addition to the escalating economic, political and environmental costs.⁹

One does not need to have a vivid imagination to picture Damiens of 1757 coming back in the 21st century: in the latest televised wars on Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), Lebanon (2006) and Gaza (2008) where entire countries and their populations were sentenced to death by the so-called 'sovereign' modern leaders, who issued their orders for a modern performance of a tragic

war spectacle. The Bush Doctrine may be read as a declaration of the need to 'bring back death into play in the field of sovereignty' (Foucault, 1977: 144). U.S. President George Bush, in his address to future U.S. military leaders said that they must be prepared to launch preemptive strikes to keep "terrorists and tyrants" from obtaining weapons of mass destruction. 'We face a threat with no precedent,' Bush told the first class to graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point after the 11 September attacks:

"We cannot put our faith in the words of tyrants who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties and then systematically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered the only path to safety is the path of action and this nation will act, all Americans must be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives".¹⁰

Although Bush did not mention Iraq by name in this speech, it was the second stage, after Afghanistan, where the modern-day Damians spectacle was released with a powerful opening scene of air bombing that set the nights of Baghdad into flashing lights, marking the invasion of a sovereign country once called Iraq to be punished as a preemptive action to defend the sovereignty of America, in case that country proved to have access to WMD,¹¹ weapons of mass destruction.

Damiens was back, but this time in March 2003 he is not the man who threatened the sovereignty of the king. Damiens of the 21st century is a whole nation sentenced to die by the 'Shock and Awe' doctrine of the Anglo-American led invasion of April 2003 announcing the return of the old guillotine to the public scene.

Shock and awe?

It is the name given to this military attack, the signifier signifies the intention of bringing an overwhelming sense of fear through a shocking war spectacle. It is the 'civilized' mode of controlling the 'uncivilized' in a civilizing intervention (Badiou, 2001: 13).

From the beginning of the invasion, we have been bombarded by a performative display of power exercised by the heavily-armed multi force army against Iraq: the country and people. It was not just the Iraqi capital; the destruction and bombing extended to all the symbols of the ex-sovereign state; not only the state, but Iraq's historical archaeological artifacts and cultural treasures were also destroyed, looted and set on fire (Baker, Raymond; Shereen Ismael and Tareq Ismael, 2010). These

scenes of excessive armed terror bring back Foucault's description of the public execution scene: 'a policy of terror to make everyone aware through the body of the criminal, of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign. The public execution did not reestablish justice it reactivated power' (1977: 49). The power that Slavoj Žižek described in his presentation on the underlying reasons for the US attack on Iraq is the power that will serve to: 'brutally assert and signal unconditional US hegemony and foster its belief that the destiny of the United States is to bring democracy and prosperity to other nations in addition to the need to control Iraqi oil reserves' (2004: 44).

The result was chaos, a state of exception that became the normal scene projected daily from Iraq:¹²

- 1.2 million Iraqi civilians people have been killed in this attack and in daily unidentified events of explosion and assassination.¹³
- Four million and a half inhabitants were exiled and displaced, atomizing the Iraqi social network.
- Kidnapping became a lucrative industry.
- Trafficking in human beings and organs and prostitution became an underground industry in Iraq and nearby countries.¹⁴
- Dismemberment of Iraq by dividing the country into small manageable pieces by walls and military checkpoints forcing the people to relocate.
- All the national state institutions, figures and symbols were eliminated in the process of de-Baathification'; governmental institutions were burnt and looted in what appears to be random sprees of violence, and representatives of former Iraqi regime were portrayed in the famous 'deck of cards' spectacle to nullify Iraqi sovereignty.
- Destruction and demolitions of old city centers and the conversion of ancient cultural patrimony, Babylon, Kish, Ur and Samarra, to military encampments.¹⁵
- Destruction of the education system that was estimated in the eighties as being the best in the region:¹⁶ houses of hundreds of professors have been stormed and hundreds of them have been arrested, the rising violence has forced 'thousands' of Iraqi professors to flee the country to different parts of the world.¹⁷ A senior Iraqi academic now living in Amman said: "They [the occupation authorities and the Iraqi government] don't want us. They say that they'll prepare a new generation of academics and professionals, people of our own coloring. In order to understand why we [refugee academics] are here [in Amman] you need to know that it's a clear-out of people like me, for whom there is no place in the new Iraq" (Baker, Raymond; Shereen Ismael and Tareq Ismael, 2010: 212).
- A systematic cleansing of Iraqi human capital in order to get hold of the

material capital. The population of teachers in Baghdad has fallen by 80%. Up to 75% of Iraq's doctors, pharmacists and nurses have left their jobs since the US-British led invasion in 2003.¹⁸ This led to deterioration in the provision of health services.¹⁹

A whole nation is facing a *homeland sacer*, meaning that this homeland with all its material and symbolic components can be destroyed, dismembered and ethnically cleansed by anyone with impunity. The killing does not only affect humans, turning them into *homines sacri* through enforced uprooting, their lands are also a target of place annihilation;²⁰ not only exposed to physical destruction, but also rich historical and national symbols were pulverized by the machine of war and the chaotic violence it created to control the Iraqi people and their land. In their discourse, representatives of the US occupation forces explained the killings of Iraqi people and destruction of their state 'as an act of democratic freedom by a previously oppressed population', or with expressions such as 'freedom is messy' or 'the messy birth pangs of democracy' this is how US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld described the acts of looting of the museums and torching of the libraries in his speech for the Bush administration in 2003 (Bahrani, 2010: 76, in Baker and Ismael).

The question then arises *what is meant by a free Iraq?* Does it mean that the country is free and Iraqi people enjoy sovereignty on their lands and resources? Does it mean free access to Iraq by Iraqis who were refugees for decades being in the opposition, is their homeland today a freer and a safer place? I would say that 'free Iraq', in today's reality, means free access to the country resources by the new sovereign powers controlling it today. Free Iraq = free oil.

No wonder that the US troops protected only one Iraqi national institution from looting after the invasion: the oil ministry.²¹ To ensure free access to oil, there is a need to sweep all the obstacles in the way, and humans appear to be the biggest obstacle, especially the educated and those capable of educating the rest to revolt against the homeland sacer. This homeland sacer ended up turning the Iraqi people into *homines sacri* who can be killed without considering this act of killing a homicide: hundreds of thousands Iraqi people died, others disappeared or were imprisoned, while 4,2 million Iraqis were turned into refugees after 2003 (2 million inside their homeland and 2.2 million in neighboring countries according to the UNHCR estimates).

Refugees as part of the homeland sacer

The Iraqi refugee experience commenced before 2003; many Iraqis were forced out of their country over the past three or four decades and large numbers of Iraqi civilians have been forced from their home areas by wars, uprisings and

government-sponsored policies.²² However, by 2006, there was a mass movement of Iraqi refugees encompassing all religions and sects (Sasson: 2009).

An ethnography aiming to present the Iraqi refugee experience without placing it in the context of the events above that turned them into refugees, as well as the continuing war situation that is prolonging their exile, will only serve to objectify refugees as humanitarian victims whose survival is bound to the new sovereign forces who control their exile. That is why it is essential to analyze the refugee experiences addressed here in the context of the homeland sacer. Iraqi and Palestinian refugees did not become 'refugees' because they were announced as *homines sacri* and thus objectified as bare life that can be killed as individuals. The homeland was the target, leaving people with two choices: 'leave or die'. Death might put an end to the suffering while leaving will not. It is, rather, a start of a different phase of bare life that will necessitate another intervention from the white-Man to save the victim-Man, the intervention, this time, will be a softer one and the tools will be humanitarian organizations.

Being excluded from the sovereign sphere where the homeland sacer is taking place does not mean that Iraqis and Palestinians have escaped the 'sacer' situation completely. The double action of uprooting exercised by a colonizing power, uprooting the people from their homeland and uprooting their homeland from its original existence, render them vulnerable to new 'sovereign' forces that will put their bodies under strict control:

- *Occupation controlling forces* that imposed the homeland sacer and uprooted the people and destroyed their homes will prevent refugees from going back to their homeland and prolong their state of exception. Neither case of refugees, Iraqi or Palestinian, can be studied without taking this into consideration.
- *The hosting state* with its apparatus and other controlling bodies including political parties and NGOs that will fight for their share of controlling positions among refugees to secure their interests using ethical or religious or national ideologies.
- *International (and local) humanitarian organizations* that are many times the sole provider of living needs especially in those cases where the hosting state resources are scarce.
- *Media* which on many occasions is controlled by the powerful sovereign.
- *The refugees* themselves who in their attempt to survive, will try to resist the continual homeland sacer situation they were forced into. Yet their space of resistance is limited and will be confined between the pushing and pulling forces of the above mentioned forces.

The above mentioned forces will contribute to construct and reconstruct different representations of refugees, the most common of which is *the image of the victim* in its several layers: survivors, poor women, children and men in need of food and help. When it comes to war refugees, the image of the victim is further stressed due to the palpable degree of physical violence projected around refugees' lives in the homeland sacer process.

Liisa Malkki shows in a review she did of refugee studies how the discourse on refugees presented by anthropologists and international organizations and human rights agencies contribute to the production of this victimization of refugees:

'People who are refugees can find themselves quite quickly rising to a floating world either beyond or above politics, and beyond or above history - a world in which they are simply "victims". It is this floating world without the gravities of history and politics that can ultimately become a deeply dehumanizing environment for refugees, even as it shelters'. (Malkki, 1995b: 518).

What Malkki describes can be seen as the epistemological limbo in refugees' studies which mirrors the real limbo in their lives. It is true that refugees are victims of various atrocities committed against them as individuals and against their societies at large: this is a fact that no one can deny. However, by emphasizing this victimization of refugees at the expense of revealing the forces in the field that reproduce this victimization, and by using the ready-made terminology and measures of international agencies and ignoring the larger political and historical contexts, a researcher can only produce a reductionist reading of the field; similar to what Nietzsche described in his criticism of the simplification of reality through 'reducing something unknown to something known (which) calms the mind and also gives a sense of power' (Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron, 1991: 25).

While media plays a representational role in presenting refugees as bare bodies, the UN and other international NGOs and humanitarian organizations will make use of the images presented by the media in the operational role they play in the refugee sphere. This will reduce the refugee cause from the collective homeland sacer case I have described above to a humanitarian problem of individuals.

This type of humanitarian discourse ironically serves to dehumanize those homeland sacer's survivors who are deprived of their homeland and their national identity and thus 'expelled from humanity' according to Arendt's expression (1951: 295) in a world where human existence is bound to nation-states. The danger of this new sovereign power stems from the fact that refugees had no choice but to accept the welfare services that are offered by international organizations because they would normally have no other means for survival. Their bodies will become a fertile soil for those international organizations to exercise their power through the hegemonic individual rights' discourse. Eventually refugees would reengineer

their existence and views of the conditions that produced it to suit the strategic objectives of those bodies, and we will see them contributing to the production of 'bare life', reproducing themselves in the image of the passive and helpless victims that will make them deserve these welfare services.

Exploring the refugees representations in other studies, I'll argue here against reducing 'war refugees' to victims or *homines sacri* in the absolute sense of Agamben.²³

The construction of refugees as victims is the most common tendency in refugee studies as concluded in Malkki's review. This can be very much attributed to the main forces shaping the experience of the uprooting, namely international agencies and organizations. Actually, the meaning of 'a refugee' has been made available to us through the fields of international law, political science and human rights. The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR)²⁴ provides the following definition borrowed from the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees from 1951:

“A *refugee*²⁵ is a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...”.

One can see from the definition the emphasis it puts on the identity of the refugee as an individual despite the fact that the refugees for which UN organizations cater are usually groups, masses and communities of people who fled or were directly forced out of their homeland and became homeless. If one has the space and time to do a discourse analysis of the UNHCR and the UNRWA²⁶ publications, and I have been following the latter, one can notice that they construct refugees as a humanitarian problem, reporting numbers of children suffering from acute malnutrition, underweight and stunting, the numbers of widowed women, casualties among men, food shortage and problems in water and electricity supply. This discourse contributes to uprooting refugees' lives from their political and historical contexts and restricts them to creatures who are in urgent need of humanitarian help to survive, reducing them to animalistic life. Refugees in the discourse and activities of International Organizations are continually constructed and reconstructed as rootless humanitarian objects that require aid to avoid a 'humanitarian crisis'.²⁷

The definitions and reports presented by the international bodies - who constitute in many cases the sole supporting system for refugees - imply certain symbolic power over the refugees' own definition of their situation. This symbolic power, carries within it certain political functions, as per Bourdieu (1977: 115) that serves to legitimate domination by the imposition of the 'correct' and

'legitimate' definition of the social world (Harker, Mahar and Wilkes, 1990: 5).

Badiou, in his turn, showed how the legitimacy of the humanitarian discourse is further strengthened by the fact that it is built on the assumption of the existence of a universally recognizable human subject possessing natural rights. He explored critically how this claim of a 'universal human subject is capable of reducing ethical issues to matters of human rights and humanitarian actions, the thing that will serve at every point to annihilate any attempt to invent forms of 'free thought' (ibid.: 10). When 'universal' ethics are legalized and reduced to Human Rights ideology and humanitarian actions that is, conceived as *a priori* ability to discern the evil of the Other, then the notion of 'universality' should be questioned. *Is there one human? Or a human and the other?* Reality proves that the human is split into People\ people as termed by Agamben or victim-Man\ good-or-white-Man as termed by Badiou. While the victim, in Badiou's *Ethics*, was named "a victim" by western humanitarian ideology, the victim here is his Other, the passive subject who suffers, he is the animal on the TV, 'the uncivilized demanding from the civilized a civilizing intervention' (ibid.: 13). The universal humanitarian language does not weigh all humans using the same scale; if we look at the laws (*droits*) concerning refugees, we can easily notice how refugees are represented as being mere victims in need of laws to protect them. While there is the other human who is taking the role of the protector and law implementer, yet, "the barbarity of the situation is seen only in terms of 'human rights' while in fact we are always dealing with a political situation" (ibid.: 13).

If we go back to the Iraqi example of war refugees, I would argue that failure to consider the Iraqi political scene when dealing with refugees has a dehumanizing effect that is often practiced by international humanitarian organizations; thus the humanitarian principles that are forced into the situation in the claim of bringing justice and human rights, many times do not do any justice to the refugees' cause as the unjust situation they face occurred as a result of political interventions in the first place (and not humanitarian). The Iraqi case I presented earlier in detail clearly demonstrates this: the sanctions, the military invasion in the name of democracy and freedom and the chaos that this created. Ignoring all these aspects of reality when dealing with Iraqi refugees in favour of the humanitarian aspect alone imprints refugees into one still image; the image of victims suffering effects of trauma and loss of land and belongings, deprived of 'citizenship' and their rights, being reduced to the minimal survival needs: food, health and education. By this, refugees remains deprived from their ability to judge the 'homeland sacer event' that transformed them into victims or bare life, preventing them from envisioning other potentials of existence apart from the bare life or victim existence.

It is difficult to think of ways to subvert the current dependency on humanitarian aid as a means to transform the 'bare life' status of refugees into a 'qualified life' or simply 'meaningful life', especially when this aid is still needed

for the survival of the refugees in a situation of non-equality created by the imperial capitalist control of human bodies. The suspension of the provision of basic humanitarian aid might end up in the suspension of the 'refugee' existence even as 'bare life'. Instead I will argue, borrowing from Badiou,²⁸ for introducing other truths in the field that will contribute to the subversion of the one western hegemonic truth of universal human rights; this could be possible when refugees and other victims of the homeland sacer extract their right to restore the historical and political dimensions to the refugee case that will eventually serve to subvert the representation of the refugee problem as a problem of individual victims or *homines sacri* into the original problem of homeland sacer.

It will not be easy to get beyond the bare life status with the presence of the sovereign forces and the power they exert to control and discipline refugees' lives, yet this is not impossible. But I will argue here that it is possible to subvert this reality by making use of the 'void' in it, the void here is the situation of limbo in which refugees are kept. Refugees experience a triple limbo: of place (being in the middle of nowhere, in-between), of time (waiting for an end of their refugeeness is like waiting for a Godot that they do not know if or when it might come and what it will) and of identity (being an outcast between animal and man). Refugees can make use of this 'void' that gives them more freedom away from the controlling disciplinary power of modern states' apparatuses. And this is something that international organizations have realized; as appears in the objectives outlined in the Preamble of the UNHCR Convention and Protocol relating to the status of refugees, the fifth objective of which states: 'Expressing the wish that all States, recognizing the social and humanitarian nature of the problem of refugees, will do everything within their power to prevent this problem from becoming a cause of tension between states'. Refugees here are not only reduced to a humanitarian problem but they are also seen as potential source of tension. However, there must be some space to escape the bare life or homo sacer fate. My argument is based on my readings in the field and on the research I carried out in two Palestinian refugee camps in addition to my personal experience of living in a refugee camp for more than 14 years.

If we look at the life practices produced by Palestinian refugees during the last 62 years of refugee-ness, we can depict moments of hope of a lost-regained land and dreams of a future when refugees will be able to restore the purity of past days. Reading through Palestinian refugees experience in oral history works and listening to their words today and observing their living experiences since 1948, we can see that they oscillated between the *homo-sacer* and *anti-homo-sacer* positions; from being humanitarian subjects of UNRWA to political activists and revolutionaries and to returnees (as we witnessed on 15 May 2011).²⁹ These positions are affected by the main actors in the field representing the role of the sovereign, whether it is the colonial occupation force, the hosting country government apparatus, international organizations and NGOs working in the

field, the media and the refugees themselves and the political bodies representing them. All these forces will affect the refugees' position and their will and ability to escape the *homo sacer* fate that they were sentenced to when their homeland was occupied.

I will conclude with the case with which I began, Um Amjad and many other Iraqis who became refugees while they were trying to escape death in their homeland. They might succeed, as individuals, *to escape death* with the assistance of the different new sovereign powers they are encircled by. Refugees will be moving between the different positions imposed by the forces described above, sometimes they are forced to accept what is there (accepting the fate of being turned into humanitarian objects or naked life) and other times they might be able to save their bodies and souls or what is left of their souls after all the losses and torture they have been through, they might be able to dream of a different reality and try to rebuild their national identity and their homeland in works of art or through a political project to achieve what Badiou calls as 'the possibility of the impossible, which is exposed by every loving encounter, every scientific re-foundation, every artistic invention and every sequence of emancipatory politics ...' (2001: 39).

But the 'sacer' body, whose reality(s) are still undissected, despite the numerous epistemological digging operations performed by researchers and thinkers from various disciplines, is Iraq and Palestine: the homeland, the nation with its people, heritage, culture and nature. Will they be able to escape the homeland sacer?

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Endnotes

- 1 This article is part of a larger paper I have written during my coursework at Bergen University to prepare for my PhD research project among Iraqi refugees in Jordan. The paper was presented at a joint workshop between Bergen University and Birzeit University held in November 2010 at the Women's Studies Institute in Birzeit University. I would like to thank: Prof. Thorvald Sirnes for his knowledge and insightful discussions during the Philosophy of Social Sciences course, my friend Sarah Philpot for reading the essay and reviewing the language of the first draft, and Penny Johnson for editing this version of the essay
- 2 The majority of Iraqis whom I have met in Jordan consider Jordan as a transit station from where they will head to a more permanent place. As explained by Chatelard: "Jordan has adopted what can be deemed a "semi-protectionist" policy towards Iraqi forced migrants, i.e. letting them in but depriving them of a status, of protection and of means of livelihood. The border with Iraq has always remained open, and Iraqis can enter on a temporary visa and stay legally up to 6 months. After that period of time, they become illegal aliens and are under risk of being expelled back to Iraq. (Chatelard, 2002: 7).
- 3 As Lisa Malkki presented in her study *Purity and Exile* 1995a: 89-99
- 4 The origin of this phrase is debated, although it was used by Zionists leaders, such as Chaim Weizmann in 1914, yet it is argued that the phrase 'was coined by 19th century Christian (European) writers, see Diana Muir's article on the origin

- of this phrase in *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2008, pp. 55-62 <http://www.meforum.org/1877/a-land-without-a-people-for-a-people-without>
- 5 'Rogue states' was used by Madeleine Albright who was the United States Secretary of States to refer to North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Libya during the late 1990s. Bush administration later replaced the term by 'Axis of Evil' to refer to Iraq, Iran and North Korea.
 - 6 I am using 'People' and 'people' intentionally, borrowing from Agamben's distinction between different functions of the concept; on the one hand the *People* as a whole; an inclusive concept that pretends to be without remainder and as an integral body politic and, on the other hand, the *people* as a subset and as fragmentary multiplicity of needy and excluded bodies known to afford no hope. According to Agamben, modern biopolitics is supported by this division of People (in capital P) representing the total state of the sovereign and integrated citizens and people (in small p) the banishment _either court of miracles or camp_ of the wretched, the oppressed, and the vanquished. (From Agamben's article 'What is a People?' available online at <http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/000939.php>, accessed on 14 June 2010)
 - 7 By mid-1990s half a million children had died. When confronted with such statistics in 1996, Madeleine Albright, then U.S. ambassador to the U.N., [told Leslie Stahl in an interview on "60 Minutes"] that "the price was worth it" to change the Saddam regime. For further details check the interview with Iraqi author Haifa Zangana on 11 July 2010 at <http://www.iacenter.org/iraq/zangana071410/>, accessed on 28 July 2010.
 - 8 Health reports show increase in cancer cases and birth defects in the aftermath of the 1991 bombardment of depleted uranium by the US-UK. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1910980.stm, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8548707.stm>, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/8589734.stm>, accessed on 28 July 2010.
 - 9 For further details check the interview with Iraqi author Haifa Zangana on 11 July 2010 at <http://www.iacenter.org/iraq/zangana071410/>, accessed on 28 July 2010.
 - 10 "Bush Says US Must Prepare For Preemptive Action", by Adam Entous, Rense.com, June 2, 2002. WEST POINT, N.Y. (Reuters) from the site: <http://www.cuttingedge.org/news/n1750.cfm> accessed on 14 July 2010.
 - 11 Seven years have passed now since the war on Iraq began and still no evidence came of WMD. On 27 July 2010 former chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix testified at the British inquiry into the Iraq War stating that he found the evidence for war "weak" back in 2003. For further details check: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/28/world/europe/28blix.html> <http://www.france24.com/en/20100727-former-iaea-chief-blix-iraq-war-uk-usa-military>. The US-British troops are still in Iraq and 'we are being told repeatedly that the main story in Iraq is that Iraqis are killing Iraqis by hundreds each day, and that the main question is whether it has yet become a sectarian civil war or not, and more recently: "Why do they hate each other?" Blaming the victims has become the widely accepted rationalization for foreign troops to remain in Iraq indefinitely'. From an interview with Iraqi author Haifa Zangana on 11 July 2010 <http://www.iacenter.org/iraq/zangana071410/>. This link and the links above were accessed on 28 July 2010.
 - 12 The chaotic bulleted points were collected from articles and news items I have been following in addition to articles compiled in the book titled 'Cultural Cleansing in Iraq' edited by Raymond W. Baker, Shereen T. Ismael and Tareq Y. Ismael (2010).
 - 13 British Agency for measuring public opinion (ORB) in the statistical study

- published in March 2008. Source: Iraq in Figures After five years of occupation, prepared by Ikram Centre for Human Rights.
- 14 See for example: <http://www.counterpunch.org/mcnutt07112007.html> accessed on 12 August 2010.
 - 15 For details see Baker and Ismail 2010.
 - 16 In 1982, UNESCO awarded Iraq a prize for eradicating illiteracy. At the time, Iraq had one of the highest rates of literacy for women – by 1987 approximately 75% of Iraqi women were literate. In 2004, UNESCO estimated that the literacy rates for adults – after a year of Anglo-American occupation and twelve years of UN-sponsored sanctions – stood at 74%. Three years later, in June of 2007, Education International estimated that only 65% of adults were literate (54% of women and 74% of men). From (Baker and Ismail 2010: 131).
 - 17 Refugee academics report receiving explicit threats of death in the form of letters such as: 'you cost us just one bullet, no more, so shut your mouth' or 'it's better to leave your job or you will face what you don't want' some got a bullet, that has become itself an effective shorthand, calling the names of professors from a list and threatening them with death if they show up in the college or posting the list of names of people scheduled for death on public walls. Implicit intimidation has been reported as another drive of forced exile: calls to professors and professionals at their houses and offices asking personal questions often end up in leaving the country (Fuller and Adriaensens, 2010: 157).
 - 18 According to a Medact report of 16 January 2008, roughly 40% of Iraq's middle class are believed to have fled the country by the end of 2006; most are fleeing systematic persecution and have no desire to return. 'In January 2005, Charles Crain remarked in *USA Today* that in a country with distinct political, ethnic and religious fault lines, the university killings seem to follow no pattern. The dead have been Shi'ites and Sunnis, Kurds and Arabs, and supporters of various political parties' (Adriaensens, 2010: 124-125, in Baker and Ismail).
 - 19 In the early years of Saddam Hussein, the health care system in Iraq was a showcase, with most Iraqis receiving excellent, inexpensive care. Iraqi doctors often studied in England, and Iraq's medical schools, based at hospitals, had high standards. From http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/30/international/middleeast/30doctor.htm?_r=1, accessed on 6 July 2010.
 - 20 As termed by Kenneth Hewitt (1983) in his article: 'Place Annihilation: Area Bombing and the Fate of Urban Places'.
 - 21 See <http://endthewarfirst.org/oil.html>, accessed on 12 August 2010.
 - 22 The first waves of Iraqi refugees were in the 1970s and 1980s, many of those were Sunnis who opposed the Saddam Hussein regime. Others were Shi'a fleeing persecution. The second wave of Iraqi refugees began in 2003 as a result of the US invasion and it is composed of Iraqis belonging to various religious sects (Al Khalidi, Hoffmann and Tanner, 2007).
 - 23 See Agamben's (1995) article titled *We Refugees* <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/giorgio-agamben/articles/we-refugees/>. Sari Hanafi also explores Foucault's notion of control by biopolitics in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon in 'Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon: Laboratories of State-in-the-Making, Discipline and Islamist Radicalism' a chapter in *Thinking Palestine* edited by Ronit Lentin (2008).
 - 24 See <http://www.unhcr.org.au/basicdef.shtml#def01>, retrieved on 26 May 2010.
 - 25 The emphasis is mine.
 - 26 The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
 - 27 To see examples of these reports, visit the following link of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)-Occupied Palestinian Territories: http://www.ochaopt.org/?module=displaysection§ion_id=97&static=0&format=html

There is a clear sense of euphemism in these reports which the UN bureaucrats attribute to the fact that they are a humanitarian international organization and therefore are supposed to be neutral, but careful reading of their reporting of the daily humiliation, exploitation and killings which people face in Occupied Palestine shows that these reports are entirely one sided under the appearance of neutrality. One can also notice the ambiguous use of words when, for example, the apartheid and segregation wall turns into a “barrier” and the excessive use of “passive voice” tense when describing the atrocities committed by the Israeli army that makes the reader feel that there is a ghost behind all the killings and destruction of Palestinians’ lives. These UN reports present an apolitical, ahistorical, dehumanizing and violent description of life under occupation and

colonial regime that is not less violent than the reality created by the Israeli military occupation itself. And the worst thing is that all this is covered behind a humanitarian mask.

- 28 Badiou refuses this claimed truth of the ‘universality of Man rights’. He suggests that there is no ethics of truth. For him ‘the only genuine ethics is ‘*ethics of truths*’ in the plural – or, more precisely, the only ethics is of processes of truth, of the labour that brings *some* truths into the world’. For Badiou there is no ethics in general. ‘There is only the *ethic-of* (of politics, of love, of science, of art).
- 29 See: “The Palestinians and the Right of Return .. 15/5/2011 as a Model” by Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations. Source: <http://www.alzaytouna.net/arabic/?c=1530&a=146661> accessed on 2 July 2011.

Debating the Informal Economy: Considering Colonialism and Palestine

Nida Abu Awwad

In this excerpt from a chapter in her thesis¹, Nida Abu Awwad examines three approaches to the informal economy in a global debate conducted over the past decades. Considering the Palestinian case, she argues for a new dimension in understanding the operations of the informal economy: colonialism, and in the Palestine case, Israeli settler-colonialism. She concludes by examining research on Palestinian households during the period of the second Palestinian intifada.

For over half a century, a wealth of studies has been published concerning the informal economy. The earlier studies from the 1950s and 1960s, such as the work of Lewis (1954), posited two contradictory economies in developing countries: one is the modern, capitalist, or formal economy; the other is the traditional, non-capitalist economy comprised of a range of small-scale urban and household peasant economic activities. It was assumed that the traditional economy would disappear when these countries achieve a level of industrial development similar to that of the modern economies in Europe and North America, but evidence all over the world shows that the informal economy continues to increase globally, including in developed countries, and, as mentioned by some, in transitional countries² (ILO, 2002; Chen, M., Vanek and Carr, 2004; Chen, M., 2006; Itzigsohn, 2000; Neef, 2002; Portes, Castells and Benton, 1989).

Three Approaches to the Informal Economy

Three main schools of thought appeared within the field of development studies in the informal sector: dualism, structuralism, and legalism. I will argue, below, however that colonialism is a key theoretical framework used to understand the Palestinian informal economy in general, and particularly from a gender-specific perspective.

The Dualist Approach

The failure of development policies in the 'Third World' particularly the African countries, was at the core of the dualists' argument. It suggests that informal activities expanded due to a slow rate of economic growth and industry's inability to absorb the structural labour surplus of unskilled, illiterate workers which was compounded by a high rate of population growth and the increasing of rural-urban migration. According to this approach, the informal sector is a traditional non-capital sector, comprised of marginal small-scale and unregistered activities, as well as the self-employed people. On the whole, the informal sector is seen as separate from the formal modern economy (ILO, 1972; Hart, 1973). Later they considered the informal economy as a safety net for the poor, functioning as a survival strategy and a way of providing income for them rather than as an obstacle to development (Tokman, 1991).

The dualist approach's argument for the centrality of industrialization fits entirely with the model of industrialization through import substitution during the 1960s and early 1970s, as was the case in Latin America (Itzigsohn, 2000). This approach also generalizes to other Third World countries in Africa and the Middle East such as Egypt and Syria. But the dualist approach fails to address the new work relationship and work conditions created after the mid 1970s and the adaptation to the neoliberal policies of development and structural adjustment such as subcontracting work and part-time jobs. Moreover, it neglects the role of the State in the issue of regulating the informal economy in terms of economic activities and labour relationships as well development policies (Chen, M. 2006; Itzigsohn, 2000).

The Structuralist Approach

In contrast to the dualists, during the late 1970s and 1980s, the "structuralist", Marxist and Neo-Marxist theorists argue that the informal and formal economies are fundamentally linked in one overall capitalist system. Furthermore, the subordinate informal sector exists to serve capitalist firms in the formal economy and to raise their revenue (Portes, Castells and Benton, 1989; Moser, 1978, 1994). So structuralists argue that the nature of the development is the primary factor in the growth of informal production relationships, instead of the lack of development as claimed by dualists.

Through the efforts to reduce production costs and to maximize their profits within an intensely competitive environment, large capitalist firms in advanced capitalist countries create new patterns of production processes. Piore and Sabel (1984) address the issue of 'flexible specialization' as a new trend of production process relying on the decentralization of the production process by specialized small-scale firms of producers, citing, for example, the Italian case (Piore and Sabel, 1984). However, a main argument of the structuralists is that the decentralization and restructuring of production was coupled by subcontracting and the creation of

new forms of cheap and informal labour known as ‘employment informalization’, such as outworkers/home-based workers as well as temporary work, and part-time work (Portes, Castells and Benton, 1989; Beneria and Roldan, 1987; Moser 1978, 1994). Furthermore, the informal economy plays a vital role in the indirect subsidizing of formal firms to reduce labour costs by producing cheap goods and services, which in turn allows formal firms to pay lower salaries to their workers (Allen, 1998: 9, cited in Bernabe, 2002).

These new forms of informal employment represent a serious evasion of employment relationships, labour standards and the social protection of jobs, especially hourly wages and piece-rate jobs (Portes, Castells and Benton, 1989; Beneria and Roldan, 1987; Beneria, 2001; Beneria and Floro, 2005). Therefore, the structuralists highlighted the essential role of government in regulating the relationship between the formal sector and inferior informal producers, in particular employment relationships in both the advanced capital central countries as well as in the peripheral world economic system (Portes, Catells, and Benton, 1989; Portes, 1994).

This approach also addresses the world economy system, focusing on the unequal relationship between the informal and formal economy as well as between the peripheral national economy and the central global economy, which is based on subordinating the informal to the formal national economy, while the national economy is, in turn, subordinate to the central global economy (Itzigsohn, 2000; Chen, M., Vanek and Carr, 2004; Chen, M., 2006).

The Legalist Approach

The legalist approach was founded by Hernando De Soto in the late 1980s and has some similarities with the structuralist approach. The legalist approach also focuses on the environment of State regulation and its role in expanding and forming the informal economy, but from a different viewpoint. Legalists argue that exaggerated regulations regarding the registration of economic activities and heavy taxation on poor entrepreneurs’ economic activities is the primary cause behind the expansion of the informal sector. De Soto was mainly concerned with the “plucky” self-employed group among the migrants of urban poor Peruvians. He pointed out that exaggerated State regulation increased the cost of establishing any new projects, in terms of financial cost, time and effort. Consequently, entrepreneurs are forced to avoid these regulations, and this avoidance then becomes one of the primary reasons for the expansion of the informal economy, rather than rural migration to the cities, a labour surplus or urban poverty as claimed by the dualists and structuralists.

According to this perspective, government deregulation would lead to increased economic freedom and entrepreneurship among working people and the poor, especially in developing countries, and the informal economy would become a true market economy within a mercantilist state (De Soto, 1989).

Rakowski (1994) noted that legalists saw the expansion of the informal sector as a solution to the economic crisis and poverty, while it was considered a problem for development and hindering the alleviation of poverty from the viewpoint of the structuralists. In fact, structuralists aim to reduce survival-level activities through adopting macroeconomic policies that emphasise the expansion of the modern industrial sector.

Informal Economy: Colonialism as a new dimension

Each of these three theoretical approaches contributes to a useful theoretical framework within which to understand some aspects of the Palestinian informal economy, whether with regard to the impact of the Palestinian Authority's regulations applied to informal economic activities, labour regulations or their neoliberal development policies, in addition to Palestine's peripheral position within the world economy system and globalization process. However, as mentioned before, the previous approaches generally focus on studying the informal economy from within a sovereign national economy, whether in the context of advanced capital countries (center) or transitional countries or post-colonial 'Third World' countries (periphery). Unlike other countries in the world, in the Palestinian case colonialism is the most significant factor in shaping the Palestinian informal economy, although this is not to overlook the potential effects of 'state' development policies and the regulatory environment or Palestine's position within the world economic system or globalization process.

Discussing colonialism is not a theme of this thesis; however, to understand how the Palestinian informal economy structure and dynamics have been shaped, it is necessary to address some aspects of the settler-colonial nature of Israel's national project in Palestine. Settler-colonialism is much more ferocious than local capitalism and the world capital economic system. In the Israeli-Palestinian case, colonialism is more ferocious due to its ambition of extending its territorial domination for ideological and political considerations related to the Jewish national home. Over the past years, Israeli settler-colonialism "expropriates Palestinian land and disarticulated the Palestinian economy, making it fully dependent on the Israeli economy" (Farsakh, 2008: 23). Settler-colonialism's excessive regulations and domination, as in the Palestinian case, contributes fundamentally to the informalization of the indigenous economy, in terms of the destruction of the existing economic sectors and arrest its development by restricting the establishment of new business projects³. The Israeli economy formed a capital center for the Palestinian subordinate and dependent economy through subcontracting some of its industrial production processes such as the garment industry, small-scale informal enterprises and home-based workers. In addition, the Palestinian economy was mainly integrated into the global value

chain production through subcontracting with Israeli capital companies, which are part of the central capital economy, which relied on Palestinian daily informal employment or piece rates.

More significantly, through protecting its colonial interests throughout the transformative political, economic and social circumstances of the Palestinian resistance movement, Israel creates a volatile political and economic environment which affects even the informal economy, particularly since the second Intifada. The growth and shrinkage of the Palestinian informal economy was structurally generated as result of the organic settler-colonial nature of the Israeli project in Palestine, and the local and international circumstances. During the first decades of occupation, Israel's ambition to extend its territorial domination led to the expropriation of Palestinian land and imposed a forced proletarianisation process of a large segment of the peasant population. Thus Palestinian proletarianisation was a consequence of Israeli colonial domination over land, people and the economy and not a response to development requirements or urbanization as was the case in many other Third World countries.

Consequently, peasant proletarianisation and the destruction of entire economic sectors, especially agriculture and industry, create a huge rate of unemployment and poverty which form a potential workforce for informal employment. However, Israeli restrictions on the urbanization of the WB and GS and its prohibition of the extension and expansion of Palestinian cities prevented the unemployed peasant from being drawn to the cities and halted the growth of the informal economy which was highlighted by dualist scholars in different regions of Latin America and Africa, or Arab regions such as Egypt. However, during the 1970s and 1980s, Israeli selective integration policies designed to dominate and incorporate the Palestinian economy into the Israeli economy succeeded in partially absorbing this huge army of unskilled peasants, particularly men, most of them informally into the Israeli economy, where they do not enjoy any social protection, or the rights of union membership⁴.

Later, during the nineties and more intensively after the second Intifada, in order to confront the growing Palestinian resistance movement Israel adopted new counter-policies aimed at disengaging from Palestine whilst still maintaining its settler-colonial hegemony on the Palestinian land and economy. Israeli domination took various forms, such as domination by geographic fragmentation and the restriction of freedom of movement. This deprived most Palestinian workers of access to waged employment in the Israeli labour market and forced them to look for alternative jobs in the local economy, which had already collapsed and was unable to accommodate them. Consequently, unemployment and poverty increased as well as the demand on informal economic activities and informal employment, but this demand was within the local economy rather than the Israeli economy.

Even after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, the Israeli settler-colonial structural domination over the Palestinian economy has continued. Further, it plays a vital role in limiting the Palestinian Authority's institutional capacity to design and implement independent development policies as well as issuing and implementing regulations that would encourage informal economic activities, or social protection for informal employment. Israel's domination over the Palestinian economy has also limited Palestine's economic integration into the global system regardless of the positive or negative impact of globalization, and, most significantly, it has imposed a different dynamic and structure onto the informal economy. This left the Palestinian Authority under the dictate of the international donor community and imposed neoliberal policies. However, in spite of all of this, the Palestinian Authority has some impact on certain policies, as well as local regulations, which have affected the growth and shrinkage of the informal economy. It also has the ability to adopt some policies and regulations related to the provision of the minimum social protection of informal employment, whether its employees work in the domestic informal economy, in the Israeli labour market or for the benefit of multinational or transnational companies.

The previous discussion of the theoretical framework shows different views regarding the factors generating the informal economy on the macro level, and adds settler-colonialism as a new theoretical dimension in the Palestinian case. This wider context contributed towards shaping the economic choices of both male and female members of households. Much of the international as well as local research literature points out that women are in a have different position and have a different relationship to the informal economy than men do, and this is likely to affect their empowerment as well as the power relationships within their households, which will be the main focus of the next section.

The Feminist Debate on the Informal Economy

Limited attention was given to gender issues in the writings of early theorists on the informal economy, except for some researchers such as Moser (1978), Safa (1986) and Beneria and Roldan (1987). Recently feminist scholars have become more interested in the global rise of women's contribution to the informal economy and in the feminization of some economic sectors, which is associated with local and global economic restructuring as well as with economic informalization all over the world.

Gender, Development, and the Informal Economy in the 'Third World'

In the past, during the 1950s and 1960s, development theorists and planners ignored and undervalued women's economic contributions in the 'Third World', and the same can be said across the Arab world and in Palestine. They assumed

that the nuclear household is the prevalent model in the “Third World”, a model which implies that the man is the breadwinner for their nuclear household and the women are housewives, with men therefore seen as the agents of development. In general, development theories and policies in the Third World during that period were considered to be seeking to project the Western industrial condition onto very different circumstances in the Third World (Beneria and Roldan, 1987). Since the 1970s and later, literature distinguished three wide development approaches dealing with women’s issues in the ‘Third World’: WID (women in development), WAD (women and development) and GAD (gender and development). These approaches were rooted theoretically in the wider feminist approaches: liberal, Marxist and socialist feminist (Rathgeber, 1990; Abdo, 1995; Moghadam, 1995).

Esther Boserup, in her publication of *Woman’s Role in Economic Development* at the beginning of the 1970s, criticized the liberal development theory of ‘Modernization’ due to its exclusion of women from the development process, and called for the integration of women into economic development. She highlights the universality of the division of labour by sex, and adds that ‘economic development in the Third World has had a differential impact on men and women and that the impact on women often had been negative’ (Beneria and Roldan, 1987:3).

Boserup constituted the base for the neoliberal approach of women in development (WID), which called for integrating women’s in the economic development on equal bases with men including in the labour force. The WID approach stresses the importance of integrating women as beneficiaries into development process plans, particularly in development organization.

Nevertheless, WID was subject to criticisms by some feminists such as Mohanty (1991) and Ong (1988), who consider it to be seeking to impose the vision of white middle-class Western women onto Third World women (Pearson and Jackson, 1998:6). It also focused on describing the role of women as a homogeneous group in the development process without considering the implication of race, class or ethnicity. Furthermore, as a liberal approach it failed to address the sources of women’s oppression and exclusion from development and the origin of differences between men and women that are rooted in the capitalist economic and social structure, as well as in colonialism. This in turn led to the adoption of development strategies which were unable to eliminate inequality between men and women in the development process and benefits (Beneria and Roldan, 1987:7; Beneria and Sen G., 1986; Abdo, 1995).

As a response to the limitation of the WID approach and modernization development theory, in the second half of 1970s there was a shift from the WID approach towards the women and development approach (WAD). This approach emerged and was developed by Third World neo-Marxists including dependency school feminists, scholars and practitioners, in particular the DAWN group (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era). In contrast to

the WID approach, the WAD approach believes that women have been active in the development process, but it highlights the importance of social class and the exploitation of the “Third World” and its dependency on the capitalist world. Therefore, the WAD approach emphasises the importance of changing the international relations and attaining national and class liberation as conditions for ending the subordination of women. However, the WAD approach fails to address the implications of the patriarchal system and women’s oppression, though it values women’s work, both productive and reproductive (Rathgeber, 1990; Moghadam, 1995; Abdo, 1995).

Unlike the two previous approaches, the GAD (gender and development) approach uses a holistic perspective for the different aspects of women’s lives. GAD scholars were more concerned with an analysis of social constructions and relationships (Kabeer, 1994), and the empowerment of women (Moser, 1993). Also, the GAD approach gives more attention to women’s economic roles in areas such as employment, income generation and household budgeting within the macro-economic context, rather than women’s reproductive roles in areas such as health, family planning and education. Moreover, it criticized the policies of the state in making clear that the state does not represent the interests of women, especially poor women (Pearson and Jackson, 1998:5). Beneria and Roldan (1987) suggested that women’s exclusion from development was related to several factors, some of which were connected to patterns of development as well as to gender issues, which may explain why women are concentrated in the informal economy.

Nevertheless, the WID approach, especially efficiency policies, still prevails among the dualist feminists and international development institutions, including the United Nations, the World Bank and USAID as well as the Canadian International Development Agency CIDA. It is the widely accepted approach among these institutions because it does not constitute a challenge to the existing political, social and economic structures. Income-generating projects - particularly micro-credit projects - were at the core of the WID approach to integrate women in the development process in the ‘Third World’, instead of women’s integration in the macro structure of economic development.

In the Palestinian context, some scholars pointed out that since the 1970s and the 1980s, the WID approach was the prevalent development approach in the Palestinian context, and that the WID approach creates ‘more problems than solution for women development’ (Abdo, 1995: 36). Abdo pointed out the women’s informal sector activities attract the attention of the donors, and almost all the women’s organization and committees was involve in these activities, especially during the first two-three years of the Intifada (Abdo, 1995). She pointed out that most of these projects activities put national priorities at the expense of gender priorities and were mainly concerned with ‘promoting

nationalism, national economy, national self-reliance, national resistance' (Abdo, 1995; 39).

Kuttab (1995) agrees with Abdo that international agencies' development strategies do not aim to challenge or change the existing social structures, and ignore the national dimension in the Palestinian context. However, she argues that most of the women's income-generating activities, and especially the cooperative production activities, were driven by political and national goals, instead of the dictates of the international development agencies. These activities were adopted as part of Palestinian national movement as new economic development programs to support Palestinian resistance (Naqib, 1999; Kuttab, 2006; Farsoun and Aruri, 2006). According to Kuttab, grassroots organization development programs contributed in promoting women's integration into the Palestinian economic development process, particularly the cooperative production. International development organizations contribute towards supporting income-generating activities, while few of them are concerned with supporting collective cooperative production, and most of these fall into the category of informal economic activities.

In general, Kuttab (2006) highlighted the fact that a variety of factors contributed to determining the gendered nature of the Palestinian economy, including the informal economy. She writes:

More specifically, not only broad labour trends, and in particular, gender imbalance and occupational segregation must be understood within this colonial framework. The gendered nature of labour markets where women are mostly active in the domestic domain cannot be explained only by reference issues of choice, culture practices and preferences, or features of the economy. Nor can they be understood without looking at the global and regional context where labour trends have undergone drastic changes through globalization (Kuttab, 2006: 236).

However, as mentioned above, the Israeli domination over the Palestinian economy restricted its integration into the global value chain economy, particularly the intensive-industry production where most women are concentrated in the informal economy whether in factories in free zones or in home-based subcontract piece-rate work, with the exception of a few Israeli projects. Palestinian women were much more vulnerable than the men especially since Israeli colonial policies also contributed towards restricting the development of the local industrial and agricultural sectors in which women's employment is preferred. Furthermore Israeli settler-colonial policies and measures reproduce traditional patriarchal ideology and enforce informal labour segregation on a gender basis and sometimes on the basis of women's mobility.

***Palestinian Households in Crisis:
The Informal Economy and Power Relations***

It has been argued that the household acts as a buffer protecting individuals from any sudden shock or rapid political and socioeconomic change (Singerman and Hoodfar, 1996; Hoodfar, 1997). Some studies highlight the crucial role of the household in the Palestinian context primarily due to Israeli colonial-settler policies, especially during the first Intifada in 1987 and the second Intifada in 2000 (Mitchell, 2009; Kuttab, 2006; Taraki, 2006). The deterioration of households' living conditions as well as their resources and security strengthens the ties among the members of those households struggling to face external challenges and to survive. Therefore households are considered a site of protection for their members in the face of these external changes. According to Kuttab (2006), the extended family as an important redistributive mechanism was one of the important safety nets for Palestinian households during the Intifada.

In another aspect, despite the importance of macro political and socioeconomic factors on the lives of the members of the households, that does not diminish the influence of micro level institutions on individuals' choices. In fact, family and household continue to attract the attention of numerous scholars, since the household 'remains the basic social unit around which people conduct their lives' (Pahl, 1984: 13). Family and household play an important role in shaping the individual's choices and decisions, particularly women's choices, such as decisions related to education, work and marriage (Hoodfar, 1997). Therefore, it is difficult to understand men and women's relationship to the informal economy and the development process in general in isolation from an examination of the role of the family and the household. As in other Arab households, Palestinian household members primarily interact with and access wider society, including their local communities, markets and the State, as well as gaining access to resources, through their families and households. Households also reflect the interaction of macro socioeconomic and political structural changes as well as the individual and collective agency of household members (Mitchell, 2009:10).

Overall, studies dealing with the nature of Palestinian households and particularly the power relations between the members of these households are very limited, with the exception of a few recent studies. More importantly, research into how household hierarchies both affect and are affected by women's entrance into the labour market, particularly into informal employment, is virtually absent. One of the few studies of Palestinian households, a report published by the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University, indicates that Palestinian policy-makers and the Palestinian people themselves relied on the assumption of the unity of Palestinian households (Giacaman and Johnson, 2002). This assumption was basically driven by the neo-classical economists' assumptions that the household is a unified unit for pooling income and other resources and for joint consumption and welfare (Becker, 1981). It assumed that household

internal relationships were based on intrinsically democratic and cooperative relationships for the benefit of all members, driven by 'benevolent dictators', who were assumed to be male.

However, on an international level many researchers provided a challenge to neo-classical economists' assumptions, and demonstrated that households are often not unified or egalitarian unities. Sen (1990) described the household as an arena of 'cooperative conflicts', which could also describe the nature and internal dynamics of Palestinian households. During the last decade, a few new studies into Palestinian households launched an analysis of the household as a non-unified unit and of the 'cooperative conflicts' relationships among its members (Taraki, 2006, Giacaman and Johnson, 2002, Mitchell, 2009), but these studies remain a long way from capturing and presenting the whole picture. The relationships of household members to the economy, how these affect and are affected by the household, and their impact on the daily life of the rest of the household remain unexplored areas in Palestinian household studies as well as in gender studies.

In a report published by the Institute of Women's Studies in Birzeit University, Hammami (2002) highlights some aspects of the nature of divisions of labour inside the Palestinian household in general. There were women workers involved in some of these households, but it is not clear from the research in which economy these women worked. However the findings do reveal that these women receive more 'help' from men in the household domestic work. A MA study by Rizq Allāh (2006) at Birzeit University entitled 'Gender Related Power and Authority in the Palestinian Households Mechanism and Causes' addressed the power relationships within the household and factor affecting them, one of these factors was women's paid work in general. The study concludes that women's contribution to the labour market improved their contribution to the management of household resources, as well as decision-making processes, but it did not change the division of labour within the household.

Other scholars mentioned that the common notion in Palestinian society is that men are the main bread winner for their households, while women are the main care-givers for children, the elderly and the sick and are the main people responsible for domestic work. They also demonstrate that gender ideology is widespread in Palestinian society, often undervaluing women's economic contribution to the household, something which is often undervalued even by the women themselves (Giacaman and Johnson, 2002; Kuttāb, 2006; Mitchell, 2009). However, these studies did not investigate the influence of women's involvement in the economy on the different aspects of power relationships within the intra-households and beyond.

Conclusion

The traditional theoretical approaches to informal economy fall short in explaining how the informal economy functions under the conditions of settler-colonialism, where state polices and regulation as well as the country's position within the world economic system are restricted by the settler-colonial domination. This article integrates colonialism as a new key dimension in this area, to understand the complexity of the economy under the structural domination of settler-colonialism as in the Palestinian case. In addition, feminist debate adds gender as a new dimension to the theoretical frameworks of the informal economy. This debate articulates different views of women and men's contribution to the development process in general, and the informal economy in particular, and thus its impact on the intra-household gender and power dynamics.

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Endnotes

- 1 The thesis is entitled "Informal Economy, Gender and Power Relationships within a Settler-Colonial Context: The Case of The Palestinian West Bank Following the Second Intifada". It was submitted to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in Arab and Islamic Studies, August 2011.
- 2 Transitional countries include a wide range of countries at different stages of 'transition' from a planned to a market economy, and with very different cultural and historical backgrounds, including those of the former Soviet Union, and Central and Eastern Europe.
- 3 If we follow the standard definition of the ILO of the informal sector, even in the period of relative economic stability, more than 87 percent of all Palestinian economic establishments would have to be considered informal since they employ less than 5 workers, are based in or near the home, or in mobile locations, and their workers do not include professionals.

4 More than 90 percent of Palestinian workers in Israel and the colonial settlements are men, who are mainly concentrated now in the construction sector, while on average women form around 5 percent of Palestinian workers. According to Portugali (1989), the Israeli labour market was segregated by nationality and gender, where most Palestinian workers were integrated onto the lower step of the jobs ladder

in the Israeli economy with few, if any benefits. Also, the working conditions of the Palestinian labour force in the Israeli market are much worse than those of migrant workers from south Asia. Furthermore, the Israeli government has absolved itself of any responsibility for the social integration of these workers, such as providing housing, health services and other services.

Positioning the “I”-Subject – Reflections on Performance and Knowledge Production During Fieldwork

Berit Angelskår

In this thoughtful intervention, Berit Angelskår, a Ph.D. candidate at Bergen University, explores a critical issue in ethnographic research “in the field”: the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Moving between her relationships as an activist in Palestine and her fieldwork as a doctoral researcher, Angelskar offers a succinct review of the debates in academia and her own solutions in the Palestinian field. In the Birzeit - Berger workshops, graduate students and faculty discussed a range of methodological issues under the one of the main aims of these encounters, strengthening the capabilities of graduate students.

Introduction

Feminist debates in academia from the 1980s onward gave rise to an enhanced reflexivity on the position of the researcher during and after fieldwork (Wolf 1996; Naples 2003). A main concern was how to level out the power relationship between the researcher and the researched. One attempt to overcome this was to give voice and power of representation to the researched as Abu-Lughod (1993) attempted in her ethnography of Awlad ‘Ali Bedouin. Feminists have argued for the importance of building close relationships between the researcher and the researched through qualitative methods (Oakley 1974, Jayaratne 1983; Stanley & Wise 1990), which also paved the way for carrying out activist research (Naples 2003) that emerges in the intersection of academic investigation and political action. Carrying out research through qualitative methods necessitates an ongoing reflexive relation to one’s own position, or relational standpoint (Hartsock 1983, Andermahr et al 1997), in relation to the researched and to the data collected.

A reflexive analysis of one’s own positioning in the field will necessarily place itself somewhere between the personal and the academic. This paper is a reflection of how I position myself in the field as ‘a political activist’ and as ‘a researcher’ when producing knowledge for the purpose of political activism and academic understanding, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). The text

will explore the fluidity between these positions and the way that the one feeds on the other, but the stress will be on how these positions contrast each other.

I base my understanding on Sandra Harding’s (1987) distinction between epistemology as “a theory of knowledge”, where my focus will lie on the production of knowledge; I see methodology as “a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed”; and method as “a technique for... gathering evidence” (Harding 1987:3-4).

Through a methodological reflection of my own positionality and performances as ‘the researcher’ and ‘the activist’, I aim to explore the epistemological implications of the fieldworker’s position, the defined subject issue, and the importance of trust in inter-subjective knowledge production. The paper proposes that it may be important to differentiate between different positions in the process of producing knowledge for different purposes to clarify for the researched to which “I”-subject they are addressing.

The field

I first came to Palestine in 2006 to live and work there for six months as a volunteer in the West Bank. During my stay I established a network of friends and informal contacts. I have been fortunate to be able to sustain some of these relations due to yearly travels to Palestine following this first extended visit.

In 2010 I started my PhD research with a focus on the United Nations Relief and Work agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In my research I have a special focus on female refugee employees in the agency. I conceptualized my doctoral research based on my academic interest in development interventions, armed conflict and globalisation. The choice of field site on the other hand was informed by my political and personal interests in Palestine. As a social anthropologist it was natural to choose extended fieldwork as my method, aiming to participate in social settings, and observe and interview relevant people in their home communities. Without going deeper into the research itself, I move on to the methodological reflections that this text is addressing.

The activist

When I came to Palestine in 2006 as a solidarity worker and political advocate for the Palestinian cause, my mission was somewhat clear: I would monitor checkpoints, accompany people through Israeli controlled agricultural gates, do solidarity work in the refugee camps, attend local non-violent initiatives against the occupation, and carry out advocacy work there and upon return home. Some Palestinians we

met dismissed our efforts as more or less useless with the notion that international visitors come and go and nothing changes. Other Palestinians showed great belief in our efforts to the extent that we felt embarrassed as they told us: “If the world just gets to know our situation they would have to do something.” I met similar attitudes and expectations later on as a researcher as well.

During a discussion on human rights, a Palestinian peace activist told me: “It feels like we are deleted from the list of human beings.” As an advocate for the Palestinian cause in Norway, I hence aimed at counteracting the production of Palestinians as “bare life” (Ophir et al. 2009) that is constructed within the Western Orientalist discourse. I wanted to foster interest and understanding for the Palestinian situation under Israeli occupation. Further down the line, this should also inform my motivation for continuing my engagement with Palestine as an academic.

Being met as a solidarity worker, people tended to talk to me about politics and share stories illustrating the hardships of the occupation. I experienced easy communication with most people, not a few insisted that I drink coffee or tea with them, or invited my colleagues and I for dinner in their homes. As I visited people again, trust started to develop between us and as relations turned into lasting friendships, stories of occupation would be replaced with more personal ones.

The PhD researcher

I was reluctant to turn my friends into subjects of study when I returned to the West Bank in 2010 even if this originally formed a part of my research plan. When I met friends after returning, treating them as subjects of study suddenly seemed unnatural and made me feel uneasy.

I understood my relationships with people from 2006 as built upon acts of reciprocity. They offered me hospitality, friendship and information, and in return I committed myself to promote their cause. Our relations were built on a more or less reciprocal understanding of the subject issue, i.e. the political situation as an unjust condition depriving Palestinians of their rights. Importantly, people I came to know well, showed trust that I would represent them and their situation in a way that would benefit the promotion of their cause in my home country Norway.

For me it became both an ethical as well as an academic dilemma to turn relationships based on equality and reciprocity into the more exploitative relationship where I as a researcher would hold the power of representation. The use of former contacts and friends - both political activists and ordinary people - as informants posed a challenge of trust and informed consent: When do they speak with me as a friend? When do they interact with me as an activist, and

when do they talk to me as a researcher? It was also a matter of how I received the information. Am I able to put their narratives under the same kind of scrutiny as if they had come from somebody else? These problems crystallized as I met with new people who encountered me as ‘the researcher’.

When returning for fieldwork, my expectations was formed by earlier experiences and I thought it likely that after more formal settings people would invite me home. From there it would be possible to build new lasting relationships that would in turn enable me to conduct participant observation. Such relations would spring from a defined researcher – researched relationship. What met me was a different kind of attitude and a different form of hospitality.

I was advised to go through the formal channels of the UNRWA’s bureaucracy to carry out my studies in the field, and after a rather strenuous process, I got a letter that allowed me to conduct interviews with employees. During the many interviews with UNRWA employees, a polite invitation to come by their house was sometimes put forward, but such comments were never followed up by a concrete invitation. Most people I met as a researcher tended to want to meet with me during working hours, and often at their office. I managed to convince most of them to meet with me outside their offices: in my experience, UNRWA employees would talk more openly away from their institutional setting. That being said, interviews generally went well and I obtained a great deal of fruitful data, but my social reality in Palestine was somehow a different one. As a researcher, meetings had to be arranged, appointments with a time and place agreed upon in advance. The informal chats and impulsive invitations hence seemed out of reach, as I was not living close to my any of my former social network.

These experiences made me acutely aware of how my position formed the way people acted towards me. I also became aware how the subject issue was operative in the interviews and in the fieldwork. I noticed that interviewees made their own evaluations of what was relevant for me to know and what they were willing to convey. This also affected the interviewees’ decisions in regard to which people they saw as relevant to introduce me to for further discussion. In this way, not only my position, but also the issued defined as the subject, operated in the knowledge production process. I experienced this as disempowering and as creating an obstacle to my integration into the field. At the same time I realised that the researched perhaps were owed this right to be selective in what to share with a researcher. In one way then, these less close relationships developing through interviews were more balanced and equal than closer relationships where the boundaries between friendship and research, between confidential conversations and data collection, often get blurred.

One illustrative example of how the relationship between the interviewee and myself, the subjects defined, and the issue of trust, played an important role, is an interview that really commenced with a lack of trust. I was to interview a head of an UNRWA girls’ school in the northern part of the West Bank. I was

introduced to the head of the school through a contact of a contact, so she knew nothing about me or about my local network; neither had I brought with me the letter from UNRWA. The interview started with me introducing three main subjects that I wanted us to talk about, and her telling me that she would not talk about the two most interesting of these three. This she explained was because of UNRWA's strict code of conduct and without the letter she could not risk talking about these issues even if I guaranteed her anonymity. During the interview I asked her about her husband and children. As I have perceived this to be a normal and polite topic of conversation with Palestinian women, I was caught off guard once again by her reaction. Before answering my question she wanted to know the relevance of such information for me and for my research. The subject issue had been defined and she clearly signalled that here she drew another boundary for what she wanted to talk about. It also signalled that she was not willing to move outside of the formal relation established between the two positions we performed from: the researcher and the UNRWA employee.

During my fieldwork I became acutely aware of how performance, strategising conversations and the position I took in the field, affected the data I was able to obtain. Building trust was crucial.

One way of overcoming the trust-issue, was to turn to my informal network to put me in contact with relevant people, and to build trust one person at the time. The trust build with one person seemed to inform the trust I am able to obtain with others of his or her network.

My relation with my field assistant "Noor" can highlight some points and dilemmas of trust when the blurring of friendship and research has to be negotiated. I asked Noor from "Mokhayem Refugee Camp" to be my field assistant. I had met her a couple of times through a common friend, and felt that we had rapport. I knew that her English was excellent and that she had an extended network in several camps due to the nature of her work. Noor arranged about a quarter of the interviews during my first fieldwork, and was my translator for several meetings. We became good friends and in conversations we often discussed research-related topics, which shifted into talk about everyday life, to stories from our personal lives, and back to things that could bear relevance for my research.

During my fieldwork, I became more aware about marking when what she told me seemed relevant for my research. A comment that I found myself saying was "oh, this might be interesting for my research," often followed by a question. When this happens it changes the mode of communication, transforming our roles and the interaction between us. As the researcher, I would pose more questions and take less active part in the conversation. My questions tend to be more concerned with details, and will not be informed by a friend's concern and interest in her life as a person close to me. She would answer in accordance to the questions and add information that she think is interesting for me, the researcher, to know. Sometimes she would also ask "Is this interesting for your research?" and

I will explain how and why, and that I would only use it if it was okay for her.

Also here the subject issue becomes operative. I do not feel uneasy with the changing of roles when the topic concerns general events happening in the community, or when Noor tells stories of unnamed families in the camp. The dilemma makes itself relevant when it is her own personal stories that become interesting for me as a researcher. I do not want to transform her into a subject of my scrutiny and in such situations I tend to leave ‘the researcher’ behind, and speak, listen and feel as ‘the friend’.

I do write these stories down with a note to contact her if I find them interesting to use in any analysis that might be published. For me it becomes a matter of accountability for the researched, to allow Noor influence what she want to share with a researcher, what she want to share with as a friend, and would like me to know as an advocate for Palestinian’s rights. Trust is resting on an expectation of loyalty, and the relational trust’s expectations to loyalty becomes a dilemma when the research data obtained was due to the trust established between two friends, and not between a researcher and the researched. To which degree a researcher has to take into account such loyalty in choosing what to write about and how, is also a matter of the subject issue’s cultural and political sensitivity, as well as the position of the persons one is dealing with. “Studying down”, meaning to study disempowered people (Bowman 2009, Shore and Wright 1997), demands greater sensitivity to do no harm, compared to when one is “studying up,” meaning to study people in power (Nader 1969). A way of dealing with this is to keep in mind that the fieldwork does not necessarily end when one leaves the geographical field of inquiry. Communication with subjects in the field may continue during the writing process, enabling the researcher to deal with these dilemmas in continuous dialogue with the people whom the research engages (D’Amico-Samuels 1991, Antonius et al 2007).

When I was introduced through my informal network, the communication tended to take a different form. First, people tended to invite me to come to their home and have the interview there, or to meet at a community centre or a similar local institution. Second, the communication between me and the subjects most often became something in-between an interview and an informal conversation, and in some instances turned into discussions where I became a more active part in the dialogue. The trust built in the relationship between me and the person who introduced me to someone in his or her social network, would inform the relationship between me and the person I interviewed. If I build trust with one person, this trust would hence inform the communication between me and persons belonging to this person’s network.

An example is “Dr. Mitri” and the people he introduced me to in the refugee camp where he lives and runs one of the community’s centres. I came in contact with him through some of the internationals currently working for the organisation I used to work for in 2006. They introduced me to Dr. Mitri who

would become my “gate keeper” in this refugee camp. I went to see him one day, and as soon as the bus driver heard who I was meeting, he exclaimed “Oh, you are to meet Dr. Mitri! I will go and look for him. You wait here.” This first time, we sat down and had a long discussion before he asked his son to show me around in the camp. I contacted him again several months later, to ask if he would be so kind to introduce me to some of the camp leaders and UNRWA employees in the camp. He agreed to this as he phrased it “nice people are kept in my mind so let’s meet.” As I walk through the camp with Dr. Mitri, everybody greeted him, and referred to him with his title Dr. Mitri. When we entered offices or schools, people would make time in their schedule to talk with us as soon as we arrived. I did not perceive any particular suspicion or receive critical questions about my research issue or about my motivations. Based on my experience in interviewing UNRWA staff and local leaders, I contend that I would not have been welcomed in the same manner and gained easy access to people without having a central figure in the camp being willing to spend a whole day introducing me to people and translate when necessary.

My fieldwork hence turned into a parallel process of strategizing. One process went through the formal channels of UNRWA, whilst the other went through my informal network.

The hybrid fieldworker

A premise for this paper is the notion that a fieldworker’s identity is not singular and fixed. Rather, one’s identity embodies several sub-identities – based on specific traits, background and inter-relations - that position the researcher differently in various social situations.

During fieldwork in a society unfamiliar to me, I experienced that my identity was in a greater flux compared to when I acted in my home environment. Who I am, what I wanted, and why, was put under a much greater scrutiny both by my self and by the people I engaged with. Frequently people asked who I was, what I was doing, and why. I felt my identity constantly under negotiation through such questions and through expectations expressed, but also through my own reflexivity and performance during fieldwork.

As a fieldworker, I was my most important methodological instrument. I used my senses to attain data, and my body and language to perform in order to build fruitful relations for inter-subject knowledge production. To a large degree I relied on my likeability, ability to adapt and my ability to be perceived as a serious and trusting researcher. I fully depended on people’s willingness to talk with me, to spend time with me and to introduce me to other people. This was imperative both for my research and for my social life and well-being. To communicate

to people that I had previous living experience from Palestine certainly helped building this trust.

I chose these two positions that I have labelled ‘the activist’ and ‘the researcher’ because they serve to reveal the fluidity and duality of the identity of me as a person performing in the field in an effort to produce knowledge for two aims: for advocacy purposes, and for academic purposes. I as a researcher work to make an academic contribution to a deeper understanding of various social processes as well as to build a career within academia. At the same time I use my research for political ends to speak with greater legitimacy through well-informed arguments in public debates about Palestine. For me it has become a reciprocal commitment to use the knowledge I embody to work for social and political justice of the researched (no matter how futile my efforts might be). However, I also strive to keep these two positions apart.

As a researcher I analyse the stories told as narratives and as subjective experiences that I need to critically understand as spoken to me within a specific social, cultural and political context. I have to take into critical scrutiny how people represent the Palestinian situation in particular ways when talking to foreigners. As an activist on the other hand, I will rather evaluate the usefulness of stories by the rhetorical potential embedded in them as illustrative or evocative stories of the unjust situation. My main point being here, that how we produce knowledge is informed by the aim of that process. In both cases would have to assess whether or not what I am conveying is breaking someone’s trust and accountability, against the relevance for the argument, and possibilities for anonymity.

Finally, I would like to point out that I do not only embody two or three positions, or identities. I have a range of other types of identity traits - such as being a European woman and from a labour family background – that is activated in different ways according to the social situation I engage in. It is therefore interesting to point out that being ‘an activist,’ ‘a researcher’ and external to the community of my fieldwork, positioned me socially outside some of the gendered norms restricting women’s mobility - and from norms of class and age hierarchies – in many settings. I could move among different milieus and among different layers of the population, I could talk to young as well as older people. Even though some of my closest contacts would critically question why I wanted to hang around with certain people - from a certain village or from a particular family - I seldom met with this reluctance if it was for the purpose of work. My role as a PhD researcher allowed me to speak with people of authority whom otherwise might not be interested in talking to a young female. It allowed me to discuss politics with people, and in some cases to be listened to with an interest I did not experience as “just a foreign female visitor.”

Conclusion

This article is not an attempt to put up a case against participatory observation, or against building close relationships with informants. It is rather to question that activist methodology and building close relationships with informants necessarily makes fieldwork-based research less exploitative, and the researched more empowered, as suggested by some feminist writers (Abu-Lughod 1991, Naples 2003).

Many social anthropologists studying different forms of injustice refrain from involving themselves politically to support their informants. I find it important to use my knowledge in the work for justice, but at the same time it has been crucial for me to distinguish between the position of being a researcher, and that of being an advocate for a political cause.

As I have experienced it, I listen, interpret and produce knowledge in different manners as a researcher, compared to as an activist. People speak with me about different issues, and in different ways according to how I position myself. As a large bulk of social anthropological knowledge is produced through the interaction with other people, the inter-relational positioning becomes important. For me, an important aspect of providing the researched with agency in the knowledge producing process, is to make it clear who they speak to, and in what purpose.

This is not to say that the knowledge I acquired as an activist is of no relevance for my research. My first prolonged stay in the field as a solidarity worker equipped me with knowledge about the society, culture and life in Palestine. Much of this knowledge consists of the “things I just know,” and it forms my behaviour in the field, my understanding and my reasoning. This form of more or less habituated knowledge requires distance and reflexion if it is to be formulated into legible data for analysis and deeper understanding. Through such reflexive processes, fieldworkers are able to re-evaluate information, and transform data into legitimate scholarly knowledge. In this process, I believe it is important to differentiate between the aim of transforming society, and the aim of understanding it. For me then, it has become more important to use one’s understanding in advocacy for change outside of the academic framework. As a political activist, gaining legitimacy through my research, I will not argue for ideas I cannot stand for as an academic. I will however carefully choose what to include, and what to leave out. This selective process is a privilege that the activist may use, but that the researcher may not.

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Michelet's Sorceress: The Witch Craze in Europe and the Persecution of Women

Amira Silmi

Amira Silmi, a doctoral student in the Department of Rhetoric at the University of California (Berkeley), analyzes the rise and fall of the woman-witch in the European Middle Ages through a close reading of French historian Jules Michelet's account. In this abbreviated version of her seminar paper, Silmi positions Michelet, writing from his own strong anti-clerical and anti-Church positions, in his own narrative, showing that he both celebrates witches – as revolutionaries, as healers, and as a “priestess of nature” – and views them as turning to witchcraft out of weakness or even madness. While Michelet is able to analyze the dynamics of power in the torture of witches under the Inquisition – and indeed the mania for the same – as the persecution of women, Silmi argues that he is unable to place the fall of witches in its material context as a historical inversion where women's power is eroded in the transformation to capitalist economies.

In his book, *La Sorcière: the Witch of the Middle Ages* (1863), the French historian Jules Michelet combines historical, analytical, and descriptive, even fictional elements to tell the story of the rise and the fall of the woman-witch in the European Middle Ages. However, his account is not confined only to those women called witches, nor to the women of the Middle Ages, it is the story of the abasement of woman, nature and man in the passage from the Late Middle Ages to the Renaissance. However, as I will show this history extends at least to the nineteenth century when he was writing, if not to the present.

Michelet's history of witchcraft is a history of all those who defy the Church's anti-nature, anti-science and anti-women principles, with women as the embodiment of defiance and thus the the main object of persecution. Michelet, a committed anti-cleric (and anti-monarch), vacillates between praising and condemning the woman-witch, depending on which position supports his antagonism to the Church as his Devil.

The Goddess of Nature

Michelet commences his book by declaring that women are witches by nature, that witchcraft is peculiar to women, it is the “regular recurrence of her ecstasy” (1863:1) that makes her a “sibyl”. It is not only “women’s nature” in Michelet, that makes a woman a witch, but it is a trait that women derive from culture; the division of labor between women and men allows for women to become witches; men are busy with the material world of war and hunting, while women are occupied by both their imagination and nature,

Michelet criticizes the stereotype developed since the late Middle Ages and continuing in the Renaissance about the witch as an “old, ugly woman”; He gives the witch, his heroine, the opposite image, it is actually because of their beauty that huge numbers of witches perished. Michelet here, is challenging the prevalent conceptions of beauty and ugliness, and even of young and old as parts of a value system that worked to abase the woman witch and elevate all that was made to be her antithesis. Michelet writes;

“she must be at least thirty years old, with the form of a Medea, with the beauty that comes of pain; an eye deep, tragic, lit up by a feverish fire, with great serpent tresses waving at their will: I refer to the torrent of her black untamable hair. On her head, perhaps, you may see the crown of vervain, the ivy of the tomb, the violets of death.”(151)

The Danger of Witches

The Witch at first in Michelet is an unalienated being, where soul and body are not opposed. She is the revolutionary who challenges what the Church and the priests stand for; it is no coincidence then that the priest saw in the witch a rival, she is a “priestess of nature” who conceives gods from gods; but for the priest it is Satan that he sees within her. (4) The Church’s hatred of the witches is an expression of this rejection of life and nature, “Consult the earliest Christian records, and in every line you may read the hope, that nature is about to vanish, life to be extinguished; that the end of the world, in short, is very near.”(19)

Michelet tells us that what the Devil gave the woman-witch was not a fantasy, despite the fact that it is true that the Devil’s arguments were charming and irresistible but that did not make them less real. “He put into her hands the fruits of science and of nature.” (1863:109) It is Satan, the Devil of the Church, that allows the witch to benefit from the treasures of nature: animals, plants “and a host of herbs all-powerful to relieve the heart, to soothe and lighten

our sufferings.”(ibid) Michelet problematizes the notion of the Devil in his reference to the influence of Muslims in fourteenth-century Spain; attributing the prosperity of the land to “the Mussulman, children of the Devil,” (1863:110) who in their agriculture work with nature without perceiving it as an enemy that needs to be controlled else it controls them. These children of the Devil are then contrasted to men of science who seeking nature’s secrets through their lustful intellect, lack “flexibility and popular power.” (1863:112) It is to women then that Satan gives the secrets of nature, for “The woman is still the most natural thing in the world.” (111)

But when Michelet’s account of Witchcraft moves into the late Middle Ages, he vacillates between this enabling notion of women as witches to an account of superstition that overtakes the weak in their weakness. But this is not all; it is also modern Western’s man ambivalence towards nature itself that could be the cause of the ambiguity we see in Michelet’s account. Witches power is thus described by Michelet as power from nature against nature. It is the power of the women, of the Devil who gives it to them. The Devil himself in Michelet shifts from the Church’s Devil, its antagonist, to the Devil who seduces witches stripping them of power while promising it to them, becoming another Church, as we will discuss below.

Witches’ Knowledge, Witches’ Power

Michelet differentiates between women and men’s ways of knowing, asserting that women seek practical knowledge. For women-witches to understand the human body; they “would bring out a corpse stolen from the neighbouring cemetery, at risk of being burned.”(15) Those men on the other hand, do not do anatomy; they bury the bodies and look for answers about living beings in the heavens or in the stars. Women cannot control their passion of seeing and knowing, as Michelet tells us, and this constitutes their danger to men.

The witch was “the only physician of the people for a thousand years;” It was this ability to heal, “this convict university of witches, shepherds, and headsmen,” that “emboldened the other rival to study”, forcing the Church to avow its belief in “good poison” and to allow public dissection. (16) But Men entering the field of science saw in women-witches their rivals, discrediting and demonizing them, with support from the Church. In the fourteenth century the Church proclaimed, that any woman who dared to heal others - without having duly studied -, was a witch and should therefore die.” (16)

When the terrible diseases, leprosy, epilepsy and then syphilis (116), hit Europe in the late Middle Ages, Arabs and Jews using medicine were not allowed to compete with the Church in treating the illnesses; they only gave treatment to

the kings. As for the people they were told that their sickness was an expression of their sins, they had to be thankful for it since it meant less suffering in the afterlife. In addition to the advice, the Church gave them holy water as its medicine. (117) While the Church condemned the poor to death, the witch offered treatment but at "a heavy risk for the Witch", (149) as she was dealing with poison, herbs that could cure as well as harm and kill. And many times she did pay the price for failing. But It was not only when they failed that they were persecuted and attacked. Michelet shows how her medical practice made her the enemy not only of the Church and men of science. but also the political authority, particularly when witches gave healing potions to lepers. It is no coincidence then that "After 1300 her medical knowledge is condemned as baleful, her remedies are proscribed as if they were poisons." (149) Although it was the lepers who were sacrificed this time, but the witches would face the same fate centuries later, when and where there are no lepers, Jews or Muslims to carry the burden of the disasters falling over the community.

The Creation of the Witch: Desire and Sin

For Michelet, it is the Church, the Inquisition and the writings of the theologians that created the witch: "The Witch is a crime of their own achieving." (9) What does it mean for Michelet to say that witchcraft is the Church's achievement?

The challenges the witches posited shaped the inquisitorial discourse on the witch and her Devil. This discourse, as Michelet shows, circulated through the hand books on witches, dissemination of stories of them, but most importantly through the practices and procedures of confession, torture and burning. The Church drew on its long-standing demonization of women as temptresses in its condemnation of witches.:

The Church associated women with sex and sexual pleasure, a pleasure condemned because it could only come from the devil. Witches were supposed to have gotten pleasure from copulation with devil (despite the icy-cold organ he was reputed to possess) and they in turn infected men. Lust in either man or wife, then, was, blamed on the female. On the other hand, witches were accused of making men impotent and of causing their penises to disappear. As for female sexuality, witches are accused, in effect, of giving contraceptive aid and of performing abortions. (Ehrenreich and English 1973: 9)

Associating women with evil and heresy together was done by turning their powers against them; what is seen as the good power of the witch is turned into

her bad demonic power. The main attribute and source of power of the witches is the power of granting fertility. “They had therefore also the opposite power, that of blasting fertility.” (Murray 1952: 128) Despite the truth or falsity of these attributions of power, this emphasis on women’s fertility and sexuality in the inquisitorial records is an expression of the Church’s desire to control the sexuality of its members.

The Spectacle of Torture: Stripping of Power

The witch, like the heretic should be burnt, but before that her soul needs to be purged: the pride gained through possession should be taken away from her. Torture of witches then is a disciplinary procedure, one that aims at creating the disciplined humiliated subject. The message of the spectacle of torture is that witchcraft is not a source of power, but of weakness and suffering. The witch is then turned from the queen of her village into the wretched, pathetic, old and ugly women who deserved her fate.

Michelet describes the process in painful detail: first are the accusations, frequently from children, but also anyone who wanted to take revenge or target someone despised or envied – or even an object of guilt, such as neglected old poor women. The clergy themselves may also accuse, when seeking to confiscate whatever those accused possessed. (Michelet 1863; Barstow 1994) Then there is the need for witnesses:

“Begin by using torture against the witnesses; create witnesses for the prosecution by means of pain and terror; then, by dint of excessive kindness, draw from the accused a certain avowal, and believe that avowal in the teeth of proven facts.” (199)

A humiliating body search for “marks of the Devil” follows. Michelet described this search by the priest and his the “noble duel between the Physician and the Devil, [the] battle of light and knowledge with the dark shades of falsehood.” (275) it is here in the trial that the doctor triumphs over woman-witch,

The trial in one stroke established the male physician on a moral and intellectual plane vastly above the female healer he was called to judge. It placed him on the side of God and Law, a professional on par with lawyers and theologians, while it placed her on the side of darkness, evil and magic. He owed his new status not to medical or scientific achievements of his own, but to the Church and State he served so well. Ehrenreich (1973:17)

According to Russell, torture “played an enormous role in the development of witchcraft from the thirteenth century onward” (1972: 152); the Inquisitorial procedure tortured the witches as if he was fighting the battle with Devil and not with a woman. In her description of the torture scene, Clément argues that the two women of Christianity, the witch- woman and the Virgin woman, in the spectacle of torture are displayed as one, split into two, the tamed woman:

Altogether, it gives the impression that lions are beings enchained. But as soon as the demon appears, they untie the girls and let them completely free, so that they are bound as girls and released as demons” (The Possession of Loudoun, 132) letter from the English writer Killigrew). Women’s bodies must be bound so that the constraints will make the demons come out; then, when the spectators have gathered in a circle, when the lions have come into the ring, they let go the pleasure of danger, the raging beauty of wild beasts in constrained freedom, of the violent demoniacal forces gripping the women; but no, they are no longer women, no longer girls. The female body served only as intermediary, prop, passage. Passage accomplished, that which is no longer woman but beast, devil, symptom is set free. The girls are not released, the girls are bound. (Clément 1975:11)

But the bound girl is not the Virgin, nor can another woman be the Virgin, a woman who saves another is a witch. According to Clément, when Father Lactance, the exorcist of Loudoun steps on the women witch’s body to force the Devil out of her, *he* becomes The Virgin, for it is “Mary, the virgin, who “normally” must walk on the serpent, one woman redeeming the other. There is no question of man in this reversal. And yet here is the exorcist putting himself in Virgin Mary’s position, showing her virile side, her repressive function. Virgin and inquisitor trample on the woman-beast, the woman –desire.” (1975: 15)

The “witch” then confesses: she killed children, women in childbirth, poisoned animals, and caused pain and suffering to others; and brought on storms that destroyed the harvest. (Barstow 1994: 17).. (51)

According to Barstow, these confessions could be an internalization of the discourse that described the witches and defined their characteristics. Torture created the witch. the woman under torture condemns herself, and the women in the crowd condemns her and feels her guilt in her, with the consequences that: “The new cult of individualism that cultural historians write about in connection with the sixteenth century was based not only on capitalistic competition or Renaissance idealism, it was in the case of women, based on fear. In the lands of witch hunts, women came to fear one another, for their lives.” (Barstow 1994:

157) The accused woman stands in opposition to herself; she is forced into the modern Western Self. The conversion of the woman is achieved, she is the *guilty* witch resentful of herself and her sex.

Michelet now argues that these women suffer from sickness; what should have been done is to cure those wretched people who became the play thing of the Devil. The witches, his great physicians when physicians were nonexistent, are now the sick: "Most of them were sufferers under the sway of an illusion." (202) They had to be the sick, it is a new time now, things are changed; the witch is now the creation of the Church. Michelet, as much as he gave us an account of the powerful woman, the witch, the sibyl, he also gave us an account of the weak woman, the same woman but within an inverted value system, whose desires, material and sexual, made her the Devil's subordinate, she as Clément (1975) stated, is the mother of Freud's hysteric.

The Witch, the Woman, the Sick

Michelet begins by rejecting the account of the theologians that witches as women, are weak and unable to resist temptation. But his account is a version of that theological account of another weakness of women that leads to their fall. According to him, it is the social conditions that prevailed at the time that led to the "witch". The wretchedness and hunger of the day, the poverty and dissolution of the family in its traditional form as a support system, may have tempted them "to call upon the Evil Spirit;" but that would make no witch for Michelet, calling up Satan does not mean that "he accepted them." For women to become the "witch" - those who we see in the inquisition records - they have to learn to "hate God." (10)

This cultural deterioration correlates with the decline of the material everyday life of the people in the Middle Ages; where men were unable to protect and defend themselves, their family and property and thus felt the need for protection. (38) The uncertainty of life in the period "the frightfully slippery descent by which the freeman becomes a vassal, the vassal a servant, and the servant a serf, in these things lie the great terror of the Middle Ages;" (41) are left helpless and their helplessness is exploited, those who try to find another way out become aliens, witches and heretics whose death can be cast another protective procedure of the Church in its defense of the community. (42) The remaining men were turned into a cowardly herd, unable to protect themselves or their families.

Women looked for the help of spirits to rescue their husbands, families, or community from the harsh situation in which they found themselves. But she is "a debased woman" who seeks a power through the spirits. (44) Now Michelet tells us the story of the witch as the story of regression, of falling back to an

ancient past; “the sorceress, who in the end is able to dream Nature and therefore conceive it, incarnates the reinscription of the traces of paganism that triumphant Christianity repressed.” (Clément 1975: 5) We are back to the life of the forest, a primitive one that leads back not only to primitive ways of life, but to primitive ways of thinking, to a primitive religion: here starts the story of the woman who regresses to her primitive God, she sells herself to the Devil. She is alone, no neighbors, yearning for love, “has no friend but her own reflections; she converses only with her beasts or the tree in the forest.” (Michelet 1863: 46) Her loneliness brings back the stories about spirits; stories she heard from her mother and grandmother; a religion that had no little power in the blustering hurly-burly of a great common dwelling house, but now comes back again to haunt the lonely cabin.” (ibid) The woman, in Michelet’s account does not only relapse to primitivism, she also relapses to childhood. Michelet’s account of the witches, now, takes the typical modernist form, witchcraft and all that is associated with it was a sickness, both a social, moral and physical sickness. Women’s weakness becomes again the key to understanding witchcraft and their involvement in it: women’s lack of vital strength because of poor nutrition becomes the cause of “the epileptic dances of the fourteenth century;” it is also the cause of “night somnambulism; in the daytime seeing of visions, trance, and the gift of tears.” (50)

It is, according to Michelet, the injustice and ill-treatment that those women and their families had to endure with their helplessness and lack of resources that lead them to take revenge through witchcraft. The woman looks for “some spirit, great, strong, and mighty,” (66) to help her. She is the “evil” one who would push her husband to be harsh, tough and uncompassionate towards other peasants, else they- she and her husband- will be the ones to suffer. She gets her hardiness from the Devil; it is the Devil who comes to her help, as her servant in the beginning but then she becomes subordinated to him.

Michelet in his gradual condemnation of the witch now introduces her as another kind of priest: her pact with the Devil is just like the priests’ defense of religion. Indeed, Michelet calls witchcraft a kind of priesthood (70) She herself, like the great lady in the castle, becomes the queen of her village which loathes her while at the same time being proud of her. She even gains beauty, “a dreadful, a fantastic beauty, killing in its pride and pain. The Demon himself is in her eyes.” (78) But Michelet questions this power, for him it is the same as the power of the priest, it is a power that necessitates surrendering oneself to another master, this time the Devil instead of God. Just as in the Christian church, she receives at once the three sacraments, in reverse order-baptism, priesthood, and marriage. In this new Church, the exact opposite of the other, “everything must be done the wrong way.” (92) It is not power that the pact with Devil gives the woman-witch but the ability to take revenge.

The Church and its clergy called women witches, and described them as “filthy,

indecent, shameless, immoral.”(129). If witch-women were revolutionary when Michelet began his story, rejecting the church’s notions of the “good woman”, they now became part of the same system by embracing the logic of the Church, the logic of power. In this way Michelet allows himself to take on the position of the Church in condemning the witches, while accusing them of being the priest-Devil. According to Michelet women-witches challenged the Church’s attack on women by affirming the witch in themselves and rejected the image of women as Virgin drawn by the priests of the Church, for the Virgin “was not an elevation of women as much as a way to abase women” (129) But, Michelet now embraces the opposite image of the woman, the woman whose ally is the Devil, was not really revolutionary but the flipside of the coin. The witch, thus becomes “that monster who deals with everything the wrong way, exactly contrariwise to that of the holier people.” (130) And just like the priest of the Church, on whose logic her act was based; the witch abused her power, her ability to do good, meant also she could do ill and she did. (131) Here Michelet completes his transformation into the priest he spent a whole book disparaging.

The vacillation in Michelet’s account of the witches is clearly now not a vacillation: it is a definite position against the power of the Church, rather than its positions in relation to women, the poor or those he described as weak, for he just embraced much of it; his position is a position against the power of the Church, a position that seeks the same power that it criticizes. His defense of the witch is his desire to condemn, if not the Church, then its clergy. And it is in this same desire that he stresses the weakness of the herd which he inherited centuries later: that the dreadful character of the Witch and her pact with the devil was a result of a growing despair resulting from the harsh circumstances that prevailed in the late Middle Ages; for Michelet, whatever, “evil” things that those women did “were not caused, ... by human fickleness, by the inconstancy of our fallen nature, by the chance persuasions of desire. There was needed the deadly pressure of an age of iron, of cruel needs: it was needful that Hell itself should seem a shelter, an asylum, by contrast with the hell below.” (70)

Changing Discourses: From Witch to Hysteric

Michelet inherits then the discourse of the woman driven by weakness, but her weakness is not some theological weakness that has to do with sin and guilt: women’s weakness is a sickness, the physio-psychological (hysterical) condition of the witch: “You feel in yourself a double life; you trace the monster’s movements, now boisterous, anon soft and waving, and therein the more troublesome, as making you fancy yourself on the sea. Then you rush off in wild dismay, terrified at yourself, longing to escape, to die.” (77) The woman possessed is tortured by

the Devil - desire - that possesses her, he wants complete control of her; she is still herself, not completely surrendered: "He places a coal of fire on her breast, or within her bowels. She jumps and writhes, but still says, "No," (78) Is it desire that is burning her, a yearning for love in Michelet's terms, or hysterical pains fueled by some uterus disturbances; or anxieties about her life and her husband's, in more Freudian terms?

Michelet's anti-Christian stance seems to be limited to the Church, although it may be extended to the nobility and the monarchy, to a past that he desires to repress. But how anti-Christian was he? The revolutionary Romantic historian who reproached the Renaissance poets for portraying the witch as ugly, the one who saw beauty in Medea, is secure enough now to establish her as ugly, the Church is gone, the witch needs to go as well.

Michelet tells us that after the famine and the Black Plague of the fourteenth century and then in the fifteenth, the image of the witch changes, she is born from the Black Mass, the witch becomes malignant, "This woman is quite the reverse of the other... There is nothing of the Titan about her, to be sure. Far from that, she is naturally base; lewd from her cradle and full of evil daintinesses." (168) Satan is not even her master anymore; her only relish is "for all things material." (ibid) Here, Michelet echoes the Church in his description: "She is dangerous in two ways: on the one hand by selling receipts for barrenness, and even for abortion; while on the other, her headlong libertine fancy leads her to compass a woman's fall with her cursed potions, to triumph in the wicked deeds of love." (169)

The witch is no longer needed, her services, her ability to help men, save them and their business is no longer desired, she then becomes in Michelet's account the lustful, corrupting and murderous Medea, not the one by whom Michelet was enchanted but her opposite. This Michelet does not say directly but in an implicit way when he tells us that

"The business improves, and men are mingled in it. Witches retain somewhat of the Sibyl. Those other frowsy charlatans, those clownish jugglers, molecatchers, ratkillers, who throw spells over beasts, who sell secrets which they have not, defiled these times with the stench of a dismal black smoke, of fear and foolery."(170)

Let us take a look at what Michelet, in his condemnation of the witch as the creation of the Church missed: the economic developments towards capitalism that required that women be removed from the market, the sweeping industries that left no place for women's employment, the changes in the family from extended to nuclear, leaving old women behind with no social or economic role to play, the immigration of young men and the ever increasing poverty of the poor and the growing wealth of the rich. That the all knowing, complete woman-

witch, cannot fit in an age where specialization and division of labor is the main feature. (Barstow 1994) The slippery descent that he described in the Middle Ages continued into the Renaissance and Enlightenment; they were not, just like the witch, the creation of the Church. It is just as Murray, quoting Sir Thomas More about the devastating effects industry had on men, put it, "The sheep have eaten up the men". (1952: 54); but she also paraphrases him "The sheep ate up the fairies." (55)

This Michelet is unwilling to recognize, in his account women now become witches not out of necessity, not as an act of saving those oppressed by the Church and the nobility; those do not need her anymore. In a move very similar to that for which he criticized the Church, Michelet condemns both the Church and the woman-witch, The witch now is the lady of the castle suffering ennui, boredom and longing for freedom a savage freedom, It is now priests who give magic potions to young women to seduce them, they open up old wounds in their bodies as signs of their pacts with Devil; they use amulets when making love to them to prevent pregnancy, the priest becomes the witch, the Devil who has mastery over the woman. (281) The woman, victim of rape by the priest, is now the hysteric.

It is no coincidence that the last story of the woman condemned to the stake in his book was of a young woman, The Virgin image of woman, the poet's heroine for whom Michelet reproached him, is his heroine now, she has nothing to do with nature or the material world, "she had no accurate knowledge of sensual things, foreseeing naught in such a mystery save pains and torments of the Devil." (323) The Devil referred to here is the priest who corrupted her, but that is not all, she is also betrayed by women who were lustful, jealous and seduced by the same priest (Devil). Michelet seems just another Inquisitor, not a medieval one, but a modern one; one who can demonize the Church and hold holy the woman who challenged it, but only as long as the Church exercised its dominion. But he is also the man the husband who betrayed his witch wife when her services are no longer needed, for Michelet there was no need for the witch-woman after the Renaissance. If she still exists, then she is the hysteric and the mad house, the psychiatric hospital, is the new stake to which he sends her. This inversion that the story of the witch underwent is not Michelet's inversion, it is the inversion brought about by History in which Western women lost all power, but Michelet, the Western historian, is as implicated in this history as was any writer of his time.

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