White Oil,

Excavations and the Disappearance

JUDY PRICE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the

University of Brighton for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed:

Dated: 10 September 2014

THESIS TITLE

White Oil, Excavations and the Disappearance of the West Bank

Research Question

How can the specific properties of artist moving image and the processes of making and viewing the moving image produce ways of thinking differently about sites of intensive geopolitical struggle, making visible the multiple layers of representation, economy, society, history and subjectivity?

Abstract

The research project considers how the processes of artistic production and their modes of reception can transform our understanding of the geopolitical and spatial relations of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It does this through a study of the extraction and exploitation of stone from the quarries in the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank. It uses film to speak directly about the intimate lived experiences of people caught up in the neocolonial struggles of this region, the technologies of industrial production, the reproduction of everyday life and the production of the moving image.

This research explores how these dynamics can be brought together to produce new meanings, and examines the role of the artist in that process as filmmaker, activist, ethnographer and friend. In doing so the single screen film *White Oil* engages with a number of genres: photography, documentary, the cinematic, fiction and testimony, with ethnographic methodologies playing an important role in addressing the way in which the quarries are not just industrial spaces in which labour and the extraction of raw material take place, but lived spaces.

The combination of film and research methodologies also enables this project to show how the quarries are not only spaces of exploitation but also rich paradigmatic and metaphorical spaces of sedimentation, excavation and transformation. These dynamics are as subjective as they are industrial, as 'worlds', politics, affects and human relations are all played out in these moving images that in turn are able to speak back to, or ask further questions of, the history of filmmaking in which this project is implicated.

This thesis is the result of an ongoing process of discovery and reflection, where scholarly research has unfolded in tandem with film production. The relationship between the two has been variable; each taking it in turn to challenge, advanced support each other. At times they have been indistinguishable, at other times their distinctions have defined their contribution where a number of disciplines from ethnography, sociology, philosophy, aesthetics and film have been embraced.

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Acknowledgements

My experience of making artist moving image in Palestine has emerged over three decades of visiting the region in different guises. For the last ten years I have focused solely on working within the Palestinian community. Although my research has taken place within the framework of a PhD at the University of the Creative Arts, the support and framework of other institutions, activist groups and residency programmes have been instrumental. Particularly the support of the International Academy of Art, Palestine in Ramallah (IAAP), where I have been a visiting lecturer; the University of Brighton; Air Residency, Bergen, Norway; Al-Quds Center for Civil & Environmental Engineering Studies; Workers Advice Center (WAC Ma'an); Marble and Stone Centre, Hebron; Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions/PGFTU; and Jews for Justice for Palestinians (jfjfp).

A special thanks to my supervisors Kerstin Mey, Conor Kelly and Ori Gersht for their long-term commitment to this research and their insights, without which this research would have not been realised. Thanks also to the critical women's art group that I have been part of for over thirteen years and who provided a forum to discuss the film material at early stages: Jananne Al-Ani, Effie Paleologou, Anne Jones, Carey Young, Melanie Manchot, Wiebke Leister, Frances Kearny, Vanda Playford and Bettina Von-Zwehl.

Gift Economy

White Oil was also made possible through the generosity and in-kind support of all involved in the production of this research project, and has been almost entirely reliant on 'gift economy'. Gift giving is as much part of the struggle for existence and co-existence in the world as any other social behaviour, and is often based on political solidarity with a particular subject or context to which an individual wishes to contribute. In *White Oil*, those coming forward offered their time and expertise as a political act as a matter of urgency to make visible the issues at stake around the quarries. Gift economy has also been profoundly important in the creation of networks and new relationships.

Abbreviations

IAAP:	International Academy of Art, Palestine
PA:	Palestinian Authority
OPT:	Occupied Palestinian Territories
BBrothers:	Birzeit Brothers
IDF:	Israel Defense Force
IOF:	Israel Occupation Force
PCI:	Palestinian Citizen of Israel
PFPL:	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

Dramatis Personae

Ramzi Safid:	Security Guard at Rafat Quarry, Ramallah, West Bank and narrator in *White Oil*.
Birzeit Brothers:	Referred to as the BBrothers throughout this thesis, the Alshalaldaha Brothers and their associates own and work a small quarry in Birzeit on the outskirts of Ramallah.
Brother 1:	Basem Alshalaldaha
Brother 2:	Gassan Alshalaldaha
Brother 3:	Samir Alshalaldaha
Brother 4:	Mohamad Alshalaldaha
Ala Halailah:	Works for the brothers
Ahmed Ebiat:	Young security guard who works for a wealthy quarry owner in Birzeit called Babour and spends time with the Birzeit Brothers.

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INTRODUCTION

My Background

My association with Palestine stems from over twelve years of political activism with Jews for Justice for Palestine and was provoked by a great number of things. In the late 1980s I lived in Israel on a kibbutz, where I thought I was partaking in a socialist community. After six months it became obvious to me that this 'socialist' project was in fact a project of exclusion and adhered to a Zionist ideology. Ten years later, in 1999, my involvement in Palestine was crystallised and fast tracked forward by seeing Arna's Children (2003), a film by Juliano Mer-Khamis. Mer-Khamis was a Jewish Palestinian director and actor who was tragically assassinated in 2011.[1] Arna's Children traces the lives of young boys who had participated in the Jenin Freedom Theatre. Founded by Mer-Khamis's mother, Arna Mer-Khamis, the theatre taught children to express themselves through art. (Arna Mer-Khamis was a Jewish Israeli activist against the Occupation). Arna's Children exposes how the lives of the young boys are affected by the oppressive conditions and their experience of living under Occupation. Many of these boys in their later years became militants and martyrs as they witnessed ongoing military incursions, confiscation of their land and loss of their loved ones in their city Jenin. The film is shot over a ten-year period and is also a complex portrait of Arna, an older women dying of cancer.

My first visit to the OPT was in 2004, when I accompanied the British Iraqi artist Jananne Al Ani as cinematographer, on her initial research trip to Palestine, under the auspices of her residency at the Al Mammal Foundation. Al Ani and I had discussed the importance of visiting the West Bank, a visit which was made in the wake of the second Intifada. The situation on the ground was very different from today. Due to checkpoints and military incursions, it took us six to eight hours to make a journey that previously would have taken one hour. Continuing to visit Palestine and Israel between

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[1] It has still to be revealed who was responsible for Juliano Mer-Khamis's assassination and Israel has refused investigations by the Palestinian Authority, raising suspicions about Israel's involvement in his death. Juliano was an important figure in Palestinian cultural and political life and there were mourning processions all over the OPT in April 2011 to honour his life's work and commitment to justice.

2004 and 2008, I made a body of moving image work, *Within this Narrow Strip of Land*, filmed in a number of locations in Israel and the Palestinian territories, including a vestige of the British Mandate, St John's Eye Hospital in East Jerusalem, as well as working with archival material related to the British Mandate.[2] In 2008 I exhibited part of the work, as well as curating a programme of archival film material around the British Mandate in Palestine, for the Al Mammal Foundation as part of the Jerusalem Show, an exhibition of Palestinian and international artists around the Old City of Jerusalem. This experience was pivotal in cementing my relationship with Palestine. It was here that I first met the director of the International Academy of Art, Palestine in Ramallah (IAAP) and was invited to teach on the BA programme in 2008. The IAAP is an institution that I am still very much involved in, both through teaching and through number of exchange programmes that I have initiated with UK Universities.

The IAAP has been essential in supporting this research. I discussed the research with both students and staff, and they were instrumental in helping me build relations with the locality and particularly my co-participants, the people working in the quarries. The local knowledge of the staff and students gave me an important foundation in understanding the complexities of Palestinian society and how best to approach people. A number of students who assisted in the recording of sound, interviews and translation at the quarries were credited with points towards their BA, and their input not only directly benefited this research project but was also used as a teaching resource in fieldwork experience.

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[2] From 2005–2007 I was artist in residence at the London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC) researching film material related to Jewish history that had been accumulated as secondary material (DVDs and video cassettes), and housed and catalogued at the LJCC. My focus was in searching out material related specifically to the British Mandate period in Palestine, before the establishment of the State of Israel. During my residency I attempted to enter into a dialogue with the staff at the LJCC about the circumstances in which the State of Israel was founded and the effects of the Occupation on the West Bank. My attempts were met with suspicion and aggression. After two years of working in a very compromising and difficult environment, with the attempted censorship of my work by the LJCC, I eventually moved my research to the Imperial War Museum where I had access to primary archival material. In 2007 I was invited by the British Council to curate a programme of archival film material related to the British Mandate in Palestine to be shown in Israel and to mark the 60th anniversary of the state. My condition was that the screenings were accompanied by panel discussions and acknowledged and engaged with the Naqba. However, due to an email released publically without my consent by an invited panellist (who had refused to take part in the programme in view of a total boycott of Israel), in regard to my political views a few weeks prior to the screenings, the British Council restricted my participation in the panel discussion and introducing the programme in Israel.

Living and working in Ramallah, and clearly in opposition to the Occupation and in solidarity with Palestine, I was able to form very meaningful and intimate relationships with Palestinians. Dr. Saleh Hamayel, a professor of history and political science at Birzeit University, and one of the founders of the Shat-ha Ramallah walking group that I joined every Friday morning to go walking in the West Bank, commented on our first meetings, 'I understand why you are here in Palestine – being Jewish from the Diaspora you are also part of the conflict.'[3] When I first started teaching at the IAAP in 2008, the students' level of engagement and openness shifted considerably, in a positive sense, when they learnt that I was Jewish.

My family fled persecution from the anti-Semitism that was rife in Lithuania in the early part of the twentieth century, and they were subsequently forced to take asylum in the USA and South Africa. My mother grew up under the Apartheid regime in South Africa, leaving in 1963 to take self-imposed exile. Her intention had been to immigrate to Israel, but on her travels to the UK she met my non-Jewish British father. Raised as a secular Jew and of mixed-heritage, I claim a secular and cultural Jewish identity. Like the Jewish writer and political theorist Judith Butler, I was taught that it is 'ethically imperative to speak up' by my Jewish mother and non-Jewish father.[4] There is no doubt that in terms of the injustices of racism, persecution of the 'other' and colonial practices, both intellectually and emotionally, Palestine is a place in which all of these forces are still in operation, and I find myself equipped as an artist, teacher and activist to engage with these. This research seeks to make visible as well as challenge the imposing and oppressive global, colonial and economic forces that have come to shape our world, changing the very fabric of communities and landscapes in the most devastating ways.

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[3] Notes from my diary.
[4] Udi Aloni, 'Judith Butler: As a Jew, I was taught it was ethically imperative to speak up', *Haaretz*, 24 February 2010.

Methodologies

My methods are drawn from observational cinema, visual ethnology (participant observation), post-structuralist geography, photography, documentary and the neo-realist aesthetics of delay, all of which are woven throughout this thesis. These methodologies respond to and stimulate each other in order to produce that which lies elusively yet evidently within the grasp of the artist as researcher, collaborator, filmmaker and producer of meaning. In doing so I explore the relationships between artist and ethnographer, participants and filmmaker, and the ethical encounters and problematics that arise through the process of filmmaking in a place such as Palestine. I reveal what is at stake for individuals and interpersonal relations in the context of production and the various levels of commitment, engagement and risk for all parties involved. The co-participants and myself (the filmmaker), as political agents, are at the core of the research where the relations between conditions of labour, bare life, the environment, economy and power are brought into confluence.

The geopolitical, social, economic and physical life in the OPT has its own speed, to which the artist cannot but in part submit. This submission and the tension it generates is perhaps the clearest insight that living in the territory, rather than objectifying it, can provide.

Drawing on observational cinema, visual ethnology and dialogical aesthetics my method has been to form subjective and intimate encounters with the quarries, their locality and the geopolitical and spatial relations of the West Bank. Spending time in these spaces, through repeated visits and building relationships with my co-participants over a three-year period, with an emphasis on listening has been absolutely vital to the project in which knowledge unfolds. Filming over a period of time has also been essential for the filmed material to live on in my imagination as a means of discerning the emerging themes and allowing them to become a catalyst for further decisions.

Derek Gregory's work exemplifies the value of post-structuralist geography in my methodologies, in his book *Geographical Imaginations*.[5] Gregory argues that in the searching out of spaces we must address the way meanings are 'spun around the topoi of different lifeworlds and threaded into social practices and woven into relations of power'.[6] In exploring the spatial dynamics of the West Bank this is highly resonant. The West Bank is a space of fragmentation and enclaves wherein Israeli settlers, Israel's Occupying Force, Israeli entrepreneurs and Palestinians are seemingly detached yet highly reliant on each other. They produce a geographic space in which any synoptic view of how these different forces interact is exceedingly complex and always inevitably incomplete.

The geographer Doreen Massey's perception of space as a 'meeting place'[7] of different forces and dynamics has been particularly useful for engaging with the quarries and in exploring how the physical, human, economic and political landscapes are folded into these spaces, and both produce and are produced as a result. As such the research engages with: the quarry spaces, their proximity to residential areas, the environmental effects, the importance of the quarries as providing a livelihood for Palestinians, the use of the material excavated and Israel's investment in the quarries, the arduous labour needed for excavation of the stone (Palestinians are not allowed to use explosives), the way the West Bank is divided into different zones by the Occupation and how this impacts on how Palestinians use their land, and issues of mobility and lack of other available work.

Ethics

The ethics of working with people in regard to participant observation and dialogical aesthetics (see Chapter Three) is challenging and entails a great deal of negotiation: not, as might appear to be implied in the word 'negotiation', in persuading people to partake in the making of an artwork, but in determining to what degree we will move

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[5] Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Blackwell, 1994).
[6] Ibid., p. 76.
[7] Doreen Massey, 'A Global Sense of Place', *Marxism Today* (June 1991), pp. 24–9.

towards each other and what elements of the material collected in the process of production will become public. In this research, this is a particularly sensitive issue as I am working within a politically volatile situation.

One of the most important aspects of working with Ramzi Safid and the BBrothers was my continuing return visits to Palestine, pledging a sense of commitment both to them and to the issues at stake, which were discussed in detail with them. It was important to be as transparent as possible about the research. My requirement of them was that they permit me to accompany them, asking questions and recording their responses both through visual and audio means. The consent forms stipulated that I would not ask my co- participants to do anything beyond their day-to-day activities, recording only what might have occurred without my presence, although clearly the presence of the camera and an outsider complicates this relationship and effects to some degree how people behave and perform.

In our conversations my co- participants openly discussed the political situation and how they are affected by the conditions on the ground. Since in doing so they expose themselves, I had to make decisions about what material would be incorporated into the film and to what degree the gravity of their words outweighed the potential risks to my co-participants. One of the conditions in the consent forms, drafted before I started filming, and that all co-participants were asked to sign, was that they view a draft edit of the film before its public release, enabling them to request that anything that puts them at risk be cut from the film. Only then would there be a final signing of release forms. In April 2013 I returned to Palestine with the draft edit of the film, travelling to Ramallah and Hebron where I screened the film to Ramzi and the BBrothers. It was well received and the release forms were signed by all of my co-participants. In the release forms I included a clause stating that each of the participants would receive 2% of all funds received if the film is purchased (see appendix 3 for consent and release forms).

Outline of Chapters

Although *White Oil* alludes to the spatial dynamics of the OPT, it has been essential to contexualise this in more detail, enabling the reader to understand the contingencies at work within this region and the power structures that have impacted on the Palestinians' relationship to space within OPT. In focusing on the spatial and relational dynamics of the OPT and the quarries, and the forces that have systematically disempowered and disenfranchised these spaces, a specific engagement with the colonial and occupying power, Israel, has been essential.

Chapter One: Location and Dislocation

Chapter One is split into two sections: *Geography of Disaster* and *Geology of Disaster.* *Geography of Disaster* addresses how space has been reconfigured within the OPT by the Occupying Force, and how this affects the local population physically and psychologically. *Geology of Disaster* engages specifically with the quarries and how the spatial dynamics of the OPT are played out within them, both in terms of the economic and political uses to which they are put and in terms of the everyday lives of workers – particularly how they move to and from the quarry and issues around mobility. In this regard this section engages with how the quarries in this region can be used to discuss the spatial dynamics and effects of the Occupation on all areas of Palestinian life, which the film *White Oil* brings to the screen.

Chapter Two: Site Specificity, Location and Identity

Chapter Two is also split into two sections: *Seizing Locality* and *Seizing Back Locality.* The first section examines Israel's expropriation of the stone from the OPT, and how it has invested national, ideological and spiritual narratives in the stone in symbolising their presence in the landscape through archaeology and architecture. I outline how Israel has imbued the stone with narratives of Jewish history and memory in the construction of Jewish nationalist identity, to the exclusion and erasure of Palestinian history and memory. By focusing on the role of architecture I look at how the stone is used to further Israel's national and geopolitical objectives and briefly locate the role of archaeology in the same realm. In doing so, I draw on the writings of Nachman Ben

Yehuda, Nadia Abu El-Haj, Nazim Al-Ju'beh, Eyal Weizman and Alona Nitzan-Shiftan, among others.

Seizing Locality is a real intensification of all of the issues and of how the stone has become the 'load stone of the project'. Setting out this discussion in this chapter provides the context for the making of the film, creating a framework in which the film can be read, and introducing a tapestry of perspectives that can be mobilised against the official Israeli narrative.

Seizing Back Locality focuses on art practices, art institutions and residencies in Palestine, giving examples of its growing arts and cultural sector and the way Palestinians are seizing back locality, as well as creating networks between the local and the global. What is significant is the role of Palestinian artists in exposing the Occupation's suffocating hold and their resilience in engaging and generating a cultural life in the face of such opposition.

The following chapters discuss the processes and practices that were involved in the making of *White Oil*.

Chapter Three: The Ethnographic Turn

In this chapter I discuss how my research incorporates the practices and methodologies of visual ethnography, and how this has been essential in understanding my role as a practising filmmaker. As a starting point I engage with Hal Foster's seminal essay 'The Artist as Ethnographer', examining his use of the term 'the ethnographic turn' to question the ethics of collaborative practices undertaken by artists who employ 'participant observation'. I then turn to dialogical aesthetics, drawing on Grant Kester's attempt to create a critical framework for the artist/ethnographer to reflect on how they are bound up in the work and on the importance of listening and dialogue. In problematising the authority of the artist as author, I examine how subjectivity is constituted as a prerequisite to communicative interaction by engaging with the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and the ethics of dialogue.

Furthering this discussion I draw on the work of Sara Ahmed to explore how ethnography as a discipline has been predicated on translating 'strange cultures' into 'the language of the one who knows' and go on to reevaluate this relationship through Ahmed's reading of the 'encounter'. Finally, in applying the practices and methodologies of participant observation and dialogical aesthetics to the making of the film, I highlight the particularities of my encounters in fostering relationships over a three-year period. Drawing on the writings of David McDougall, Chris Wright, Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Raventz, I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the corporeal image and the embodied experience of filming in Palestine, addressing framing and the apparatus of the camera.

In chapters four, five and six I situate *White Oil* within artist moving image, drawing on its relation with documentary and artefaction as well as unpacking some of the images and the way in which the film functions as an assemblage of different filmic languages.

Chapter Four: Architecture of White Oil

In this chapter I focus specifically on the formal coherence of the film and consilience between the logic of the narratives and the events to which they refer. The relationship between sound and image, and the decisions that have been made in post-production regarding the image and the script, are discussed. I also discuss how the viewer is a referent within the work and how images and the edit have been considered in regard to a narration of fragmentation and an aesthetics of digression in bringing attention to the fragmentation of the landscape, as well as recognising the impossibility of adopting a coherent viewpoint and vision. The composition of image, time and duration play a significant part in how we engage with the film in making visible the quarries and the operations of power at work in Palestine and the singularity of lived lives. In its construction *White Oil* does not attempt to be true to a conventional time-space unity, but weaves together multiple narratives and spaces, constructing relations and assemblages of meaning that speak to each other as they unfold a number of narratives in the film.

Chapter Five: Bestowing Visibility

This chapter draws upon a number of film and photography theorists and anchors the practice. Gilles Deleuze's writing on film has been a consistent presence in the making of this work and my thinking about moving images. Rather than mapping Deleuze's ideas over *White Oil* I enter into a productive dialogue in which his ideas are used as a springboard with which to engage and think differently about images. I outline and refer to concept of the time-image, from Deleuze's *Cinema 2*, which he distinguishes from the movement-image in its spatial and temporal dimensions, and situate *White Oil* within the 'time-image' by producing a cinema in which the characters record rather than react, are not limited by representation, and are characterised by pure optical and sound images. I also refer to Deleuze's 'any-space-whatever', which are spaces that have been dehumanised or the ruined landscapes created by war, industry or city planning. Laura U. Marks draws out the political implications of Deleuze's theories of cinema, and I discuss how *White Oil* can be read within this prism. I also make use of Deleuze's notions of the 'powers of the false' and 'intercessors', who are the agents of cinema, real characters who make up the artefaction of the film, and show how in the case of *White Oil* they construct a minor discourse by 'telling tales' or stories to effect and shape the constitution of a people.

I go on to discuss the durational static frame and how this exposes the limits of representation and opens out meaning towards the creation of new political subjectivities by looking at the writing of Patricia Bras. Ariella Azoulay's powerful work on rethinking the political and ethical status of photography is drawn on, as are Jacques Rancière and Christopher Pinney in thinking through the role of photography in this research. I discuss the correlation between fiction and documentary and the constructiveness of documentary being as creative as fiction in assembling intelligent structures, and again I draw on a number of writers: Michael Renov, Rancière and Stella Bruzzi. Through Judith Butler's work I consider how the precariousness and vulnerability of my co-participants' lives is given visibility through their words and the images borne out on the screen. At the end of this chapter I elucidate the importance of the static frame in *White Oil*, in relation to the work of David MacDougall, Anna Grimshaw, Susan Trangmar and Serge Daney, to create a distance and 'otherness', and

consider why cinema has been so important for me as a medium for exploring the world in all of its complexity and for bestowing visibility.

Chapter Six: Situating the Field

Although the film can be situated within documentary and visual ethnography, positioning it with the field of artist moving image opens up a much broader aesthetic field that includes the cinematic, fiction, testimony and photography.

In this chapter I discuss the influence of a range of artists and filmmakers, unpacking their different methodologies, approaches to the image, and editorial strategies, and the extent to which *White Oil* shares or departs from these moving image works. I refer to the work of Abbas Kiarostami, Ursula Biemann, Zarina Bimji, Hito Steyerl, Steve McQueen, Otolith Group, Jean Luc Godard and Anne Marie Meiville.

White Oil Synopsis

White Oil (2014)
65 minutes, single screen.
HDV, colour, stereo
language: Arabic   subtitles: English

Filmed in a number of locations in the West Bank, *White Oil* uses vernacular language with a highly composed aesthetic imbued with the language of the static frame, the durational image and the aesthetics of delay. The film seeks to reveal the explicit and hidden dynamics that are at work in the region, which include the military, religious and geopolitical forces pervading the land and the impossibility of constructing a coherent vision and viewpoint. Throughout the film dialogues (with subtitles) are interwoven as fragmentary narratives. *White Oil* looks in detail at the workings of particular quarries, how they impact on the lives of the surrounding communities, and the contribution they make to the local economy. By drawing out the dynamics of the quarries, the language of film speaks to and speaks through the spaces of lived experience. This is performed through the owners, workers and security guards, where personal histories, experiences and the changing landscape and conditions in the

quarries bring to light the myriad losses of land, economy, identity and history.

The first half of the film is driven by a tableaux of daytime images that inform and create meaning. The second half of the film is set at night and is characterised by voice and experience. The final section foregrounds the Birzeit Brothers, although Ramzi appears intermittently throughout the film to provides a narration and consistency.

Link to film:

http://vimeo.com/judyprice/white-oil

password: berlin

1: LOCATION AND DISLOCATION

Geography of Disaster

Geography and scale

The OPT are comprised of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Bordering Gaza is Egypt on the southwest, Israel on the south, east and north, and the Mediterranean Sea on the Eastern coast. The West Bank, with which this research project is concerned, borders Israel on the west, north and south, and Jordan on the East. Although the West Bank is shrinking in size with Israel's continuing land grab, in 2003 it was calculated as covering a land mass area of 5,860 sq km (Land: 5,640 sq km and water: 220 sq km). Comparatively, the total area is a quarter of the size of Wales. A landscape made up of rugged terrain, dissected upland with some vegetation in the west, barren in the east and a dramatic desert scape in the south, the lowest point is the Dead Sea at 408 m below sea level and the highest point Asur at 1,022 m.[8]

History

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to engage in any depth with the historical circumstances that have led to the establishment of the State of Israel and the displacement of millions of Palestinians and dispossession of their land. However, a brief synopsis is necessary for the reader to be aware of some of the complex narratives that have resulted in the seemingly fixed position that Israel and the international world hold towards the Palestinians, and that underpins Israel's colonial rule and Occupation of the West Bank.

From 1517–1917 Palestine was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Palestinians and Jews had lived side by side for many centuries without conflict. However, following the publication of the Austro-Hungarian journalist Theodor Herzl's book *Der*

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[8] Central Intelligence Agency, The World Fact Book, Middle East: West Bank
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html> [accessed 3 September 2013].

Judenstaat[9] in the late 19th century, a modern Zionist movement[10] was established as a nationalist political venture that called for 'the self determination of the Jewish people in a sovereign Jewish national homeland' and encouraged Jewish migration to Ottoman Palestine.[11] This movement was predominately founded by secular Ashkenazi Jews (Jews from Northern Europe) in response to anti-Semitism and the Anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian Empire, of which my own family were victims.

The British Mandate provided the legal, administrative and political structure for the Occupation of Palestine between 1917 and 1948, after which Palestine became the State of Israel. This transition was a harrowing and difficult path for all involved. The British entered Palestine in 1917 as the bearers of a complex historical cultural, economic and political process that had taken shape over the previous 500 years in Western Europe.[12] As Ronit Lentin articulates in her book *Thinking Palestine,* 'Israel was an anomaly at its founding, reflecting conflicting logics of world historical events between which its declarative moment was awkwardly wedged.'[13]

Perhaps one of the reasons, best understood by most, for Europe's involvement with

[9] Walter Laqueur, *The History of Zionism* (Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2003), p. 40.

[10] The modern Zionist movement strategically constructed narratives around Palestine that mythologised the land in relation to its own cultural and religious heritage. The Palestinians were portrayed as a small group of people who were merely peasants and shepherds scattered across a barren land, and, in the eyes of Zionists, largely insignificant in determining the identity of Palestine as a place. The western world, up until the 1960s, largely supported this portrait of the Palestinians, founded on Christianity's representation of the Holy Land, in which the Palestinians formed merely 'notations in the landscape'. (For further reading see, Jacqueline Rose, *The Last Resistance* [Verso, 2007], and *Third Text*, 20:3-4, Palestine and Israel, Special Edition [May/June 2006].) Palestinians were not seen as culturally bound or invested in the landscape itself and were anonoymised, while the narratives constructed around them enforced the political and religious ideologies of the West. Palestine itself was portrayed as a 'land without people' without legislative infrastructures or values of 'progress'. According to the late Edward Said, the phrase was coined by a Zionist named Israel Zangwill for the purpose of making a false claim that Palestine was empty. Rashid Khalidi, in his book, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, (Colombia University Press, 1997) has also explained that the phrase became a widely propagated Zionist slogan. This portrayal is also visible in the films produced at the time of the British Mandate which were used as propaganda to ensure continuing support for the Mandate by the British public. See *Palestine the Modern Age*, 1946, UK, *Palestine Police*, 1946, UK, *Land of the Book*, 1941, UK and *Avodah*, Palestine, 1935, available from the BFI and Imperial War Museum in London and the Spielberg Archive and Axelrod Collection in Jerusalem.

[11] Jeffrey S. Gurock, *American Zionism: Mission and Politics* (Routledge, 1998), p. 289; Moshe Davis, *Zionism in Transition* (Arno Press, 1980), p. 56.

[12] In *Thinking Palestine* (Zed Books, 2008), Ronit Lentin gives a precise account, drawing on Hourani and Said in relation to orientalism.

[13] Lentin, ed., *Thinking Palestine*, p. 26.

and support for the Jewish national homeland in Palestine, beyond any consideration for the Palestinians as the indigenous inhabitants, was the extermination of 6 million Jews in Nazi concentration camps during the Holocaust. However, we must remember that the Balfour Declaration had promised to 'establish' a Jewish homeland in Palestine long before 1917. In order to realise this, British government officials created a discourse around the Balfour Declaration that sought to symbolically justify British rule by resorting to the idea of Palestine as the 'Holy Land' in the specifically British post-Reformation Judeo-Christian biblical world-view. As Lentin so insightfully makes clear,

> This discourse strategically justified British rule in terms of Britain's pivotal role in the fulfillment of a 'Jewish national home' in the service of this world view…which sought, along with its colonial-settler Zionist *protégé*, to selflessly bring light to an otherwise Conrad-like 'heart of darkness'.[14]

For the West, Israel with its influx of European Jews evoked a place mirroring European values and civilisation in the Middle East, and it would become a strategic outpost for Europe and America in the region in the years to come. Israel represented modernisation, progress, industry and industriousness, as opposed to Palestine, which represented the past, failed effort of the British Mandate and a civilization that was still hampered by pre-industrialisation and pre-modernity, 'a place constantly in the grip of its time past and passed'.[15]

It is worth noting that in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, the Jewish presence was identified as migrant rather than settler. The legacy of this oversight by the British was that the growing Jewish population in Mandate Palestine did not behave as might be expected with a readiness to compromise and submit to an established authority, but precipitated an open conflict between Jewish settlers and the colonial forces of the British Mandate.[16] Towards the end of the Mandate period, between 1945 and 1946, tensions escalated, with Jewish resistance movements groups like the Hagannah and the Irgan using extreme acts of violence to bring an end to British colonial rule. This

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[14] Lentin, ed., *Thinking Palestine*, pp. 242–243.
[15] Ibid., p.27.
[16] Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society* (Pluto Press, 2006), pp. 2–7.

paved a way for the creation of the State of Israel on the 14th May 1948 as the homeland for the Jewish people, now celebrated in Israel each year as their day of Independence.[17] Today there are 8.018 million people living in Israel. Approximately seventy-five percent of the total population are Jewish, twenty percent Palestinian and four percent non-Arab Christians or members of other religions.[18] Roughly forty percent of Jews live outside of Israel as part of the Jewish Diaspora.[19] However, although many Jews from the Diaspora choose not to live in Israel, they have formed strong emotional bonds with the country, perceiving it as their 'rightful home'[20] as well as forming strong economic connections through the global flow of capital.

For the indigenous people of Palestine, the Palestinians, 14 May 1948 and the events leading up to it are known as *Al Naqba* (The Catastrophe), referring to the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and the dispossession of their land resulting in over 700,000 refugees and 418 villages destroyed.[21] Many Palestinians were forced to seek refuge in neighbouring countries like Lebanon and Jordan or to set up temporary homes in refugee camps around Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. Sixty years later these refugee camps still exist, without any permanent status or means of applying for official building permits. The residents live in a seemingly permanent state of transience and rootlessness as they wait to *return home*.[22]

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[17] It should be noted that a number of other places were first offered to the Jewish people as a homeland, including Uganda.

[18] Aviad Klinger, 'Press Release', Central Bureau of Statistics, State Of Israel (2013) <http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/cw_usr_view_Folder?ID=141> [accessed 3 September 2013]. According to this source, towards the end of 2011, over seventy percent of the total Jewish population were born in Israel (known as 'Sabras') compared with thirty-five percent who were native-born in 1948. One should also note that when it comes to equal rights for citizens of Israel, there is a huge discrepancy for Palestinians living in Israel, but this will not covered in these thesis.

[19] Harriet Sherwood, 'Israel's Jewish Population Passes 6 Million Mark', *Guardian*, 1 January 2013 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/01/israel-jewish-population-six-million> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[20] A.R. Taylor, 'Vision and Intent in Zionist Thought', in *The Transformation of Palestine*, ed. I. Abu-Lughod (Western University Press, 1971), p. 10.

[21] See Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).

[22] The displacing of one historical narrative with another is the subject of Uriel Orlow's recent installation *Unmade Film* (2013). In this modular audio-visual installation, produced during his residency at the Al-Ma'mal Foundation, Orlow takes as his starting point the pyschiatric hospital Kfar Shau'l in

Occupied by Jordan and Egypt between 1948 and 1967, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank have been under Israeli Occupation since the Six-Day War of 1967. The Israeli occupying force withdrew its settlements from Gaza in 2005 but still continues to control all borders, air and sea space.

In her book, *The Last Resistance*, Jacqueline Rose states that ethnic transfer is now openly being discussed in Israel and there is a greater displacement and dispossession of Palestinians both inside and outside the territories than at any other time since 1948.[23] We can see from Israel's continuing *land grab*,[24] with the building of settlements in the West Bank, that the 'events' of 1948 are still unfolding today.

Colonialism and Globalisation

Although the colonial nature of Zionism is frequently mentioned, the conflict in Palestine is generally framed in way that discounts the colonial genealogy and focuses on nationalist and religious features. However, defining Israel as a colonial settlement clarifies the relations between the settling nation and the native one, and opens up a space in which to articulate the dynamics that Lorenzo Veracini describes as transforming 'a typically colonial context into an intractable conflict of opposing nationalisms'.[25]

Israel's need to retain dominion over an ideologically charged country and fulfil the Zionist project of a religiously and ethnically homogenous settler state severely

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Jerusalem that initially specialised in the treatment of Holocaust victims, and was established in 1951 on the site of the Palestinian village of Deir Yassin. In 1948 the village was attacked by two Zionist paramilitary groups brutally killing many of the villagers. The pyschiatric hospital was not only built on this site but also incorporated many of the buildings that remained intact after the massacre. To add to this, and perhaps most conflicting and horrifying of all, is the 'breathtaking panoramic view' of Deir Yassin from the Holocaust Museum in Vad Yashem. As Hanan Toukan writes in her text on Orlow's work *Continuity from Rupture: Deir Yassin's Absent Presence in an Unmade Film,* 'There are no markers, placards, or memorials, and no mention from tour guides in the museum of Vad Yashem regarding what visitors see from where they stand.' Uriel Orlow, *Unmade Film*, Al-Ma'mal, ed. Andrea Thal (fink Zurich, Contemporary Art Publishers, 2013), p. 11.

[23] Rose, *The Last Resistance*.

[24] For a comprehensive analysis of this see the report published by B'Tselem: Yehezkel Lein, and Eyal Weizman, 'Land Grab, Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank', The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (2002)
<http://www.btselem.org/download/200205_land_grab_eng.pdf> [accessed 27 September 2013].

[25] Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society*, p. 3.

restricts its capacity to negotiate with its Palestinian counterpart. War with an indigenous Other was always within the cultural horizon of colonialism, but in order for any progress to be made an initial degree of decolonisation is absolutely necessary. As Veracini notes, 'the difficulties in relationships are markers of a colonial state of mind that Israel is far from shedding'.[26] The incapacity of Israel to commit to a specific timetable for relinquishing control over the OPT is very much part of a colonial mentality, as well as a geopolitical mentality in which land, power and natural resources are seen as necessary for the benefit of the colonial nation regardless of the impact on the oppressed other, the Palestinians.

Rather than displaying any reflective awareness of or critical engagement with its role as a colonial power, Israel has become even more belligerent in both its attitude to and treatment of the Palestinians; it is, as David Grossman says, 'more militant, nationalist and racist than ever before'.[27] Alongside South Africa and Algeria, Israel is ranked as one of the worst cases of colonial abuse towards the native inhabitants.

To what degree the international world and the Jewish Diaspora are aware of the extent of Israel's exploitative and oppressive policies within the OPT is somewhat unclear. The dissemination of information through the technology revolution has changed radically over the last ten to twenty years, with stories on the ground from those affected by colonialism and occupation being more readily available and accessible. However, in the case of the Israel and Palestine conflict there is still an absence of will on the part of the international world and the Jewish Diaspora to fully recognize Israel's abusive behaviour. The legacy of the Holocaust has left a rift that many seem unable to address emotionally or intellectually. There is an absence of any real analysis of the harrowing conditions on the ground in the West Bank and Gaza, or of the increasing prosperity and growth that Israel enjoys at the expense of the Palestinians. Any socialist principles that were once important to the foundations of Israel, for example the principles on which kibbutzim were founded, have long since

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[26] Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society*, p. 6.
[27] David Grossman, 'Two Years of Intifada', in *Death as a Way of Life – Despatches from Jerusalem* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2003), p. 177.

been eroded and replaced by capitalist systems of growth and accumulation. As Uri Ram points out, during the late twentieth century, classic nationalism in Israel had weakened, leading to the rise of two deeply opposed movements: neo-Zionism and post-Zionism.[28] Both of these movements mark the 'emergence of globalization within Israel as a market society and liberal culture with a local backlash'.[29]

The continuing impact of globalisation and the speed and pace with which Israel's colonial project has progressed under its influence have created another level of exploitation which the Occupation administers within the OPT. This now includes not just the construction of settlements but also the industrialisation of the West Bank explicitly for Israel's use and the expropriation of raw materials from its quarries, which I explore later in this chapter. Firstly, however, I will outline the spatial dynamics of the OPT and the consequences the Occupation has had for Israelis and Palestinians.

Administration/Politics

The West Bank is currently divided in terms of administration and security. There are three areas known as Area A, Area B and Area C, and these different 'Zones' have a different impact on Palestinians depending on the degree to which their lives are oppressed and regulated and the extent to which they are able to engage with and use space in the OPT (see figure A). The measurements given below are an approximation as the West Bank is constantly changing as Israel moves towards establishing greater control.

• Area A includes most of the major Palestinian cities – Ramallah, Nablus, Bethlehem, Hebron and Jenin, is under the military and civil control of the Palestinian Authority,

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[28]Neo-Zionism and post-Zionism share traits with 'classical' Zionism but differ by accentuating antagonistic and diametrically opposed poles already present in Zionism. 'Neo Zionism accentuates the messianic and particularistic dimensions of Zionist nationalism, while post-Zionism accentuates its normalising and universalistic dimensions', Steve Chan, Anita Shapra and Derek Jonathan, *Israeli Historical Revisionism: From Left to Right* (Routledge, 2002), p. 58. Post-Zionism asserts that Israel should abandon the concept of a 'state of the Jewish people' and strive to be a state of all its citizens, or a binational state in which Arabs and Jews live together while enjoying some kind of autonomy. See Meyrav Wurmser, 'Can Israel Survive Post-Zionism?' *Middle East Quarterly* (March 1999), pp. 3–13.

[29] Uri Ram, 'The Future of the Past in Israel – A Sociology of Knowledge Approach', in *Making Israel*, ed. Benny Morris (University of Michigan Press, 2007), p. 224.

and amounts to approximately seventeen percent of the total area of the West Bank.

• Area B contains the vast majority of Palestinian towns and is under the control of both the Israeli military and the Palestinian administration. It amounts to approximately twenty percent of the total area.[30]

• Area C is under both military and administrative control by Israel and amounts to approximately sixty percent of the total area of the West Bank.
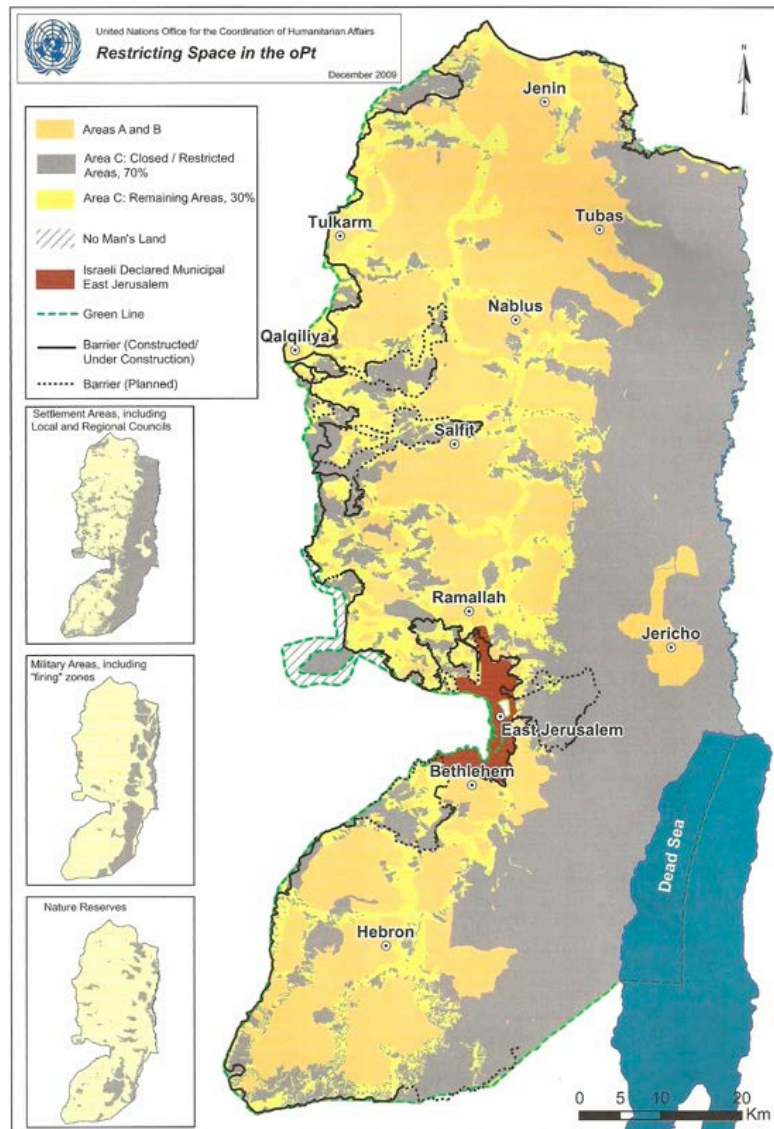
(figure A)

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[30] Elisha Efrat demonstrates that at the beginning of the 2000s, towns and villages in Area C under Israeli control constituted a continuous space, whereas Areas A and B were divided into 190 enclaves. See *The Geography of Occupation* (Carmel, 2003), cited in Cédric Parizot, 'Temporalities and Perceptions of the Separation Between Israelis and Palestinians', *Bulletin du Centre de recherché français de Jérusalem*, 20 (2009) <http://bcrfj.revues.org/6319> [accessed 3 September 2013] (para 24).

In July 2013 it was estimated that there are 2,676,740 people living in the West Bank. Palestinians make up approximately eighty-three percent, and Israeli settlers seventeen percent. There are around 325,500 Israeli settlers living in the 121 officially recognised settlements (with a further 102 unauthorised outposts in the West Bank that are not officially recognised by Israel), while 186,929 Israeli settlers live in annexed East Jerusalem.[31]

Israel retains full control over the building and planning sphere in Area C, while responsibility for the provision of services falls to the Palestinian Authority (PA). The consequences are that Palestinians are prohibited from building, working the land or setting up businesses without a permit from Israel, which is in most cases denied. As well as these divisional Areas A, B and C, the shrinking of space within the OPT has taken on a new intensity and pace over the last twenty years, since the disaster of the Oslo Accords in 1993.[32]

Attempting to create a platform for future relations between Israel and Palestine, the Oslo Accords served as a framework for the creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) that would administer the Palestinian territories and the withdrawal of the Israel Occupation Force (IOF) from parts of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In the five-year period in which the Accords lasted, during which a permanent agreement was to be negotiated, Israel continued to build and expand settlements within the Palestinian Territories while Palestinians were still denied permission to build within Zone C (60% of the territories). For many the Oslo Accords are seen as having enabled the disbandment and curtailing of the Palestinian resistance movement under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority, a political institution that has effectively been powerless in transforming the spatial, political and economic dynamics on the ground in the OPT

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[31] Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Fact Book, Middle East: West Bank*.

[32] It has been noted by Edward Said and others that the signing of the Oslo Accords was on the same date as the Sabra and Shatilla massacres in Lebanon: 13 September 1982. Hundreds of Palestinians were slaughtered in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by Lebanese Phalangists aided by the Israeli army. See Gilles Deleuze, *Gilles Deleuze and the Palestinians*, trans. by Timothy Murphy (originally published in *Revue d'etudes palestiniennes*, September 1983),
Architexturez network, *Driftline: Deleuze-Guattari-L* (1994) <http://mail.architexturez.net/+/Deleuze-Guattari-L/archive//msg04437.shtml> [accessed 3 September 2013].

in its negotiations with Israel for a Palestinian state with self-determination.

The Spatial Dynamics of the West Bank

Space, in all of its manifestations – literally, metaphorically, psychologically, politically and economically – has been at the core of the Israel/Palestine conflict since the beginning of Zionism and Israel's colonial project.[33]

As is clear from the above, the contraction of space within the Palestinian Territories has been driven by a number of strategies adopted by the Occupying Force. Jeff Halper, anthropologist, political activist and co-founder and coordinator of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), describes the spatial dynamics of the OPT as a matrix of control implemented by Israel:

> For the most part the matrix relies upon subtle interventions performed under the guise of 'proper administration,' 'upholding the law,' 'keeping the public order' and, of course, 'security.' These interventions, largely bureaucratic and legal, are nevertheless backed by overwhelming military force which Israel reserves for itself the right to employ. The active, forcible measures of control which can be taken against Palestinian communities and individuals include the extensive use of collaborators and undercover '*mustarabi*' army units, administrative detention, arrest, trial and torture. [34]

This matrix of control severely restricts the flow of movement or autonomy that the Palestinians have in the OPT. The policy of restriction includes the increasing expansion and construction of settlements, the construction of roads linking the settlements to Israel and to each other, the cutting through and defacing of Palestinian land by the Separation Wall, the direct ownership of Palestinian land by Israeli businesses, and, through all of the above, the creation of non-spaces or no-man's-lands that separate the settlements through fenced-off perimeters. These are often placed 200–300 metres away from a settlement as a security measure and render the enclosed area

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[33] Ariel Handel, 'Where, Where to and When in the Occupied Territories: An Introduction to Geography of Disaster', in *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Territories*, ed. Adi Ophir, Michal Givoni, and Sari Hanafi (Zone Books, 2009), pp. 179–222 (p. 193).

[33] Jonathan Murdoch, *Poststructuralist Geography: A Guide to Relational Space* (Sage publications, 2006).

[34] Jeff Halper, 'The 94 Percent Solution: A Matrix of Control', *Middle East Report*, 216 (2000) <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer216/216_halper.html> [accessed 3 September 2013].

untenable for agriculture, homes or businesses. The consequence of this for Palestinian farmers, olive groves and the expansion of Palestinian residential areas is enormous. It is not unusual to find the remnants of a house that stands isolated and abandoned between a settlement and a Palestinian village or town. The house will have been deemed unuseable in order to protect the Jewish settlements.

Settlements range in their character from kibbutz, Moshav (similar to the kibbutz where farming is done collectively and profits shared equally but differ in that they are individually owned), farming communities and suburbs to frontier villages. Built on high ground, they are visible manifestations of the Israeli presence constructed by the cheap labour of Palestinians, who are prevented from building homes for themselves and their families. The three largest settlements, all on the outskirts of East Jerusalem, Modi'in Illit, Ma'ale Adumim and Betar Illit, are cities with schools, shopping malls, public swimming pools with ancient olive trees on beautifully manicured grass verges, parks and roundabouts.[35] The construction of roads linking the settlements as directly as possible with the urban areas in Israel has been a major development over the last ten years. However, Palestinians are largely prohibited from using these 'superhighways' and are shunted off into side roads that are often in a state of dire disrepair.[36]

The most recent transport construction project is a tramline that links the settlements deep in the West Bank to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv while bypassing many of the Palestinian neighbourhoods. The tramline is not just a transportation system offering ease of passage to and from the settlements, but is yet another structure that will make it very difficult to reverse the annexation of east Jerusalem and the colonisation policy pursued by Israel.[37]

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[35] See Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (Verso, 2007): 'Although the aquifer is the sole water source for residents of the West Bank, Israel uses 83 per cent of its annually available water for the benefit of Israeli cities and its settlements, while the West Bank Palestinians use the remaining 17 per cent' (p. 19).

[36] Ibid. See Weizman's extensive writing on the settlements, pp. 8–9, 12–13 and 87–139.

[37] The following passage by the Associated Press in *Haaretz* (a centre-left newspaper in Israel) describes the route that the new tramway takes and emphasises what is at stake for Palestinians: 'The tramway

In addition to the above there are also the checkpoints. As of September 2008, there were ninety-three manned checkpoints and 533 unmanned blocks in the West Bank.[38] To some degree these checkpoints are possible to prepare for, and one can estimate the time needed to get through them. However there are also 'surprise checkpoints', consisting of a Jeep or armoured vehicles and a small number of soldiers. Numerous trenches, physical obstacles and temporary roadblocks are also put in place by the army to control and restrict pedestrian and vehicle traffic in the OPT, creating an even greater disruption to life than that of the permanent road blocks as it is impossible to prepare for them.

Palestinians wishing to get through the checkpoints are often subjected to unnecessary humiliations, arbitrary delays and uncompromising bureaucratic demands. In early 2001 Machsom Watch,[39] an Israeli women's activist group, was set up to monitor and intervene in the violence and abuse at checkpoints by the military (who are mostly young men and women aged between 18–24). The watching practice, emphasised in the movement's name, aims to challenge the checkpoint as a military-masculine space by introducing instead a civilian-feminist gaze.[40] Today there are more than 500 women activists from various parts of Israel who visit the checkpoints regularly and issue reports. However the IOF exploits the direct action strategies of Machsom Watch by using the media locally and internationally to publicise the fact that there are groups instrumental in preventing worsening conditions for Palestinians.

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runs past the settlement buildings and Palestinian houses occupied by settlers in Sheikh Jarrah and stops outside the settlement of Giv'at Ha Mivtar. The line passes through the Ramot Eshkol area, a settlement built on the land of the Palestinian area of Lifta and splits into two with one line running straight to the settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev. The line conveniently bypasses the Hizmah checkpoint leading to the lands of Shu'afat and Hizma. These lands are encircled by a 6 foot fence, rolls of barbed wire and a military road overlooked by a military watchtower. About half a kilometre along the road the tramline returns from its detour in the affluent community of Pisgat Ze'ev. Pisgat Ze'ev is a settlement of over 4000 people established in 1985 on the land of Palestinians from Beit Hanina and Hizma.'
Corporate Watch, 'Walking the Route of Veolia's Tramline in East Jerusalem' (2010) <http://corporateoccupation.wordpress.com/2010/03/12/walking-the-route-of-veolias-tramline-in-east-jerusalem> [accessed 3 September 2013].
[38]United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'West Bank Closure Count and Analysis' (2006) <http://unispal.un.org/pdfs/WB0106.pdf> [accessed 3 September 2013].
[39] Machsomwatch, 'Women Against occupation for Human Rights' (2001) <http://www.machsomwatch.org/en> [accessed 3 September 2013].
[40] Ibid. The civilian-feminine gaze is explored in more depth in Chapter Five, in relation to Ariella Azouly's work on 'The civil contract of photography'.

As such, the checkpoints are perceived as being not quite so contentious and more humanised, counteracting Machsom's good work and creating an alibi for Israel to retain the checkpoints. Many of the checkpoints that were once cobbled together barracks are today termed 'terminals' by Israel and are constructed as permanent features in the West Bank, complete with toilets, computerised systems, x-ray machines and metal detectors. Israel uses this to frame the checkpoints as being more sympathetic. In actual fact, these systems are even more perverse and cruel in their attempt to control, monitor, dehumanise and immobilise Palestinians.

As a consequence of all the factors outlined above, as well as the rubble and crumbling infrastructure of the roads, moving around the West Bank is a feat of endurance for anyone. The mode of movement is all important in the OPT, as the speed at which one moves around in one's daily life, whether going to work or school, affects the quality and productivity of one's life, as well as the economy of the place. In the OPT uninterrupted time and space is a privilege reserved for the Jewish minority living in the settlements. The notion of space for the Palestinians has come to symbolise that which is disrupted, captive, occupied, disenfranchised, co-opted and completely fragmented. Whilst Palestinians can only cross borders at considerable risk or hardship, if at all, for the settlers and the occupying force, all borders are porous, to be crossed at will.

According to Eyal Weizman, the Occupation has created a fluid Israeli 'hyper-space'[41] in the West Bank, detached from a highly fragmented Palestinian 'infra-space'. There is almost a complete disassociation between Israeli space and Palestinian space, created by different strata and levels as well as borders and zones. In his article 'Temporalities and perceptions of the separation between Israelis and Palestinians' Cédric Parizot states, 'The border no longer just separates zones on a two-dimensional map, it also separates levels (Israeli and Palestinian) on a three-dimensional map.' [42] What exists in the OPT is a system of layers and strata which the Israelis traverse through, above and below, at all angles and degrees, leaving Palestinians' space effectively as a series of

[41] Weizman.
[42] Parizot, 'Temporalities and Perceptions'.

enclaves. The OPT is a region lacking any real legitimacy or functional ability for Palestinians, consisting of unconnected enclaves and fragmented islands that remain as a consequence isolated topias. The architect and member of the artistic group *Decolonising Architecture*, Alessandro Petti, describes the system of connected islands that represent the Israeli settlements in the OPT as an *archipelago* where movement is fluid and rapid,[43] whereas for Palestinians, moving through the OPT involves threading through mazes and dead ends, cracks and openings. It is a constant falling into Israeli space in which the Palestinian body is either thrown out, disembodied or exiled to the Palestinian space of the underworld.

As Ariel Handel makes clear, 'the spatial conflict in Israel/Palestine … is a dispute not over land units but over the very possibility of *using* the space'.[44] The rhizomatic, changing and fluid spaces that Israel produces in the OPT facilitating the movement of the military and settlers is not accessible to Palestinians, and these matrixes destroy and disable any known routes of movement that the Palestinians once had. The OPT becomes the production of Israeli space, as opposed to the production of Palestinian space. Israel, as the ruling power and primary authority in the West Bank is not trying to restore order, but to act as the main producer of chaos and the 'systematic destruction of Palestinian order [and economy]'.[45]

People in the Region

In most countries, space and time are taken for granted and grounded in maps, which provide what Anthony Giddens calls 'ontological security'. The routinisation of daily activity in space and time – the ability to make repetitive movements that follow similar paths – connects the individual and the outside world and gives the former a sense of continuity and stability. This is critical for the individual's sense of security, as well as for the building and preservation of the *longue durée* of social institutions.[46] Its

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[43] Alessandro Petti, 'Asymmetries in Globalized Space: On the Border Between Jordan and Palestine-Israel', Centre for Research Architecture <http://roundtable.kein.org/node/1111> [accessed 3 September 2013].
[44] Handel, 'Where, Where to and When in the Occupied Territories', p. 181.
[45] Ibid., p. 194.
[46] Antony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Polity Press, 1984), pp. 61 and 85.

absence is harmful to both the individual and to society. When there is no routine, one's faith in one's own stability and in the existence of one's inner core seems to dissipate. Giddens' analysis starts with the Nazi concentration camps.[47] In order to show the extent to which a loss of routine produces radical ontological insecurity, he cites Bruno Bettelheim: 'it was…the inability to plan ahead because of the sudden changes in camp policies that was so deeply destructive'.[48]

In the OPT this ontological security is increasingly undermined. Due to the constant changes implemented by the Israelis, both in terms of the physical space and the regulations governing its use, the stability of space dissipates and it becomes almost impossible to create a map of how the space is used. [49] The inhabitants struggle to reintroduce predictable features into their lives and resist travelling around the OPT, preferring to stay within their very local habitats. With all the restrictions on the right and freedom of passage, Jericho, Nablus, Jenin, Hebron and Ramallah become strangers to each other. Communities' get smaller and relationships between those living in different parts of the OPT cease to exist: the sustenance of everyday life, commerce or cultural connections seems almost impossible. To quote Handel, 'The decomposition of space by Israeli policies in the OPT undermines the ability of Palestinians to work, to produce, to sell, to buy, to study, to heal, to know someone, to keep in touch, to organize, to coordinate, to resist, and to fight.'[50] In her paper 'Violent morphologies: Landscape, border and scale in Ahmedabad conflict', Ipsita Chatterjee also provides an important account of how people's lives are affected not only by violence and death, control and command, conflict and riots but also by the disruption and reordering of space.[51]

In the OPT, social networking through the Internet has become one of the most prolific ways of keeping in touch with friends, family and colleagues both inside and outside of

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[47] The camps were also about separating – a political strategy to brand and mark another.
[48] Antony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, Vol. 1: Power, Property and the State* (Macmillan, 1981), p. 37.
[49] Handel, 'Where, Where to and When in the Occupied Territories', p. 193.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ipsita Chatterjee, 'Violent Morphologies: Landscape, Border and Scale in Ahmedabad conflict', *Geoforum*, 40:6 (November 2009), pp. 941–1080 (p. 1003).

the West Bank, and is one of the only forms of organising. Moving between the West Bank and other parts of the world is equally as difficult for Palestinians, although there is not the space here to address this in any detail. However, it should be remembered that Palestinians in the West Bank do not have passports, only identity cards, and are considered *citizenless*.

Physical enclosures in the OPT appear in varying forms. Some Palestinian areas distinctly resemble enclaves, as in the case of Shuafat refugee camp, home of academic director of the IAAP, Tina Sherwell. With a population of approximately 35,000 residents the refugee camp is located inside Jerusalem and its residents carry Jerusalem identity cards. Established in 1966, the camp is located on the traditional lands of the town of Shuafat. Like nearly all other Arab neighbourhoods in Jerusalem, there is a complete absence of care by the state. With few resources and economic means Shuafat is in dire disrepair, with potholed roads and overcrowding. The social infrastructure and fabric of the camp emerge from the residents themselves, although unlike UN-run refugee camps, residents of Shuafat pay taxes to the Israeli authorities.[52] In 2011 the Separation Wall enclosed the camp with checkpoints controlling all entry and exit points.[53]

East Jerusalem, home to many Palestinians, has experienced an increasing disbandment of Palestinian cultural events over the last few years. Israel implements a regime of cultural oppression by closing down community centres and confiscating tools and props that facilitate cultural production and exchange between Palestinians. In addition, with the checkpoints, the Separation Wall and access to Jerusalem denied

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[52]Lara Friedman and Daniel Seidman, 'Jerusalem Neighbourhood Profile: Shuafat Refugee Camp', *Ir Amin* (August 2006) <http://www.ir-amim.org.il/en/report/jerusalem-neighborhood-profile-shuafat-refugee-camp> [accessed 3 September 2013].
[53] The Palestinian artist Jawad Al Mahli's photographs and videos explore the geography and architecture of Shuafat refugee camp. *Here* (2009) is a panoramic photographic montage of the camp. Due to the cramped conditions and architectural confinement, Al Mahli took the photographs from a neighbouring Israeli settlement where he positioned himself, often at night, tied to a tree so as not to lose his balance from the hilly slope of the Israeli settlement. The panoramic images of the camp offer an alternative scenario, testifying to another reality in the 'promised land'. See also Tina Sherwell, 'Jawad Al Malhi', *Contemporary Practices, Visual Arts from the Middle* East <http://www.contemporarypractices.net/essays/volume6/profile/Jawad%20Al%20Malhi_60–63.pdf > [accessed 3 September 2013].

to all Palestinians living in the West Bank, East Jerusalem has increasingly become a cultural and social black hole.

As a result, Jerusalemites (Palestinians living in Jerusalem, who have a different ID from West Palestinians in the West Bank) now socialise in Ramallah, as they can travel across the borders and checkpoints created by Israel. In light of this, Ramallah has become the new cultural and political capital of the West Bank, where cultural encounters and exchange are possible. Growing at an extraordinary rate, Ramallah is known by locals and foreigners alike as 'the happy hour' of the West Bank or the 'Ramallah bubble'. As a city Ramallah falls within Zone A, under the administration and security of the Palestinian Authority, and it is able to cultivate political, cultural and economic aspirations for its people. Palestinians are forced to leave the enclaves of the villages and smaller towns to seek work in the city as a potential refuge from the Occupation. The consequence, however, is that the rest of the West Bank becomes more and more disconnected and detached.

Handel describes the limits on movement imposed by both physiological and geographical constraints in the OPT as producing a 'geography of disaster'.[54] We can define disaster as a large-scale event in which suffering and loss occur together with a partial or total collapse of the systems of space and time.[55] In the case of the West Bank the 'geography of disaster' refers not only to the spatial characteristics of the area, but also to the ways in which Israel exerts its power through the control of space and the economy, thereby becoming the source of the disaster.

Geology of Disaster

The spatial dynamics of the OPT that have been discussed in detail above are played out in the quarries, both in terms of their economic and political use and in terms of the everyday lives of workers, particularly how they move to and from the quarry. As

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[54] Handel, 'Where, Where to and When in the Occupied Territories', p. 193.
[55] See Gary A. Kreps, 'Disaster as a Systematic Event and Social Catalyst,' in *What is Disaster?* ed. E.L. Quarantelli (Routledge, 1998), pp. 31–56.

Handel describes the situation: 'Accessibility and centrality produce political and economic value; transportation expenses over space are embodied in the price of goods and are dependent upon movement possibilities in the space.'[56]

Geography and Scale

The decomposition of space in the West Bank means that quarries and their associated businesses come second only to olive production. As the West Bank lacks any other major natural raw materials, limestone and sandstone are considered to be the 'white oil' of Palestine and the only raw material available to support the Palestinian economy providing a livelihood for thousands of workers. The quarries fall within Zones A, B and C and are generally situated in the south around Hebron and in Nablus and the town of Jama'een in the north. However there are an increasing number of quarries around Ramallah and the surrounding vicinity of Birzeit (figure B).

Established in 2006 the Union is a non-governmental association that represents the owners of the quarries and industrial factories but not the employees. In an interview with the director, I was informed that the quarries and associated industries, including the stone-cutting factories, are the main industrial sector in Palestine, representing approximately 4.5% of GDP. During my field research in 2011, I visited the Stone and Marble Union in Bethlehem. The last survey by the Stone and Marble Union was in 2006 in which it was estimated that there were about 20,000 workers in the industry and over 350 quarries in different areas of the West Bank.

From 2000 until 2005, with the second Intifada and the restrictions imposed on Palestinians by the Israeli Occupation, many of the quarries and stone-cutting factories closed due to mobility in the West Bank being severely reduced by the closure of roads and checkpoints. However since then the industry has increased and there are now estimated to be over 800 stone-cutting factories of varying size. Of the stone and sand excavated from the quarries approximately twenty percent goes to the local Palestinian market and fifteen percent to the international market. The largest amount, sixty-five percent, is expropriated by Israel for its construction industry and to

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[56] Handel, 'Where, Where to and When in the Occupied Territories', p. 180.

build the illegal settlements in the West Bank. Claiming the stone as its own, Israel also re-exports around a quarter of the stone to the international market with an Israeli certificate of origin.
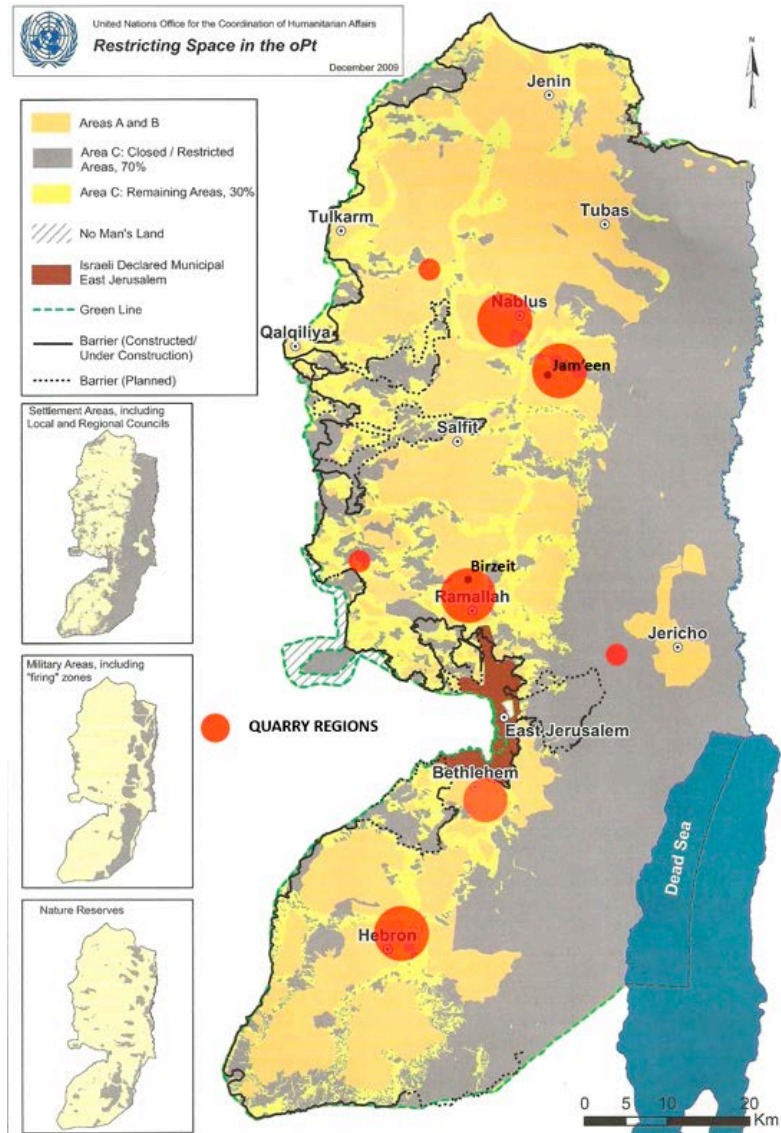
(figure B)

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The quarries, although providing a livelihood for many Palestinians, are complex in their geopolitical status. There are also now a growing number of quarries owned by Israeli entrepreneurs. In her detailed and authoritative research Violet Qumsieh outlines how a land grab of the quarries occurred in the years up to 1998.

> The Israelis have confiscated an area of at least 18,700 dunums [approx 78 acres][57] in the West Bank to construct seven quarries, in various locations. The largest is the Wadi Al-Teen quarry in the Tulkarem district, on an area of 9,685 dunums. In the Ramallah district, an Israeli quarry is located near Kufr Malik village, on a 2,523-dunum area. Israel plans to construct another quarry in the Ramallah district on land belonging to the villages of Rantis and Shuqba. In the Hebron district the following areas have been confiscated for quarries: 1,744 dunums between Dura and Al-Thahiriya; approximately 2,677 dunums from Tarqumiya, Dura and Khirbet Jamroura villages; and 2,077 dunums of land belonging to the village of Surif. Lastly, a quarry is located on land which belongs to Majdal Bani Fadel village in the Nablus district.[58]

We can safely assume that the extent of this land grab has become more pronounced in the last twelve years as Israel shifts from seeing the West Bank as a region to be pacified to treating it as a region to be exploited – not least because Israel has very few quarries within its own borders so relies heavily on the material excavated in the West Bank quarries for the building of illegal settlements in the OPT and the construction industry within colonial Israel, which I expand on in Chapter Two (Israel also expropriates Palestine's other natural resource, water; either just taking it or selling it

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[57] 1 dunum = 0.24 acres.
[58] Violet Qumsieh, *The Environmental Impact of Jewish Settlements in the West Bank* (Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem, 1998)
<http://www.arij.org/publications%282%29/papers/1998%20The%20Environmental%20Impact%20of%20Jewish%20Settlements%20in%20the%20West%20Bank.pdf > [accessed 3 September 2013].

back to Palestine and using the West Bank as a waste and dumping ground[59]). There are also strict laws in Israel governing the noise and dust levels produced by quarries inside Israel. However in the West Bank, with the Palestinian Authority unable to enforce environmental or labour laws because Israel controls the territory, Israeli mining companies are able to operate with greater ease.

Many of the quarries in the West Bank are located in residential areas where a high concentration of particles with hazardous effects can be found. In recent years there has been an increased level of asthma, particularly amongst children in the environs of the mining.[60] The quarries are also destroying the ecological balance and biodiversity of the West Bank's flora and fauna, as well as damaging what little agricultural land there is, as it takes time to rehabilitate land in and around the quarried areas.

Administration/Politics

The quarries epitomise the destruction of the natural and social environment of the West Bank through the 'systematic pirating of Palestinians' natural resources'.[61] The expropriation of raw material from quarries owned by Palestinians and the increasing expansion of Israeli-owned quarries in the OPT are also a violation of international law and under the Fourth Geneva Convention.[62] A report by the political activist group Yesh Din claims that seventy-five percent of the stone and sand from the OPT quarries is exported to Israel and to other continents (the Stone and Marble Union estimate a

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[59] Although there is a rich water supply within the West Bank Palestinians are not permitted to access the natural water reserves through wells or any other means. Israel has complete control of the water resources after the PA's signing of the Oslo Accords acceding to Israel's demand that they not dig further than 500 metres down into the West Bank – a depth too shallow to reach water. Israel thus ciphers the water from the West Bank into Israel and sells water back to Palestinians at a high rate (including tax). While Jewish settlements in the OPT and Israel have swimming pools and cultivate manicured lawns and gardens, Palestinians are restricted to quotas of water for each household and business.

[60] Barli Vieli, *Particulate Matter Emission in the West Bank* (Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem, 2009).

[61] The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ), 'Wadi Al-Teen Quarry and the Systematic Expropriation of Palestinian Natural Resources', (1997) <http://www.poica.org/editor/case_studies/view.php?recordID=590> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[62] Ibid.

figure of sixty-five percent).[63] This colonial and global model of exploitation is further intensified by the increasing inability of the international world to hold Israel to account for its palpable illegal and human rights violations as an occupying force.

As an occupying power Israel is prohibited by international law from expropriating and utilising the West Bank's natural resources unless it is for the sole benefit of the occupied population, the Palestinian people.[64] Hague Regulation 55 states that an occupying power should only be regarded as

> the administrator and usufructuary of public buildings, real estate, forests, and agricultural estates belonging to the hostile State, and situated in the occupied country. It must safeguard the capital of these properties, and administer them in accordance with the rules of usufruct.[65]

It also states that an occupying power will be liable to pay the occupied territory a lease if it profits from its land, in addition to a percentage of profits acquired from a business or industry.

Of course all this has been totally ignored by Israel. In 2009 Yesh Din submitted a petition to take to court the IOF, the Israeli civil administration and a number of Israeli mining companies accusing them of illegally extracting raw resources from the West Bank quarries for the sole benefit of the Israeli construction industry and the building of settlements as an 'illegal transfer of land in the most literal of senses'.[66] In 2012, the High Court of Justice recommended that there should be no new Israeli quarries opened in the OPT, 'whose main purpose is to produce quarry materials for sale in Israel'.[67] However they rejected Yesh Din's petition regarding the expropriation of raw

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[63] Zafrir Rinat,'Yesh Din Petition: Israel Pillages West Bank Resources', *Haaretz* (10 March 2009) <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/yesh-din-petition-israel-pillages-west-bank-resources-1.271765 > [accessed 3 September 2013].

[64] The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ) <http://www.arij.org/> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[65] International Committee Red Cross, *Treaties and States Parties to Such Treaties*, (The Hague, 18 October 1907) **<**http://www.icrc.org/ihl/WebART/195–200065> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[66] Rebecca Anna Stoil, 'Mining in W. Bank Violates International Law', *The Jerusalem Post* (3 September 2009) <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=135343> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[67] Yesh Din, 'HCJ Legalizes Quarrying in the West Bank by Israeli Companies' (2011) <http://www.yesh-din.org/infoitem.asp?infocatid=171> [accessed 3 September 2013].

materials from Palestinian quarries. The reason given was that:

> the laws of occupation must be interpreted to accommodate long-term occupation, in such a way which accords the occupying forces greater powers. The court also noted that Israel's quarry activity in the West Bank benefits the Palestinian residents, since they can enjoy the employment opportunities they offer. The court based its judgment on the Israeli-Palestinian interim agreement which leaves the quarries in Area C under Israeli control, as a proof that the PA has consented to the quarries' operation.[68]

There is, however, no wording in the interim agreements regarding Area C that indicates that the PA gave consent, nor does the PA have the right 'to consent to the violation of the Palestinians' human rights'.[69] As Yesh Din's General Director Haim Erlich makes clear:

> The HCJ [High Court of Justice] has already enabled the settlement enterprise with its rulings as well as the separation fence that cuts through Palestinian villages, and now it is allowing the continued theft of the Palestinian quarries for the Israeli economy. This crosses yet another red line of violation of international law, in complete contempt of the rights of the occupied people under Israeli rule.[70]

The West Bank has effectively become a zone of free enterprise for Israeli entrepreneurs investing in projects like the quarries. This picture is further complicated by the fact that partnerships between Palestinians and Israelis' are created in order to exploit the quarry industry. There is no 'body' to oversee investments such as these, protect workers rights, prevent damage to the local environment, or give something back financially and economically to the OPT.

People in the Region

This picture is further complicated with the increase of areas in the West Bank being used as quarries for private Israeli companies. Israel is no longer completely reliant on trading with quarries owned by Palestinians (most of these are family run), with the result that some Palestinian quarries have come under closure acts from the Israeli

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[68] Yesh Din, 'HCJ Legalizes Quarrying in the West Bank by Israeli Companies' (2011) <http://www.yesh-din.org/infoitem.asp?infocatid=171> [accessed 3 September 2013].
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

military. With many Palestinian quarries operating in Area C, under Israeli administration and security, many Palestinian quarries have become economically unviable due to Israeli-imposed restrictions on work. These include: having to apply for permits from Israel; being able only to excavate part of the land; land being confiscated for military training; proximity to a settlements; explosives not being permitted for breaking up the stones; and the use of ineffective machinery which is time consuming. In addition the quarries in Area C are completely unregulated. The result is that work conditions in the quarries are not monitored, giving rise to long working hours, a lack of protective clothing and masks, and low salaries. There is also no regulation of the environmental hazards of quarries in close proximity to, sometimes even inside, residential areas. In the case of a town near Nablus called Jama'een, where I spent a considerable amount of time filming and speaking with local residents about the impact of the quarries, the air is so polluted with dust that many of the elderly people find it difficult to leave their homes. There is a continuous source of traffic from the quarries through the town, which has only one main road, full of lorries laden with stone and debris.

At a quarry to the west of Ramallah and bordering the Qalandiya refugee camp – where Ramzi, one of the participants in the film, works as a security guard – excavation had been halted for over four years (until very recently) with all machinery closed down by Israel. No reason was given, although the quarry neighbours a military training ground and the Separation Wall, so one assumes that these factors have played a part in the attempt to bring the operation to a standstill. As a consequence, of the 100 workers who relied on work at the quarry only a skeleton of twenty-five workers remain, contributing to the huge unemployment in the West Bank.

Before the construction of the Separation Wall Palestinians were one of the main sources of cheap labour in Israel and were to be found in all spheres of manual work. Before the Wall the quarries were used as fluid spaces by the Palestinians to travel to university and work. They were no-man's lands that allowed those prepared to navigate off the traditional routes on to minor roads and paths to find gaps and cuts in the landscape that were not surveyed by the Occupying Force. These no-man's lands

enabled access to Jerusalem and Israel as well as being shortcuts past the checkpoints that had sprung up all over the OPT. With the construction of the Separation Wall, the quarries no longer fulfil this purpose and are now merely desolate spaces in the landscapes, standing in as markers for the transfer of stones and sand to Israel.[71]

In my field research I visited another quarry east of Qalandiya situated near an Israeli settlement. The quarry is subject to petitioning by the settlers demanding that the site be closed down due to the emissions of dust particles. In addition, the quarry owners, a family from Ramallah, have only been allowed to excavate a third of their land with the remaining two thirds used as an Israeli military training ground and as no-man's land between the quarry, Qalandiya checkpoint[72] and the settlements.

In the Palestinian-run quarries around Ramallah and Birzeit, a university town on the outskirts of Ramallah, the workers are committed to 'doing time' in emptying out the West Bank's landscape. They work either as security guards on night shifts watching over these ravaged spaces, or as quarry workers who are unable to travel home at the end of each day to their families because of the 'matrix of control' established by the Israeli 'security measures'.[73] At a small quarry near Birzeit, four brothers who rent the land to excavate the stone spend five nights a week camping out in a metal shipping container. Before the checkpoints and the Separation Wall, their journey home from Birzeit to Hebron through Jerusalem would take no more than forty minutes. Today it takes over two and a half hours. As a result they are confined to the quarry at night, their dreams taken over by the ruin of their homeland as an empire is constructed in Israel no more than 20 miles away. (The Birzeit Brothers play a central role in *White Oil*).

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[71] The Palestinian artist Khaled Jarrar's single screen film *Infiltrators* (2012) tracks the movements of Palestinians of all background attempting to find gaps and holes in the Separation Wall as a means of seeking routes through this oppressive barrier in connecting with loved ones, places of work, lost homelands and sites of worship. The film takes the form of a road movie in which Jarrar documents these feats of resistance.

[72] Qalandiya checkpoint is one of the permanent structures that now exist within the West Bank, which Israel calls a 'terminal', as referred to earlier in this chapter.

[73] Jeff Halper, *An Israeli in Palestine: Resisting Dispossession, Redeeming Israel* (Pluto Press, 2008). Halper is an Israeli activist and founder of ICAD, Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, a non-violent, direct-action organisation established in 1997 to resist the Israeli demolition of Palestinian houses in the Occupied Territories. Jeff Halper, ICAD, Israeli Committee Against House Demolition (1997) <http://www.icahd.org/?page_id=68> [accessed 17 September, 2013].

The role of the quarries is further complicated by the fact that they do provide a livelihood for many Palestinians, and will probably continue to do so. For example, in the Israeli owned Sal'it quarry near the West Bank settlement of Maaleh Adumim, there are forty-two Palestinian workers. Eighteen live in annexed East Jerusalem and are permanent residents in Israel with the remaining twenty-four travelling from different part of the West Bank and considered to be residents of the Palestinian Authority (PA).[74] However as Assaf Adiv explains in his article in *Challenge Magazine*:

> The quarry is in Area C, defined by the Oslo Accords as under direct Israeli control both civilly and militarily. Yet the authorities—government ministries, the safety bureaus and the Society for Protection of Nature—keep their distance. All claim to be restricted in what they may do beyond the Green Line, and often they do nothing at all. This hands-off policy makes the area a No Man's Land for workers' rights. Officially, the Civil Administration (an Israeli military apparatus) is in charge, but the relevant officer appears to be chiefly concerned about the welfare of Israeli entrepreneurs. The result is extreme disregard for job and safety conditions, vaguely written pay slips for the East Jerusalemites, and no pay slips for the PA residents, who also have no proper insurance for work accidents.[75]

In May 2011 the workers went on strike after the management of Sal'it quarry continued to ignore the workers' demands for an increase in wages, for wages to be paid on time, and for proper accident insurance. What was significant about this strike is that it was the first by Palestinian workers officially endorsed by the Israeli government in supporting their demands. There have been ongoing strikes by Palestinians during the two Intifadas but these were not union organised or officially recognised. With the aid of the Workers Association Union (WAC), a non-Zionist socialist-based Union in Israel supporting both Jewish and Arabic workers, as well as support from a number of unions internationally who raised a minimum of funds to support the workers while on strike, they held out for two and a half months. It was hoped that the strike at the Sal'it quarry would set a new precedent for Palestinians in claiming their rights and political agency in all work places, including in the settlements where many Palestinians work due to there being so few job opportunities in Palestine.

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[74] Assaf Adiv, 'Palestinian Quarry Workers Organize', *Challenge* (2007)
<http://www.challenge-mag.com/en/article__121/palestinian_quarry_workers_organize > [accessed 3 September 2013] (para 1).
[75] Ibid. (para 2).

On 29 June 2011, on the last day of filming as part of my production trip for *White Oil*, I visited the striking quarry workers at Sal'it. Having witnessed the exploitation of so many workers – not just those under Israeli management but also those employed by Palestinian entrepreneurs who are mirroring the exploitation of labour all over the world – the strike at Sal'it had a tremendous impact on me. Here was proof that there was indeed a possibility of challenging and righting the wrongs of exploitation, and that solidarity among workers, supported by organisations both at home and internationally, has the potential to be a force for change.

The strike took place in front of the Sal'it quarry on the road from Ramallah to Jericho, bordering the desert landscape of the Negev. Under a tent at the quarry entrance fourteen men took shelter from the harsh rays of the sun. Haj Muhammad Fukara, who had worked at the quarry for twenty-seven years since it first opened beside his family's shacks in a wadi (valley), and who took a lead role in the strike, says in an interview with Assaf Adiv:

> Whatever may be the results of the strike, I feel that we're restoring to ourselves the power that's been drained from us through the years. We are making the management realise that we'll no longer put up with humiliation and belittlement… [the strike] has enabled me to get to know the workers and to know who my friends are. If you want to know a man, you have to test him in the hard moment. If I hear workers hesitating about the strike, I tell them that there's no reason to regret our decision. The Arab saying goes, 'When you've sold the camel, don't fret about the reins.'[76]

Although *White Oil* does not reference the Sal'it quarry or the strike, I felt it imperative to mention it as a vital illustration of the context and the issues at stake for workers within this region.[77] All of the issues around the quarries are emblematic of the intensely contested and conflicted state of life in an occupied land, and of the wider global and geopolitical struggle, which converges on the Israel/Palestine conflict.

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[76] Assaf Adiv, 'When you've sold the camel, don't fret about the reins' (WAC-MAAN, the Workers Advice Center, 2011).
<http://www.wac-maan.org.il/en/article__214/'when_youve_sold_the_camel_dont_fret_about_the_reins > [accessed 3rd September 2013] (paras 2 and 14).
[77] A future film will include the audio and visual material I collected while on location supporting the strike.

2: SITE SPECIFICITY, LOCATION AND IDENTITY

Seizing Locality

In asking how artist moving image can reconceptualise the exploitation of land and labour in a zone of conflict we need also to look at the constructed narratives that have overwritten and repressed other narratives. In this chapter I look at how Israel has not only expropriated the stone from the quarries in the West Bank, but has also invested national, ideological and spiritual narratives within the stone in symbolising their presence in the landscape.

In 1968 the masterplan for the city of Jerusalem stated that:

> The value of the visual impression that is projected by the stone…[carries] emotional messages that stimulate other sensations embedded in our collective memory, producing strong associations to the ancient holy city of Jerusalem.[78]

In this chapter I focus on how the stone has a number of different sedimentations and strata – historical, geological, judicial, military, physical, material, symbolic, filmic and representational – and how the stone can be perceived as an archive in which the historical, social and political forces that have impacted on the OPT are embedded.

Archaeology

Collective memory is the act of remembering and has been an important objective in national state building in Israel. In activating collective memory towards a retrieval of the past, archaeology, architecture, history and education have been the main players. Israeli Jews take a great interest in archaeology, and in the broader sense history which extends to architecture, and plays an important part in shaping collective and national consciousness.[79] Nachman Ben-Yehuda outlines how the well-known and

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[78] Avia Hashimshoni, Scweid Yosef and Zion Hashimshoni, Municipality of Jerusalem, *Masterplan for the City of Jerusalem* 1968 (1972), p. 13 (Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 28).

[79] Yaacov Shavit, 'Truth Will Rise from the Land: Points in the Development of Public Jewish Interest in Archeology (till the 1930's)', *Cathedra* 44:27–54 (1986), in Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *The Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel* (University of Wisconcin Press, 1995).

controversial archaeological excavations of Masada near the Dead Sea have been used in the ideological battle for claiming locality. In his book *The Masada Myth* he examines how the State of Israel mobilises archaeology to instill a sense of presence and belonging in the landscape for the Jewish people[80] and to create a strong sense of nationalism. In the 1980s a number of papers were written that exposed Israeli archaeologists' and historians' distortions of the facts for political purposes, and that accused the State of Israel of hijacking myths for national and political purposes as well as focusing on the most negative aspects of Jewish history and their continuing persecution.[81, 82]

Yigael Yardin, an Israeli politician and archeologist who excavated the Quaram Caves and Masada at the Dead Sea, made explicit his ideological and political views in relation to archeology in an interview in 1969 with *Bamachane*, the official weekly magazine of the Israeli Defense Force:[83]

> The public's interest in the antiquities of the land is … almost phenomenal…
> Everyone feels and knows that he is discovering and excavating findings and artifacts from the days of his fathers. And every finding bears witness to the connection and covenant between the people and the land … as far as Israel is concerned … the search and building of the connection to the people and the land … must be taken into consideration… [Archaeology] in my view reinforces the Hebraic consciousness, let us say – the identification and the connection with ancient Judaism and Jewish consciousness. (23(26)14–15)[84]

These ideas were not confined to the 1960s when Yardin gave this interview, nor were they confined to archaeology; they are rooted in an ideology in which the past is

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[80] I use the term Jewish people in this context rather than Jewish Israelis as it is important to note that the Jewish Diaspora is as deeply invested in Israel as those who actually live there.

[81] Ben-Yehuda, *The Masada Myth*. Ben-Yehuda references (p. 380) an article published in 1992 in *Newsweek* which outlined how history is taught to Israelis by focusing on the most negative aspects and emphasising the continuing persecution of the Jews without ever engaging with the Jewish renaissance and the complexity of Jewish history, which is by no account straightforward.

[82] There have been accounts claiming that Zionists in the early part of the twenty-first century fabulated terrorist attacks in Jewish neighbourhoods in Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries to persuade Jews living in the Diaspora that they were under threat and that Israel was the only place that could provide a safe haven and real sense of belonging for Jews. Naeim Giladi, an Iraqi Jew who emigrated to Israel and then America, wrote an autobiographical account and historical analysis of Zionist misdeeds in an article titled 'The Jews of Iraq' (1998). The article later formed the basis for his originally self-published book, which was banned in America and Israel and is now available through Dandelion Books. Naeim Giladi, *Ben-Gurion's Scandals: How the Haganah and the Mossad Eliminated Jews* (Dandelion Books, 2003).

[83] Ben-Yehuda, *The Masada Myth*, pp. 65 and 332.

[84] Ben-Yehuda, *The Masada Myth*, p. 65.

socially constructed in the present to fit the modes of the present. Collective memory is always an invention of the present and challenges the assertion that there is an 'objective past'.[85] If collective memory is only constituted in relation to one group of people, then the past is composed in relation to their political, national and ideological narratives, and this has been one of the dominant features of Israel's state building. In every corner of Israeli society, there is a reminder of the legacy of the landscape as the Jewish homeland. When visiting and living in Israel for short periods of time in the 1980s and 1990s, I was struck by the way that one's attention was consistently drawn to the Old Testament and Jewish history in the landscape and in nearly every visual or textual document, whether newspapers, a guide book in a hotel, a map, with very little or no mention at all of Palestinian history. In many ways this is perhaps not surprising for a state that was established on volatile foundations. However, most Jews in Israel at the time were from the Diaspora and either Ashkenazi Jews (Northern European Jews), whose history was embedded in European ideas, history and culture, or Sephardic Jews (Spanish and Middle Eastern Jews), whose history was embedded in the ideas and culture of Spain and the Middle East. In Israel the complexity of these identities was repressed in the early stages in order to unite all Jews under a 'Hebraic' status and install a strong sense of national identity based on links with ancient Jewish history in the bible.[86]

The Palestinian writer Nadia Abu El-Haj has examined how biblical archaeology has

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[85] Ibid., p. 22.

[86] In its founding years the State of Israel banned Yiddish as a spoken and written language. Yiddish was the vernacular language of the Jews from central and Eastern Europe before the Holocaust, and was originally a German dialect with words from Hebrew and several modern-day languages. All Jews immigrating to Israel were versed in Hebrew which was perceived as the language that carried the true historical legacy of the Jewish People. Giorgio Agamben's words are pertinent here when he says that 'The vicious entwining of language, people, and the state appears particularly evident in the case of Zionism. A movement that wanted to constitute the people par excellence (Israel) as a state took it upon itself, for this very reason, to reactualize a purely cult language (Hebrew) that had been replaced in daily use by other languages and dialects (Ladino, Yiddish). In the eyes of the keepers of tradition, however, precisely this reactualization of the sacred language appeared to be a grotesque profanity, upon which language would have taken revenge one day.' Giorgio Agamben, *Means without End, Notes on Politics*, trans. by Vincenzo Binette and Cesare Casarino (University of Minnesota, 2000), pp. 67–68. It is ironic that what Israel was doing was in effect erasing two thousand years of Jewish history lived out through the Diaspora. Yiddish, largely spoken by Ashkenazi Jews, incorporated everyday customs, stories and myths, collectively forming a semiotics of Jewish life which was rich and culturally diverse. Sadly, Yiddish is now becoming a forgotten language and on the verge of disappearance.

been used by Israel in its historical foundation to 'validate the claim that vernacular architecture was in fact Jewish', and thereafter developed into built forms by Israeli architects.[87] Edward Said writes of being indebted to El-Haj's research in which she exposes 'a history of systematic colonial archaeological exploration in Palestine',[88] whereby subsequent historical narratives were appropriated into the expansion of the Jewish nation State 'fashioning the colonial and nationalist project(s) and imagination(s)', and dismantling signs of Palestinian history.[89] Abu El-Haj outlines how bulldozers in a dig at Jezreel grind through strata comprising 5,000 years of history, until the deeper levels of the Bronze Age/Canaanite and Iron Age/Israelite are reached, piling up the debris of other histories in their mission to excavate Jewish History. In so doing the 'past histories – Crusader, Ottoman, Arab – are subsumed and de-nationalised or stripped of their significance'.[90] In the Six-Day War in 1967, just before the ceasefire, Israel used bulldozers to demolish the 400-year-old North African (Maghariba) Quarter in East Jerusalem, which contained important Islamic buildings, in order to clear the space for an enormous plaza extending between the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall (also known as the Wailing Wall). A whole neighbourhood was erased and several thousand people displaced.[91]

The critical theorist Walter Benjamin's words have a powerful resonance here: 'there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner

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[87] Edward Said wrote of Abu El Haj that: 'What she provides first of all is a history of systematic colonial archaeological exploration in Palestine, dating back to British work in the mid-nineteenth century. She then continues the story in the period before Israel is established, connecting the actual practice of archaeology with a nascent national ideology – an ideology with plans for the repossession of the land through renaming and resettling, much of it given archeological justification as a schematic extraction of Jewish identity despite the existence of Arab names and traces of other civilizations. This effort, she argues convincingly, epistemologically prepares the way for a fully fledged post-1948 sense of Israeli-Jewish identity based on assembling discrete archaeological particulars -scattered remnants of masonry, tablets, bones, tombs...'. Edward Said, *Freud and the Non-European* (Verso, 2003), p. 47.
[88] Ibid., p. 47.
[89] Nadia Abu El-Haj, 'Translating Truths: Nationalism, the Practice of Archaeology, and the Remaking of Past and Present in Contemporary Jerusalem', *American Ethnologist*, 25:2 (May 1998), pp. 166–188 (p. 181).
[90] Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 106–108.
[91] Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground,* p. 165, cited in Weizman, *Hollow Land*, pp. 37–38. See also David Cassuto, *The Western Wall: A Collection of Essays Concerning the Design of the Western Wall Plaza and Its Surrounding* (The Jerusalem Post Press, 1975), p. 95.

in which it was transmitted from one owner to another.'[92] Israel has been fashioned on the historical past of the physical landscape and its Hebraic roots. This fashioning on the distant past has meant that Palestinians are seen as vanishing points on the horizon, where the Jewish narrative dominates as a way of grasping what it perceives to be 2,000 years of history and exile.

The prevailing Israeli narrative on Jerusalem has been, as Edward Said noted, 'to project an idea of Jerusalem that contradicted not only its history, but its very lived actuality, turning it from a multicultural and multi-religious city into an "eternally" unified, principally Jewish city under exclusive Israeli sovereignty'.[93] This absence of respect for other histories and cultures is tragic, particularly in light of Jewish history and the systematic erasing of Jewish life and culture by other groups in pogroms and the Holocaust.

Architecture

While archaeologists sought Jewish history below the ground, architects were looking for a sense of locality above ground in order to define Israeliness 'as a local native culture', taken over by the latecomer Palestinians. [94] Nazmi Al-Ju'beh, archaeologist and historian at Birzeit University and co-director of Riwaq (Center for Architectural Conservation) in Ramallah, has researched how architecture has been used in the historical deception by expropriating Palestinian antiquities, and the visible way Israel establishes structures that convey a sense of Jewish history through material properties actually connected to Palestinian history.[95] Al-Ju'beh outlines how Palestinian antiquities have been looted and historical buildings destroyed, with many of their ornamental stones expropriated and incorporated within new structures in Israel, endowing the architecture with a historical feel in the fabulation of 'collective

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[92] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, edited and with introduction by Hannah Arendt (Fontana Press, 1992), p. 248.

[93] Edward Said, 'Projecting Jerusalem', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 25:1 (Autumn 1995), p. 7. For the religious syncretism of Ottoman Jerusalem, see Salim Tamari, ed., *Jerusalem 1948, The Arab Neighborhoods and Their Fate in the War* (Institute of Jerusalem Studies, 1999).

[94] Alona Nitzan-Shiftan, 'Seizing Locality in Jerusalem', in *The End of Tradition?* ed. Nezar Al Sayyad (Routledge, 2004), pp. 231–55, p. 242.

[95] Nazmi Al Jubeh, 'Architecture as a Source for Historical Documentation: The Use of Palestine's Built Heritage as a Research Tool', *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 36 (2009).

memory' and 'historical rights'.[96] For example, the architecture of the Arab village of Silwan was perceived as biblical and so was included in a park in the green belt around the Old City.[97]

Stone

Stone has been a central component in the production of the historicist context of post-modern architecture in Israel and in particular Jerusalem, coinciding with the housing boom post-1967. In *Hollow Land*, Eyal Weizman draws our attention to how architecture of this period was infatuated with 'place' and 'region', where the idea of 'dwelling' was pitched against 'housing' and 'home' in an increasingly alienated post-modern world.[98]

Ram Karmi, a young architect who was at root a historicist, became chief architect of the Ministry of Construction and Housing in 1974, and was responsible for overseeing the construction of residential areas in Israel. Karmi and many of his peers were supporters of the Labour Party, the party in power at the time that was responsible for the colonisation of Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories between 1967 and 1977. Karmi, like many of these young architects, had returned to Israel from Europe, not out of national conviction but because there was the opportunity in the new State to engage in issues that were at that time central to architectural discourse, counteracting the brutalist style architecture of the 1950s and 1960s socialist housing blocks of European modernism.[99] In 1977 in his introduction to 'Israel Builds', an official publication by the Ministry of Housing, Karmi says,

> We live under the pressure of a shortage of housing… We make every effort to build as much as our budget permits… Still I feel that in all those efforts there is a lack of one component, the component around which Israel came into existence: The

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[96] Ibid., p. 49.

[97] Alona Nitzan-Shiftan, 'The Israeli "Place" in East Jerusalem: How Israeli Architects Appropriated the Palestinian Aesthetic After the '67 War', *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 7:1 (Summer 2006), pp. 15–27 (p. 23).

[98] The theoretical reference for this was Martin Heidigger's 'Building Dwelling Thinking', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Albert Hoftstadter (Harper Colophon Books, 1971). For an in-depth analyses of this issue see also, 'Seizing Locality in Jerusalem', in *The End of Tradition*, ed. N. AlSayyad (Routledge, 2004), pp. 241–4 (p. 238), cited in Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 36.

[99] Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 43.

establishment of a 'national home' … Home means more than just the narrow confines of one's apartment; it implies a sense of belonging to the immediate surroundings…[100]

For Karmi the search for national identity and sense of belonging was conveyed and executed through architecture in which the limestone from the West Bank played a central role.[101]

The Judicial

Throughout the twentieth century a number of bylaws were put in place regarding the use of limestone from the West Bank as the main material of construction in Jerusalem. After 1967, these bylaws included areas extending beyond the green line into the West Bank. However, the first stone bylaw was put in place in 1918 by Colonel Ronald Storrs, who had been appointed military governor of Jerusalem in 1917, on behalf of the British Mandate after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. For Storrs, like so many in Britain at the time, the return of the Jews to Palestine was considered an act of salvation and historic justice. Storrs later wrote that the Zionist project was 'forming for England "a little loyal Jewish Ulster" in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism'.[102]

The 1918 stone bylaw implemented by Storrs in the Old City of Jerusalem declared that only local limestone could be used in the construction of new building extensions and roofing.[103] For Storrs, the local limestone with its yellow hue embodied the Holy Land past dating back thousands of years and shaped a memory of biblical tradition. In 1937 he published his memoirs, *Orientations*, where he stated:

> Jerusalem is literally a city built upon rock. From that rock, cutting soft but drying hard, has for three thousand years been quarried the clear white stone, weathering blue-

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[100] Ram Karmi, 'Human Value in Urban Architecture', in *Israel Builds* 1977, eds. Amiram Harlpap and Hari Frank (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Housing, 1977), p. 31, cited in Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p.43.
[101] Ibid., p. 31.
[102] Ronald Storrs, *Orientations* (I. Nicholson & Watson, 1939), p. 405. The relationship between geographical representation, national identity and global politics is explored in Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Penguin, 1991). See also Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (Oxford University Press, 2003), p.15.
[103] Weizman, *Hollow Land*, pp. 28–30.

grey or amber-yellow with time, whose solid walls, barrel vaulting and pointed arches have preserved through the centuries a hallowed and immemorial tradition.[104]

Eitan Bar Yosef, in his book *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799–1917: Palestine And the Question of Orientalism*, analyses representations of the Holy Land in English culture and how Jerusalem has always been a 'quintessential part of English identity and culture'. He explores how this vision shaped the Victorian experience of actual Jerusalem in the Middle East.[105] Britain's Imperial ethos was embedded in the Protestant vocabulary of the 'Chosen People' and the 'Promised Land'. As Bar-Yosef explains:

> When the so-called Orientalist drive to Levant was superimposed on the long-standing religious impulses toward the same geographical terrain – as was the case with British Interests in the Holy Land – the discourse that emerged could be much more ambiguous than postcolonial criticism hitherto acknowledged.[106]

The Holy Land functions as an ideological foundation for and an object of western imperialism, as it maps a biblical narrative over colonial territory. We see this with Storrs, who appropriates the stone in conjuring up and sustaining the sanctified Holy Land as a pervasive presence, and in the construction of an enduring perception of the landscape through recourse to the Holy Land, both real and imagined.[107]

By attempting to reinforce an image of Orientalised locality the stone bylaw was initially only applied to the Old City, but it was later extended in 1936 to the whole municipality and surrounding area. In 1944 this regulation was modified so that only

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[104] Storrs, *Orientations*, p. 44.

[105] The collaborative artists Matthew Cornford and David Cross have explored this in their sculptural work *Jerusalem* (1999) commissioned by *East International*. A life-sized figure of a military cadet boy soldier was cast from bullet lead and mounted on a Caen stone plinth and then inscribed by the 'monumental mason of Norwich Cathedral with the single word, Jerusalem'. The sculpture was set in the 'peaceful and quintessentially English scene' of the public school grounds of King Edward VI School, Norwich, 'facing west in an open space of well tended turf, bounded by mature trees and crowned by the spire of Norwich Cathedral'. Cornford and Cross, *Jerusalem* (1999) <http://www.cornfordandcross.com/projects/1999/01jerusalem/index.html> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[106] Eitan Bar Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799–1917: Palestine And the Question of Orientalism* (Clarendon Press, 2005), p. 4.

[107] Molly K. Robey, *Sacred Geographies: Religion, Race, and the Holy Land in U.S. Literature* (Lightning Source UK Ltd, 2011).

external walls and columns of houses and the facade of walls adjacent to a road needed to be 'natural, square dressed stone'.[108] With the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 the regulations in Jerusalem were maintained but modified so that much thinner layers of sawn stone, 6 mm thick, were permitted.[109]

The stone bylaws were recently included by Frank Gehry in his design for the 'Museum of Tolerance', which combined stone clad walls with his signature titanium cladding.[110] The proposed Museum of Tolerance in Jerusalem, funded by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in the USA, is to be located on the site of a Muslim cemetery in the area called Mamilla. The cemetery dates back to the 7th century and has been dug up in order to house the museum. The project caused strong local and international protest amongst both Muslim and Jewish objectors, with Gehry eventually withdrawing his design and involvement in the project. A lawsuit suspended digging for four years but construction has now resumed behind high walls, with hundreds of excavated skeletons being exhumed and removed.[111]

In a residency undertaken in Jerusalem with ArtSchool Palestine, the British artist Sarah Beddington produced a single screen film, *Elegy to Mamilla* (2009). The film investigates the excavation of memory and loss in Israel and Palestine through the dismantling of the Mamilla Muslim cemetery for the construction of the Israeli Museum of Tolerance.[112]

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[108] Jerusalem Town Planning Ordinance, 1936; Jerusalem outline town planning scheme [modification], 1944. See also the discussion in Arthur Kutcher, *The New Jerusalem, Planning and Politics* (Thames and Hudson, 1973), pp. 51–4 (Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 274).

[109] Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 30.

[110] Ibid., pp. 274–75.

[111] The development of Jerusalem's Independence Park in the 1960s destroyed a large portion of the cemetery, with pipes laid directly over many of the tombs. See 'Petition For Urgent Action On Human Rights Violations By Israel', *Campaign to Preserve Mamilla Jerusalem Cemetery* <http://www.mamillacampaign.org> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[112] *Elegy to Mamilla* moves between historical excavation and poetic observation as it documents the cemetery area from daylight through to dusk, juxtaposing footage of the construction site with a reflective portrait of the surrounding cemetery. An important aspect of the film is the calm and soft voice of the Palestinian poet and director of the Al Qattan Foundation in Ramallah, Mahmoud Abu Hashhash, reading the remaining tomb inscriptions. Each inscription begins with al-Fatiha – a request for the reader to look up the first chapter, or surah, of the Qu'ran. *Elegy to Mamilla* makes visible the role of architecture in distorting and erasing Palestinian history once again. Sarah Beddington, *Elegy to*

Symbolic and Military

Following the occupation of the West Bank in 1967 a new urban master plan for Jerusalem was put in place to ensure the city's unification. The architects of this plan, Avia Hashimshoni, Yosef Scweid and Zion Hashimshoni, stated in 1968 that they must 'build the city in a manner that would prevent the possibility of it being repartitioned…'[113] as well as take into account that the function and value of masonry construction must also be measured, 'not only according to architectural value that seeks to reveal a building's construction methods in its appearance, but according to cultural value that sees buildings as conveyors of emotional messages'.[114]

As a consequence, a unifying regulation was introduced stating that new construction on the periphery of Jerusalem (which was moving into the remote hilltops of the West Bank, becoming the origins of the settlements that we see today) required the use of stone cladding throughout the expanded municipal area.[115]

In the post-1967 period, the stone not only embodied the earthly nature of place but was a unifying material in Israel's Occupation of East Jerusalem and beyond, strategically defining and extending Israel's borders beyond the green line. Architecture and town planning in Jerusalem was to become a way of designing strategic military outposts in the West Bank.[116] The stone from the quarries was used as the raw material in the fortification of Israel, and as a consequence the West Bank has been fragmented, with the infra-space reserved for Palestinians surveyed and captured on every level.

On a symbolic level the stone was appropriated to capture a sense of spirituality and

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Mamilla (2009). <http://www.sarahbeddington.com/video/?video_id=461&group=70> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[113] Hashimshoni, *Masterplan for the City of Jerusalem*? (Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 28).

[114] Ibid.

[115] Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p.31.

[116] Weizman talks extensively about this in *Hollow Land* as well as his early book, *A Civilian Occupation*. All settlements are built on hilltops and are strategic sites of military surveillance over the West bank, acting as a boundary between Israel and the rest of the Middle East. Most secular Israelis support the settlement projects in the OPT entirely for this reason. It should also be noted that the settlements are primarily constructed by cheap Palestinian labour who earn approximately 200 shekels a day (£40).

even holiness in sustaining perceptions of Jerusalem as a Holy City in its entirety. Meron Benvenisti notes that 'from the moment a particular area is designated as part of the Holy City, it comes under Jerusalem's religious laws, whose sole objective is to strengthen the spiritualities between Jews and their sacred city'.[117] In sales brochures the yellow hued limestone was imbued with a 'quasi-religious mysticism', portrayed as 'a precious stone, carved from the holy mountains of Jerusalem',[118] petrifying all construction in the city and its surrounding areas, from shopping malls to schools and community centres, synagogues and offices, and residential houses with a sacred identity. As Weizman makes clear, 'when the city itself is perceived as holy, and when its boundaries are flexibly redrawn to suit ever-changing political aims, holiness inevitably becomes a planning issue'.[119]

For the Jewish people 'the large and timeless life-cycle' [120] of the stone propels them into an emotional identification with the landscape, and their presence, ownership and authenticity to the land is cemented. The ordeal of daily life for Palestinians under the Occupation, and the labour and fatigue of the quarry workers who are the sheer physical force extracting the stone from the earth, is not accounted for in the Israeli narrative.

Giorgio Agamben, in his book *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, argues that life is now understood only in terms of its complete exposure to sovereign action.[121] Power has become the rule over 'life' in a new era in which politics is bio-politics and delineates the encounter with the subject who possesses psychological life without any political significance or representation before the law. As Alison Ross makes clear, 'bare life is human life that is completely exhausted in status as the correlate of

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[117] Meron Benvenisti, *City of Stone: The Hidden History of Jerusalem* (University of California Press, 1996), p. 147, cited in Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 33.

[118] Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 32.

[119] Ibid., p. 33.

[120] Yosef Sharon, *The Supreme Court Building* (Yad Hanadiv, Rothschild Foundation, 1993) p. 94, cited in Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 32.

[121] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 1–14.

sovereign action'.[122] The stateless Palestinian, the dispossessed, the exile, and the exploited subject used as cheap labour with no civil rights are used for political calculation in the struggle for territory of which the stone is a part. The 'bare life' of the Palestinian quarry worker is exposed to political calculation in the excavation of stone from the quarries, as the non-citizen who is beyond the law and therefore unrepresentable within it. Stripped of any legal standing or political rights, Palestinians are subjects living in a 'state of emergency' decreed by the sovereign state Israel and 'abandoned' by the law, living on the edge of 'disaster'.[123]

It is important to remember that the Palestinians' reliance on the stone industry as a livelihood is a consequence of the Occupation. There are few opportunities to develop other industries or trades in the OPT because two thirds of the total surface of the West Bank, outside of the cities and towns, is under Israeli military and administrative control, which denies permits in almost all cases for businesses and alternative industries. [124]

Building and extending Jerusalem and the settlements in the West Bank has meant that the quarries have proliferated to meet Israel's desire for the stone, ripping apart the landscape of the West Bank, while constructing and maintaining a sense of continuity of Jewish presence within the landscape. For Israel the West Bank has become an industrial park. Since the beginning of the second Intifada in the autumn of 2000, Palestinian labourers have been almost completely prohibited from entering Jerusalem and Israel.[125] This has been achieved through the building of the Separation

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[122] Alison Ross, 'The Agamben Effect', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 107:1, Special Issue (2008), pp. 1–13 (p. 2).

[123] Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, pp. 1–14.

[124] In a conversation with some of my students in Palestine I asked why no one had set up a recycling centre close to Ramallah, as rubbish is a huge problem in the West Bank. According to my students there have been a number of attempts and initiatives to set up a recycling centre but permits had been declined. It is very hard to get to the bottom of exactly why, and when one asks people they just shrug and say, 'the Occupation'. In dividing and regulating the landscape Israel denies industries or initiatives that might create better conditions on the ground for Palestinians and invests in industries that will be of benefit only for Israel.

[125] Weizman, *Hollow Land*.

Wall (with cheap Palestinian labour).[126] West Bank Palestinians who once provided Jerusalem and other areas of Israel with cheap and 'flexible' labour have been kept out of the city by the placement of industrial zones, such as the quarries, far from the new neighbourhoods to the periphery of the municipal area of Jerusalem which now extends into the West Bank.

Over the four decades since 1967, 'twelve remote and homogenous Jewish neighbourhoods'', have been established in the occupied areas of the city of Jerusalem, enveloping and bisecting Palestinian neighbourhoods and villages annexed to the city.[127] Three quarters of all Israelis have settled in the occupied areas since creating an expanded Jerusalem that is the Occupation. As Jeff Halper states, the 'metropolitan Jerusalem is the occupation'.[128] Without the 1968 master plan and investment in the quarries by Israel, government building of metropolitan Jerusalem and the settlements with subsidised housing for Israeli Jews could have not taken place. The other crucial factor in the colonisation of the West Bank and annexed territories has been cultural, with the landscape transformed into a 'familiar home ground'.[129] The stone from the quarries plays a role in naturalising the new construction projects and settlements so that they appear as an organic part of Jerusalem that extends like a serpent into the depths of the West Bank. The visual language of architecture sustains territorial claims and national narratives of belonging for Jews, circumnavigating and erasing the narratives of Palestinians, and leaving Palestine in crisis.

Seizing Back Locality

As my research is centred on the role of art in making visible the geopolitics and spatial dynamics of the OPT, I draw on the role of Palestinian artists, architects, curators and institutions as active agents of change in exposing the Occupation and seizing back

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[126] Since its construction, manual labour in Israel that was previously provided by Palestinians has been replaced by an influx of workers from Asia, who are given temporary work permits with very specific conditions attached.

[127] Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 24.

[128] Jeff Halper, ICAD, Israeli Committee Against House Demolition.

[129] Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 26.

locality. Rather than waiting for a green light from the thus-far failed peace treaties with Israel, since the second Intifada Palestinians have themselves begun to create infrastructures that mirror the statehood of other nations. Questions about how these institutions operate and what makes them unique in relation to the locality of Palestine have been crucial, and the arts have played a significant role in thinking through the issues around statehood. In this section I outline a number of projects and initiatives as examples of the many arts and cultural centres in Palestine, providing examples of projects that I think are particularly pertinent in challenging and reflecting on locality, architecture, statehood, institutions and activism as part of the act of seizing back locality.[130] I have also selected projects and organisations that I have specifically been involved with, either as a teacher or an artist, or those that I have been linked to as an interested observer.

Residencies and Institutions

Art School Palestine is a virtual hub run by Palestinian curator Samar Marta that facilitates residencies in the West Bank. An important aspect of this residency programme is that artists are expected to spend a minimum of two to three months in the West Bank, or make a number of visits over a longer period of time. There is no institutional base and an apartment-studio space is rented on the artists' behalf. The residency aims to enable the research and development of a project by artists working on the ground, starting from an embodied experience of living in Palestine. Samar Marta is based in Ramallah and is at hand to introduce the artists to the locality. Beddington's film *Elegy to Mamilla*, referred to earlier in this chapter, resulted from her residency in Jerusalem with Art School Palestine in 2008 and 2009.[131] The

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[130] The methodologies and practices of Palestinian artists are extremely diverse. Below are some of the artists, animators, architects and curators I think are extremely interesting but that I do not discuss here: Ahmed Habash, Anne-Marie Jacir, Emily Jacir, Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou Rahme, Mirna Bamieh, Elia Suleiman, Ghassan Salhab, Jumana Emil Abboud, Jumanna Manna, Khalil Rabah, Larissa Sansour, Maher Abi Samra, Mohanad Yaccoubi, Mona Hatoum, Nida Nawad, Raeda Saadeh, Ramallah Syndrome, Rashi Salti, Reema Fadda, Shuruq Harb, Sliman Mansour, Tarek Al Ghoussein, Taysir Batniji, Wael Shawky, Wafa Hourani, Oraib Toukan, Nahed Awwad, Basma al sharif. There is also a new wave of younger Palestinian artists emerging from the International Academy of Art, Palestine, such as Noor Abed and Bisan Abu-Eisheh Hussam.
[131] The residency was also in association with the Al Hoash Gallery in Jerusalem where 15 artists from the UK, Germany, Denmark, France, Morocco, Algeria and Jordan were invited to pursue new projects

conditions of Beddington's film production and of my own film work inevitably bring up the question of the unique status of the artist, and particularly the *visiting* artist, operating under exceptional political or social conditions – a question which lies at the heart of Art School Palestine's activities and of this thesis. (In Chapter Three, *The Ethnographic Turn*, I explore the conditions of film production in some detail.) Crucial questions discussed are the types of interventions that can be envisaged and how these unfold and impact both locally and globally, as well as the translation of artwork from the locally specific context in which it is produced (Palestine) to the global realms of artistic dissemination.

The Al Mammal Foundation is a Palestinian residency and gallery founded and directed by Jack Periskian[132] and based in the Old City of Jerusalem. Al Mammal facilitates residencies of three-month blocks or, like Art School Palestine, a number of visits over an extended period of time, giving artists the opportunity to build a level of understanding and engagement with the locality. Al Mammal's curatorial programme has developed in parallel with the social and political realities of a Palestine and has taken the form of the Jerusalem Show, where site specific artworks by Palestinian and international artists are placed throughout the Old City of Jerusalem for a period of two weeks.[133] The show includes interventions, performances, talks and screenings, with many of the projects highlighting the different narratives and histories of the city as well as the experience of Palestinians living under Occupation. Since the building of the Separation Wall, Jerusalem has become increasingly isolated from the West Bank, with many businesses and cultural activities relocating to Ramallah. In counteracting this, many of the commissioned projects for the Jerusalem Show work with local communities engaging with locality through artworks installed in local cafés, restaurants and community centres.

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or research in locations throughout Palestine which were then exhibited in the locality of East Jersualem.

[132] Jack Periskian was director of the Sharjar Biennial from 2006 until 2011. He is currently the director of the forthcoming Palestinian Museum which is under construction on land contributed by Birzeit University on the outskirts of Ramallah.

[133] In 2008 I participated in the Jerusalem show, screening two films reappropriating archival footage from the British Mandate period in Palestine as well as curating a series of screenings of pre-existing films and footage from the British Mandate period.

In 2012, Al Mammal joined up with a number of other cultural institutions in Palestine to organise the first Qalandiya Biennale to take place across Palestinian cities, towns and villages.[134] Qalandiya is the name of the largest checkpoint that divides the West Bank from Jerusalem. One aim of the Qalandiya Biennale was to highlight valuable architectural sites through artistic interventions. Films, talks, walks and performances were included and drew attention to the way cultural, social and political life has been affected by the checkpoints, the Separation Wall and other aspects of the Occupation. The core objective of this initiative was to engage the local public and join forces and resources in 'forming links across a fragmented geography; [in] a take on unity'.[135]

The International Academy of Art, Palestine in Ramallah (IAAP), where I have been a visiting lecturer since 2008, is very small academic institution. Founded by the artist Khaled Hourani, it was to begin with a conceptual artistic project engaged in thinking through what an Academy of Art could be as part of a state-building initiative in a region where Palestinian statehood and autonomy have been denied. The Academy was realised as an actual rather than virtual project in 2007, and is accredited and funded by the Oslo National Academy of Arts (KHIO).[136] With around 36 students the IAAP is an intimate but very engaged teaching environment in the centre of Ramallah. The IAAP attracts a constant flow of local and international visitors and has built strong relationships with other local arts and cultural institutions. In the mission statement on their website IAAP declare that their aim is to be 'a creative hub for international students and artists, via exchange programmes, visiting lecturers, activities and projects'.[137] From 2010 to 2011 the IAAP took part in the radius programme, a forum for exchange, reflection and evaluation in the fields of 'art-based research', 'art for

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[134] The participating cultural institutions included the Palestinian Art Court, Al Hoash in Jerusalem, IAAP, Riwaq, A.M. Qattan Foundation and The Sakakini Cultural Center based in Ramallah and The House of Culture and Arts in Nazareth.

[135] Qalandiya International (2012) <http://www.qalandiyainternational.org/?q=about> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[136] IAAP has a small pool of staff including academic director Tina Sherwell, an Anglo/Palestinian writer and director Khaled Hourani, two technicians and two administrative staff as well a Board of Directors of The Palestinian Association Contemporary Art (PACA) composed of a number of Palestinian artists, curators and academics. With a student body ranging from 12 students in my first year of teaching to currently 36 students it is a very intimate and engaged community. Students have studio space on the premises which are open 24 hours a day.

[137] International Academy of Art Palestine <http://www.artacademy.ps/english/index.html> [accessed 3 September 2013].

social transformation' and 'art in the public sphere'. [138] Tina Sherwell, the academic director, is currently trying to make a case for a funded fellowship at IAAP involving teaching and research on an ongoing basis. The IAAP has been an important hub for my research, with many of the students assisting in the production of the film *White Oil*. In Chapter Four I refer to this in more depth.

Picasso in Palestine

Khaled Hourani's *Picasso in Palestine* (2011) maps the social and political landscape of Israel and Palestine, exposing the juridical and control systems that regulate how goods and objects are imported and exported to and from Palestine.[139] *Picasso in Palestine* is a project in three parts: (i) mapping and archiving the process and route taken in transporting Picasso's *Buste de Femme* (1943) from the collection at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Holland; (ii) transforming the IAAP, where Hourani is director, into the first art museum in the West Bank for a period of three weeks; (iii) a 52-minute film by Rashid Masharawi and Hourani documenting the entirety of the project as a conceptual artwork (figures 1).

In transforming the IAAP into a museum for three weeks, *Picasso in Palestine* provoked questions about the type of institution that might be developed in Palestine in the future and to what extent the IAAP and the arts can engage the Palestinian communities. Opening in June 2011 the exhibition displayed a Modernist masterpiece, Picasso's *Buste de Femme* (1943), in a public space in Palestine for the first time.[140]

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[138] Radius, *Partnership Kiel – Palestine* (2009) <http://www.radius-of-art.de/2009-partnerschaften-e.php> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[139] Khaled Hourani is an artist, curator and art critic and was one of the founders of the IAAP. He was curator of the Palestinian pavilion for the Sao Paolo Biennial, Brazil, and the 21st Alexandria Biennale, Egypt, and is an active member and founder of artistic and administrative boards in a number of cultural and art institutions. He has participated in the Berlin Biennale, Sharjah Biennial and Documenta 2012.

[140] Munib Al Masri, an industrialist and statesman owns a Picasso painting. Described as the world's wealthiest Palestinian, he is known by locals as the 'Duke of Nablus', 'the Godfather' and the 'Palestinian Rothschild' with his wealth founded in the oil and gas business. His holding company Edgo Group is based in London. In 2000 Masri's constructed a new residence on Mt. Gerzim, above his hometown of Nablus that was modelled after a sixteenth-century Palladio-designed villa near Venice. The house is almost entirely built from materials imported from abroad and the walls adorned with paintings by Picasso and Modigliani along side 'tapestries, silver, Louis XIV sofas, a wooden staircase

The reality of life in Palestine under Occupation meant that in order for the painting to be loaned to the IAAP, the standard loan procedures between the Van Abbemuseum and IAAP had to be rethought. As a consequence this conceptually astute project was finally realised two years after Hourani's initial loan request to the Van Abbemuseum in 2009 due to a series of obstacles relating to border controls, statehood and the Occupation.

Many procedures and practices had to be adjusted and legal frameworks re-set regarding insurance and transportation of the painting to the West Bank. In tracking this process, Hourani's project draws attention to complex trajectories a work of art must navigate in order to reach Palestine. The eventual arrival of the painting and the inaugural opening of *Picasso in Palestine*, which I attended, was a momentous occasion. As Nick Aitken comments 'if Picasso can come to Palestine, side-stepping seemingly insurmountable hurdles, then art, museums and new publics still have an important role to play'.[141]

A symposium was held during the opening weekend in Ramallah to contextualise and analyse the project, and Atef Abu Seif spoke poignantly via Skype from Gaza. The political and material differences between Ramallah and Gaza are vast. Ramallah is relatively prosperous economically and culturally compared to the fractured and isolated Gaza.[142] Seif spoke about art's transformative role, saying 'art is not thinking for its people, it is pushing them to think'. Another speaker at the symposium, artist and writer Andrew Conio, addressed the way *Picasso in Palestine* can be seen in relationship to Gilles Deleuze's 'diagram' and identified the project as a new form of 'strategic interventionist artwork' and a model for political artistic practice by drawing on fields such as legislative procedures and legal frameworks. In his paper, 'Picasso In

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from Italy, and a fireplace from Versailles. Outside are 10,000 olive trees, Islamic gardens, and gazelles.' http://www.aub.edu.lb/doctorates/recipients/2012/Pages/masri.aspx [accessed 10th April 2014)

[141] Nick Aitken, *Picasso in Palestine* (Frieze, 2011) <http://blog.frieze.com/picasso-in-palestine> [accessed 3 September 2013]. Nick Aitken is associate director of Outset Contemporary Art Fund, a funding body that supported a symposium that contextualised and analysed the project in parallel with the opening weekend in Ramallah. It should be noted that Outset has an affiliated organisation based in Israel which although independently financed and administered raises important questions regarding funding. However there is not the scope here to explore this.

[142] Gaza is approximately 100 kilometers from Ramallah but inaccessible by land or sea.

Palestine: The Diagram', Conio writes:

> Not only does *Picasso in Palestine* sit comfortably with anti-representational, critical and transformative art practices that disrupt the distinctions between the judicial, legislative, curatorial, scholarly, artistic and activist, it also uniquely pushes these practices forward, into new and unexpected terrains.[143]

Negotiating the realisation of *Picasso in Palestine* was an extraordinarily complex process and endeavour. Commencing as a regular loan agreement between two institutions, the project poses important questions about the relations between art, politics and geography, and lived them through the act of traversing border controls, security and checkpoints.[144]

The 52-minute film, *Picasso in Palestine*, was exhibited at Documenta in 2012. Alongside the film was a small painting on a postcard by Amjad Ghannam depicting *Picasso's Buste* in a gesture of protest. Ghannam was a political prisoner at Glabou Central Prison at the time of the *Buste de Femme's* arrival in Ramallah in 2011.

In response Ghannam sent his own painting on a postcard to Hourani, painted with coffee and other food items that he had access to in prison (figure 2). The postcard, now titled *Buste de Resistance*, is an astonishing testament to art's ability to reach out and touch people beyond the art world. Poesis and politics are not at odds with each other here but are at one, mobilising and refracting a complex set of relationships

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[143] Andrew Conio, 'Picasso In Palestine: The Diagram', *A Prior*, 22 (Oct 2011), p. 27.
[144] Conio, 'Picasso In Palestine

Khaled Hourani (2011) *Picasso in Palestine* (figure 1)

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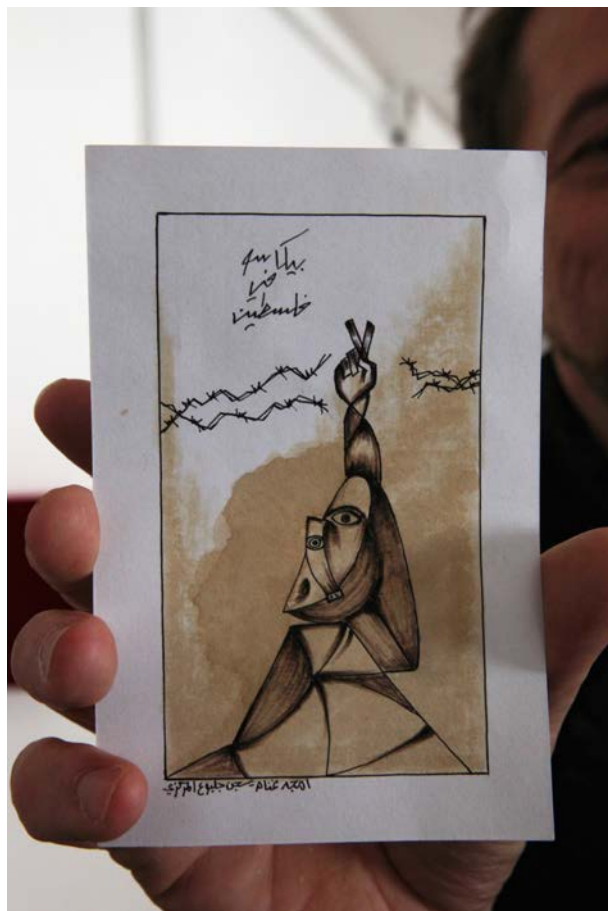
Amjad Ghannam (2011), *Buste de Resistance*
Khaled Hourani holds the hand-drawn postcard (figure 2)

Live, Work in Palestine

Khaled Jarrar's *Live, Work in Palestine* also mobilises political agency. Jarrar's project is a symbolic gesture that bridges the gap between an imagined nation and an actualised state by referencing the United States green card work permit for foreigners. After graduating from the IAAP in 2011, Jarrar[145] created a postage stamp, *State of Palestine postage stamp* (2011), for Palestine and an unofficial passport stamp called *State of Palestine stamp* (2011). Both documents use as their motif a colourful drawing of the Palestinian Sunbird emblematic of the local bird life (figures 3 and 4). The Sunbird, with its beautiful coloured markings of blue and green, is commonly seen in the landscape of Palestine, a region that is one of the main bird migration corridors between Europe and Africa.[146] In Jarrar's project, the Sunbird conjures the theme of Palestinian cultural identity, and, like the architectural group Palestine Regeneration Team's (PART) *Palestine Sunbird Pavilion* (2012), suggests 'a freedom of movement and hopefulness that lies far beyond the control of any enforced borderlines'.[147]

Jarrar's *Live, Work in Palestine* seizes back locality by re-introducing the Sunbird into Palestine's cultural, social and juridical life as an emblem. The postage stamps were issued by Deutsche Post in Germany as part of the Berlin Biennale (2012), with over 20,000 stamps sold and used to send letters all over the world.

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[145] A former student at the International Academy of Arts, Palestine, Jarrar was an integral part of filming with the Birzeit Brothers, acting as a translator and intermediary.

[146] The Palestine Wildlife Society has recently requested that the Palestinian President officially pronounce the Palestine Sunbird as the national bird of the state of Palestine. Nasouh Nazzal, 'Bird Keeps Palestine Name Despite Campaign' *Gulfnews* (2013) <http://gulfnews.com/news/region/palestinian-territories/bird-keeps-palestine-name-despite-campaign-1.1203823 > [accessed 3 September 2013].

[147] *Palestine Sunbird Pavilion* (2012), Palestine Regeneration Team (PART) <http://www.arabbritishcentre.org.uk/events/exhibition-palestine-sunbird-pavilion> [accessed 3 September 2013].

Khaled Jarrar (2011), State of Palestine postage stamp
Image: courtesy of the artist and Galerie Polaris (figure 3)

Khaled Jarrar (2011), State of Palestine stamp

Image: courtesy of the artist and Galerie Polaris (figure 4)

Undermining the everyday life of Palestinians in the West Bank, the Occupation has largely destroyed their ability to organise themselves in political terms, amounting to what Baruch Kimmerling terms 'politicide'.[148] With access to the OPT from abroad tightly controlled by border regimes – the most important locations being Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv and the King Hussein Bridge between Jericho and Jordan (also known as the Allenby Crossing, a legacy of the British Mandate) – the Israeli state has created a paradoxical and impossible situation for Palestine.[149] The denial of the state of Palestine by Israel is synonymous with a denial of borders. As Hourani says: 'I exist in a place that is not a state … full of checkpoints, border crossings and barricades. When there is no state, there are no borders.'[150]

Jarrar's work resists this 'politicide'. With his unofficial State of Palestine passport stamp, Jarrar performs as an unofficial border guard at bus stations and checkpoints, parodying the Israeli border regime by stamping the passports of foreigners arriving in the OPT. This performative gesture contests the fictional border that is controlled in reality by the Occupying sovereign state Israel. Simon Faulkner articulates well how Jarrar asserts his agency:

> "as a creative and political subject … attesting to the fact that the long-standing Israeli attempt to suppress Palestinian political nationalism is an incomplete and in fact failed venture. If Jarrar's project effectively highlights the lack of Palestinian sovereignty, it also asserts the ever-present potential of this sovereignty in the future. The legend 'State of Palestine' exists in the passports stamped by Jarrar as a phantasmic premonition of what might be."[151]

As Faulkner has suggested, the *State of Palestine* stamp 'does not tell one when, or how this state will come into being, or what kind of state it will be', but sets in motion an unforeseeable encounter for the passport holder at the official Israeli border at Ben

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[148] Baruch Kimmerling, *Politicide: Ariel Sharon's War Against the Palestinians* (Verso, 2003).
[149] Simon Faulkner, 'Contesting the Antiborder Condition: Khaled Jarrar's Live and Work in Palestine Project', Simon's Teaching Blog (July 2011) <http://simonsteachingblog.wordpress.com/2011/07/10/contesting-the-antiborder-condition-khaled-jarrar%E2%80%99s-live-and-work-in-palestine-project> [accessed 3rd September 2013].
[150] Khaled Hourani, Statement for the 'Liminal Spaces' project in collaboration with the Israeli Centre for Digital Arts <http://www.digitalartlab.org.il/ExhibitionPage.asp?id=264&path=level_1> [accessed 3 September 2013] cited in Faulkner, 'Contesting the Antiborder Condition'.
[151] Faulkner, 'Contesting the Antiborder Condition'.

Gurion Airport.[152] Jarrar has logged in the form of email testaments the experiences of those traveling through these so-called 'official borders' and their responses to the stamp in their passport. In our conversations and emails Jarrar shared with me that those travelling to other countries from Ben Gurion have been greeted with surprise and curiosity by the immigration border control officials. The passport stamps have invited questions and an appreciation of the aesthetic value of the stamp with the Sunbird motif. In September 2012 Jarrar stamped a passport for the last time in Oslo, before destroying the passport stamp at the doorstep of the Norwegian Nobel Institute.

Ramallah – the fairest of them all?

In a place where statehood is the subject of an ongoing debate, questions addressing the status of public spaces in Ramallah and how they have changed over time are pressing. Planning regulations by the municipality rarely take into consideration public space, and an overview of a city that is rapidly expanding has only recently started to be addressed. Architect, artist and curator Yazid Anani is an important voice in challenging how Palestinian public space, specifically in Ramallah, is developing as a result of neo-liberalism. [153]

In 2010 Anani co-curated, with Vera Tamari, an exhibition called *Ramallah – the fairest of them all?* at the Ethnographic and Art Museum at Birzeit University, in parallel with

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[152] Faulkner, 'Contesting the Antiborder Condition'.

[153] Yazid Anani is an assistant professor at Birzeit University, Palestine, and lecturer at the International Academy of Art, Palestine. He is part of a number of collectives and projects such as Decolonizing Architecture (www.decolonizing.ps), Ramallah Syndrome (ramallahsyndrome.blogspot.de) and has curated projects such as Urban Cafés, Palestinian Cities – *Visual Contention* and several editions of *Cities Exhibition*. Anani lectures and publishes internationally on issues of architecture and urban transformations, colonial spaces and power relations, public art and public spaces and art education. With the former prime minister, economist Salam Fayyad, taking a central role in state building in Palestine under the auspices of the PA, artists are identifying the politicide that manifests as a result of some of these projects. The concern is that they create a false sense of reality for Palestinians, binding them to a consumerist neo-liberal society and in turn to the Occupation. Under the guise of neo-liberalism Palestinians are restrained by turning their attentions elsewhere to the day-to day business of an increasingly materialist society where credit has risen twofold suffocating people financially. This new neo-liberal subjectivity is becoming the dominant strata in Palestine, crippling the resistance movement. In *White Oil*, the narrator Ramzi Safid talks about the changing economic strata of Palestinian society and the increasing divide since the Oslo Accord and the introduction of the credit system. He laments the politicide of Palestine and Palestinians through their newfound allegiance to and seduction by consumerism and neo-liberal capitalism.

a series of public interventions around the city of Ramallah. For Anani, the conceptual premise of the project was to use the exhibition to explore how public space in Palestine has historically been transformed and suggest how public space might be envisaged in the future.[154] In the monthly printed and online magazine *This Week in Palestine* the exhibition is described as attempting to 'draw attention to a variety of relationships between people, place, and time, keeping the cadence and uniqueness of each city'.[155] The installations around the city provoked discussions about how public space is used and regulated in Ramallah with the increasing privatisation of space and neoliberal economy. Anani points out that 'the municipal public park was built in the middle of last century as a free leisure space for different social groups to enjoy. Today, it is restricted to those who can afford the prices of drinks and food.'[156]

The artist collective Ramallah Syndrome's intervention in Ramallah was to circulate thirty canvases with fifteen questions in both Arabic and English and hang them throughout the city in coffee shops and restaurants. These places became alternative spaces in which to generate discussion within a wide spectrum of Palestinian society as well as the international community living in Ramallah. According to Anani, shop owners would acquaint the artists with neighbouring shops and cafés in which to hang their questions and be involved in debating them. Anani stresses that what was vital about the project overall was 'engaging the locality and community in seeing urbanisation as an important component of state building'.[157]

In a collaborative work *Al-Riyadh*, Anani, along with the American Palestinian artist Emily Jacir, produced billboards advertising two fictional architectural projects as a way of accentuating the 'already lived predicaments of the ongoing urbanization and economization of Palestinian cities'.[158] The first billboard named *Al-Riyadh Tower* was

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[154] Shuruq Harb, *Interview with Yazid Anani by Shuruq Harb* (Artterritories, 2010) <http://www.artterritories.net/?page_id=889> [accessed 3 September 2013].
[155] Vera Tamari and Yazid Anani, *Ramallah – the fairest of them all?, This Week in Palestine* (2010) <http://www.thisweekinpalestine.com/details.php?catid=10&id=3167&edid=184> [accessed 3 September 2013].
[156] Harb, *Interview with Yazid Anani*
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.

a modern Dubai-style tower block that promoted a state of the art business environment for foreign trade exchange, to be located on the old vegetable market in al Bireh (figure 5). The building's design was modeled on the global capitalist architecture that we see around the world and asked questions about the kinds of buildings that are currently being constructed in Ramallah. The second billboard proposal was *Al-Riyadh Villas*, a gated community project restricted to those who could afford to live there. The design replicated an Israeli settlement, much like the city of Rawabi that is currently being built by the Palestinian Authority in the hills of the West Bank. As well as erasing the 'architectural heritage of the historic centre of Ramallah', *Al-Riyadh Villas* was depicted with high walls as borders, surveillance cameras and private security guards.[159]

The billboards were placed in the centre of Ramallah provoking reactions from the public as a way of asking crucial questions about the role these types of buildings play in Ramallah: Who are they for? Which sector of Palestinian society uses or benefits from such buildings? What are the impacts of these types of structures and the ideology behind them on Ramallah's inhabitants, resources and access to public space? The buildings do not reflect or have any relation with Palestinian architecture and sense of locality but merely mirror colonial style architecture. Anani and Jacir were interested in challenging the status quo in thinking through the possible 'solutions and modifications that could preserve Palestinian social and cultural values … with the hope of helping to produce a city structure unique to Ramallah and Palestine'.[160]

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[159] Harb, *Interview with Yazid Anani*
[160] Ibid.

Yazid Anani and Emily Jacir (2010), *Al-Riyadh*,
Image: courtesy of the artists (figure 5)

A number of students at the IAAP have also been making work that explores the effects of urbanisation in Ramallah, the increasing noise levels, the demise of public space where children can play or older people can spend time outside, and how new buildings block out light and the views from neighbouring buildings. These new buildings do not alleviate the effects of the Occupation but rather create another level of stratification within Palestinian society by dividing and fragmenting locality even further and removing any possibility of a common shared space.

Walking Through Vanishing Landscapes

The rapid expansion of Ramallah and other urban hubs is also a consequence of the political situation and the effects and dangers of the Occupation. Rural areas in the West Bank are constantly under attack from Israeli settlers. In the last few years this violence has steadily increased, from the polluting of wells in villages, destruction of Palestinian crops and olive trees, to physical assaults and firearms attacks on

Palestinians in their towns and villages.[161]

The Palestinian human rights campaigner, lawyer and writer Raja Shehadeh's book *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* addresses some of the issues discussed above in his poetic and literary accounts of walking through the hills of the West Bank. He refers to the increasing dangers of walking alone and to the aggression often encountered from Israeli settlers or the IOF. Shehadeh narrates six walks he took between 1978 and 2006, mapping the West Bank temporally and spatially, and showing us the lost footpaths that have become a metaphor for the deprivation of an entire people estranged from their land. He finds the old trails he used to walk now impassable and the hilly terrain that he once traversed freely now become contested ground. Shehadeh writes:

> When I began hill walking in Palestine a quarter of a century ago, I was not aware that I was travelling through a vanishing landscape … the biography of these hills is in many ways my own, the victories and failures of the struggle to save this land also mine.[162]

As a response to the increasing difficulty of hiking in the West Bank, the Ramallah Walking group Shat-ha was founded in 2006 to enable people to walk in the safety of numbers.[163]

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[161] More recently there have been attacks on Palestinian homes and mosques with firearms. There are numerous accounts which have finally made their way into the International media: Ian Traynor, 'Israel "Turning Blind Eye" to West Bank Settlers' Attacks on Palestinians', *Guardian*, 21 March 2012 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/21/israel-settlers-violence-palestinians-europe> [accessed 3rd September 2013]. Also see B'tselem, *Violence by Settlers* (2011) <http://www.btselem.org/settler_violence> [accessed 3 September 2013] and For logged incidents see The Alternative Information Center (AIC), *logged incidents* (2013) website established in 1984 by Palestinian and Israeli grassroots activists <www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/component/search/?searchword=settler+violence&ordering=&searchphrase=all> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[162] Introduction to Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* (Profile Books Ltd, 2007), pp. xiii and 1.

[163] Line Barakat-Masrouji, 'Reflections on the Way to an Early-Morning Hike', *This Week In Palestine* (August 2010) <thisweekinpalestine.com/details.php?id=2819&ed=171&edid=171> [accessed 3 September 2013]. Starting early in the morning, usually on Fridays, these walks have always been one of the highlights of my visits to Palestine. Here I experienced the beauty and flora of the West Bank and observed the small towns and villages nestling in the hills and valleys, walking with people of all ages and backgrounds and enjoying the local fresh homemade contributions to the picnic breakfast of Za'atar (a Middle East herb

Reclaiming and Decolonising Architecture

The collaborative group Decolonizing Architecture (DAAR) engages in projects that create virtual and actual propositions on the ground in the West Bank for the decolonising of land and architecture. Founded by Palestinian architect Sandi Hilal, Italian architect Alessandro Petti and Israeli-born architect Eyal Weizman, DAAR's projects imagine a future for Palestinians in the OPT by transforming and decolonising architecture as a form of resistance. Their projects often involve additional collaborators and combine 'discourse, spatial intervention, education, collective learning, public meetings and legal challenges', by precipitating events that engender new space-times through architectural designs and interventions.[164]

From Oush Grab to Palestine (2008) is a modular work composed of drawings, architectural models and a number of interventions that articulate the possible future use of the Israeli former military base, Oush Grab, that was evacuated in May 2006. DAAR suggested a number of possible reincarnations for this site. These include Palestinian individuals and companies dismantling the concrete structure to reuse and recycle the entire site, including the doors, window frames and reinforced steel. They also proposed transforming the military base into a bird sanctuary and a new public park using the tank ramparts by drilling holes to perforate the concrete walls. In early 2010, 150 activists, Palestinians and Internationals planted olive trees on the Oush Grab hill to re-territorialise the site. However later in 2010 all signs of the military base were razed to the ground by Israel.[165]

In countering the expropriation and destruction of Palestinian artifacts, architecture and heritage, Riwaq, the Center for Architectural Conservation, was founded in 1991 in

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mixed with sesame seeds and dried sumac), Manakish bread, Labeneh (strained yogurt), Ackawi (white salty and smooth cheese), Baba ghanous (aubergine salad) and of course hummus.

[164] *Decolonizing Architecture* (DAAR)
<http://www.decolonizing.ps/site/about/> [accessed 3 September 2013].
Armin Linke and Francesco Mattuzzi, *future archaeology* (2010) <http://www.futurearchaeology.net> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[165] *Oush Grab Introduction* <http://www.decolonizing.ps/site/introduction-2> [accessed 3 September 2013] (para 1). DAARs's projects are significant but there is not the scope within this thesis to go into more detail. For a comprehensive overview of more projects by DAAR see the *Decolonizing Architecture* website.

Ramallah. The organisation focuses on the conservation of Palestinian Heritage and registers historical buildings in the West Bank after 1967. This process has involved collecting 'information about buildings, their ownership, exact location, description, date, building materials, physical condition, structural integrity, its ornaments, characteristics and uses'. [166] For geopolitical and cultural/religious reasons, Palestine's historical and cultural significance is vast in comparison with the physical space it occupies, and the register has been vital in increasing public awareness of the material substance of the cultural heritage in Palestine.[167]

Riwaq has also collaborated with a number of artistic projects. In 2005 it launched its first Biennale, making visible its approach and philosophy to conservation and regeneration. Working with both local and international organisations the Bienniale was a platform for initiating a project that continues today in the conservation and revitalisation of the historic centres of fifty villages in the West Bank.[168]

Mapping Invisible Networks

In her PhD thesis and forthcoming book, the Palestinian architect Yara Sharif explores the role of architecture as a strategy for the empowerment of fragmented societies and as form of resistance, specifically in Palestine. Her research focuses on spaces in-between and the fragmented maps of Palestine by engaging in everyday narratives to discover invisible networks of communities that are 'creating new tools' to overcome, adapt and re-define the meaning of the built environment.[169]

Sharif's paper 'The Battle for Spaces of Possibility within the Palestinian/Israeli

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[166] Al Jubeh, 'Architecture as a Source for Historical Documentation', p. 50.
[167] Ibid., pp. 50–52.
[168] Biennial Foundation, *Riwaq – Centre for Architectural Conservation, Ramallah* <http://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennials/riwaq-biennial> [accessed 24 September 2013].
[169] Yara Sharif is an academic, researcher, practising architect and co-founder of Palestine Regeneration Team. Yara Sharif, 'Searching for Space of Possibility in Between the Fragmented Map', *Architecture and the Built Environment* (2007) <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/aboutus/schools/architecture/research/research-students/yara-sharif> [accessed 27 September 2013].

Conflict'[170] outlines the fragmented maps of Palestine and shares the counter-maps she has created. These counter-maps show alternative routes of mobility that local people take through the fragmented landscape in searching out the seams and fractures as a way of a passing through the territory. For example, Sharif once used the quarries as a way of circumnavigating the checkpoints to travel to the University. Since the Separation Wall was built the quarry routes are no longer viable and the maps need to be changed yet again.

Khaled Jarrar's film *Infiltrators* (2012) tracks the movements of Palestinians of all backgrounds attempting to find gaps and holes in the Separation Wall as a means of seeking routes through this oppressive barrier in connecting with loved ones, places of work, lost homelands and sites of worship. These alternative maps are also what Edward Said called for: 'In the history of colonial invasion maps are always first drawn by the victors, since maps are instruments of conquest. Geography is therefore the art of war but can also be the art of resistance, if there is a counter map and a counter strategy.'[171]

For Sharif, mapping is a way to document things that we cannot see on a conventional map through experience and narratives that have been lived through. It is also about reconstructing imagined scenes inspired by these narratives: 'Mapping can be a way of reflecting reality but also to imagine possibilities.'[172] Sharif has also been working on the ground with local communities to regenerate the historic centres of the villages in Palestine. Sharif and Yasser Nasser of NG architects have teamed up with Riwaq to explore alternative ways of constructing buildings and walls. Working with a number of architectural students from universities in the UK, they have been experimenting with aggregate and sand to explore the possibilities of building environmentally sustainable buildings in the West Bank that do not rely wholly on quarrying and stone.

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[170] Yara Sharif, 'The Battle for Spaces of Possibility within the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict', Paper given at a Conference, *Occupation: Negotiations with Constructed Space*, University of Brighton (2009) <http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/44849/40_Yara-Sharif_The-Battle-for-Spaces-of-Possibility-within-the-Palestinian-Israeli-Conflict.pdf> [accessed 3 September 2013].

[171] Edward Said, *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After* (Pantheon Books, 2000), p. 27.

[172] Interview with Yara Sharif, London Mapping Seminar (2012) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzDd8Gz6jio> [accessed 20 September 2013].

Sharif has also devised a conceptually imaginative and virtual project about the expropriation of the stone from the quarries by Israel in which she suggests inserting DNA from the quarry workers into the stone itself. The premise is that at some point in the future, the stone used in buildings in Israel might be traced back to its original source, the quarries in the West Bank, and make visible the biography of the collective workers.

These various projects are 'acts of resistance' that engage people beyond the art world in political debate. They resist 'politicide' by claiming and activating political agency and transforming the social and political landscape of Palestine in a constructive and thoughtful way beyond the Occupation's suffocating hold.

3: THE ETHNOGRAPHIC TURN

Visual Ethnography

Ethnographic data has long been used as a source material for artistic practice, however, over the last few decades the relationship between ethnography and art has intensified, with artists engaging with ethnographic methodologies and anthropologists employing photography and video to examine cultures and systems. In this chapter I discuss the 'ethnographic turn' in contemporary art, drawing on a number of projects as well as my own practice and methods in relation to visual ethnography and dialogical aesthetics in order to address the various ethical dimensions of working with people.

It has been suggested by Miwon Kwon that artists, writers and critics have engaged with ethnography over the last century because of the 'correspondence between the pervasive conditions of cultural displacement and ethnography's partial mode of operation'.[173] In exploring today's globalised world and how systems of power, relationships and economy function at every level of society, the paradigm of ethnographic methodologies is well suited as a working model. The turn by artists to ethnography has largely stemmed from its practices of 'participant observation', in which participation as experience and observation as interpretation are coupled together. Fieldwork is often used to bring together practice and theory, however there has been a tendency to claim that 'experience' legitimates a subject's authority, 'as the unique witness/author of a certain cultural knowledge, one that belongs to no one else'.[174] This statement clearly needs to be questioned in relation to the consilience of knowledge and power, as well as the 'complex mediations' that are involved in the construction of identity, which is always founded on partiality, instability and uncertainty, countering the possibility of speaking authoritatively.[175]

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[173] Miwon Kwon, 'Experience vs Interpretation: Traces of Ethnography in the Works of Lan Tuazon and Nikki S. Lee', in *Site Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn*, ed. by Alex Coles (London, Black Dog Publishing, 2000), pp. 74–91 (p.74).
[174] Kwon, p.76-7.
[175] Kwon, p.77.

Participatory art practices more than often involve the artist forming close and intimate relations with specific social groups over extended periods of time. This raises a series of ethical questions in regard to how social groups are co-opted, represented, and in some instances exploited in the name of making art. It is also related to the distinction between experience and interpretation in artworks that have an ethnographical leaning when employing a collaborative mode of address.[176] As Kwon writes: 'To clarify, the concept of participant observation encompasses a relay between empathetic engagement with a particular situation and/or event (experience) and the assessment of its meaning and significance within a broader context (interpretation).'[177] However, as I will show throughout this chapter, the artist's or ethnographer's ability to maintain solidarity and an empathetic relationship with her co-participants is not always straightforward.

For a practice to be considered a 'turn' there needs to be an engagement with participant observation and dialogical aesthetics in creating a critical framework for the artist/ethnographer to reflect on how they are bound up in the work whilst also problematising the authority of the artist as author.

The Artist as Ethnographer

> …practices claiming objectivity and detachment are less able to give clear indications of what they are doing than practices like art, that stress interiority and subjectivity.[178]

Artistic practice is diverse in its appropriation of ethnographic methodologies, producing artworks wide-ranging in their aesthetic form and exploration of a specific site or aspect of culture. [179] Although artists use methods of fieldwork in the manner of ethnographers and anthropologists, their predominant site of display is the art gallery

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[176] Anthony Downey, 'An Ethics of Engagement: Collaborative Art Practices and the Return of the Ethnographer', *Third Text* 23:5 (2009), pp. 593-603 (p.594).
[177] Kwon, p.75.
[178] Susan Hiller, *Thinking about Art: Conversations with Susan Hiller* (Manchester University Press, 1996) p.36.
[179] Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, 'The Challenge of Practice', in *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*, ed. by Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright (Berg, 2006) pp.1-27 (p.16).

or site-specific space marking their works as artworks.[180] This differs from ethnographers and anthropologists whose research has, until recently, been presented in educational contexts, books, museums, and in the case of visual ethnographers, on television or in the cinema. In recent years, modes of display for both artists and visual ethnographers have crossed over into each other's disciplines, extending and embracing the plurality of experiences, and creating an open and rewarding dialogue. The renowned visual ethnographer and writer David MacDougall has been instrumental in testing out how visual ethnography in the field produces a different set of concerns and methodologies with the 'shift from word-and-sentence-based anthropological thought to image-and-sequence-based anthropological thought'.[181]

Working visually brought a whole other set of ethical implications to the forefront. Conventional ethnographic filmmakers have often assumed a subject position for the viewer that creates a power dynamic between the viewer and the subjects that is both objectifying and disempowering. In the 1990s, MacDougall sought to challenge this objectifying dynamic by proposing that visual ethnography should focus on the 'experiential and individual nature of social life.'[182] Like the visual ethnographer Jean Rouch, MacDougall and his partner Judith MacDougall started to ask themselves important questions about who they were making films for, and why and how.

My concern here is the extent to which artists engage with ethnographic methodologies as a way of understanding how relationships between 'author' and 'other' in which the 'viewer' is prefigured are mediated and variable.[183] The success of works that use ethnographic methodologies is often measured by their engagement with a place and culture over a long period of time in which an intimate and aesthetic

[180] Schneider , 'The Challenge of Practice,' p.15.

[181] David MacDougall, 'The visual in anthropology', In M. Banks and H. Morphy (eds), *Rethinking Visual Anthropology* (London: Yale University Press, 1997), p.192, 292.

[182] Sarah Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography: Images, Media and Representation in Research* (London: Sage, 2001), p.169. See also David MacDougall study of the Doon School in India, in his *Doon School Project* where he spent three years researching the film and nine months living in and observing the school. He writes in depth about his experience and encounters and how he built relations with the students in his book, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses* (Princeton University Press, 2006), pp.94-144.

[183] Kris Rutten, Dienderen An van, Ronald Soetaert, 'Revisiting the ethnographic turn in contemporary art', Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies (2013), p.464.

relationship with the location and the local people are formed. However, the ethical implications surrounding these relations are extremely complex and there is much more at stake then just spending time somewhere. As the authors of 'Revisiting the ethnography turn in contemporary art' stress,

> 'Ethnography as an interactive encounter is of crucial importance, as the informant and the ethnographer are producing some sort of common construct together, as a result of painstaking conversation with continuous mutual control.[184]

In light of this, we need to recognise, as Sarah Pink has noted, the complex intersubjectivity that ethnography entails, including different voices and perspectives and 'the multiple and simultaneous realities in which people live and participate.'[185] This has led to a postmodern ethnographic that is dialogical in its move away from objectivity towards, as Sally McBeth puts it, 'an informed intersubjectivity predicated on listening and collaboration' where informants are defined as co-authors.[186]

The Institutional Drive Home and Abroad

A characteristic of many art practices today is working abroad on a project often commissioned by the 'home' country. Artists also engage with cultures and places very different to their own through residency opportunities of short duration. Sites of conflict are also on the road map of residencies offered. Although there have been some significant projects in which commitment to a place is addressed, more often than not the artist's relationship is fleeting and the result is a limited engagement with a place and locality. In such cases, the question of context, and how the artist makes a translational leap from one place to another, particularly in regard to cultural and social frameworks within the parameters of the residency, is questionable. In his seminal essay 'The Artist as Ethnographer' Hal Foster critiques some of the problematics of the institutional drive to send artists as 'envoys' abroad on field

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[184] R. Pinxten, *When the day breaks: essays in anthropology and philosophy* (Hamburg: Peter Lang Verlag, 1997), p. 31 cited in Rutten, 'Revisiting the ethnographic turn in contemporary art', p.465.
[185] Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography*, p.143-144.
[186] Sally McBeth, 'Myths of Objectivity and the Collaborative Process in Life History Research', in Caroline Brettell (ed.), *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography* (Bergin & Garvey, 1993), p. 162.

research. He warns us about art leaning towards 'ideological patronage'[187] whereby the author is perceived as the producer of meaning and art as autonomous from the social and political spheres.

Thus Foster argues that going abroad to make art can become an exoticising quest for the other territory, resulting in superficial engagements with another culture or displaying the naivety of the outsider's knowledge in regard to local conflicts and political or social difficulties. This critique has some validity, as in various forms of art made for Biennales or through residencies we often see a disengagement with the locality in which the work was produced. In the past, residencies 'elsewhere' have often acted as retreats in which the artist could disengage from the world. However, over the last two decades there have been a number of institutions and residencies that have explored alternative models of practice by experimenting with different forms and methodologies. As artist residency programmes increase, providing artists with a diversity of contexts from rural retreats to large-scale institutions to artist-led spaces, new paradigms of delivery require that artists engage with the localities in which they are hosted.

In the context of the Middle East, over the last ten years there has been an increasing number of organisations and initiatives seeking to create bridges between European artists and local artists through ongoing residency programmes. In the UK the two most significant organisations are the Delfina Foundation and the Triangle Network affiliated with Gasworks Gallery, both of which are in London.[188] In the publicity for a

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[187] Foster also draws our attention to an important point that ideological patronage' should not be conflated with the 'indignity of speaking for others,' that Gilles Deleuze spoke of in 1972 in a conversation with Michel Foucault. However, in the 1980's this proved problematic as it produced a 'censorious silent guilt as much as it did an empowered alternative speech.' See Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1977), p. 209 cited in Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer?* (1996), p. 307.

[188] *Delfina Foundation* is an independent, non-profit foundation dedicated to facilitating artistic exchange and developing creative practice through residencies, partnerships and public programming, with a special focus on international collaborations with the greater Middle East & North Africa (MENA). Delfina Foundation <http://delfinafoundation.com/about/mission> [accessed 24th September 2013].
An international network of artists and arts organisations Triangle promotes the exchange of ideas within the contemporary visual arts by initiating and supporting a number of artist-led workshops, residencies, exhibitions and outreach events.
Triangle Network <http://www.trianglenetwork.org/about> [accessed 24th September 2013].

discussion that took place in January 2012 at Gasworks, the headline read, 'Residencies offer a crucial space to research and incubate projects, strengthen creative communities, and instigate artistic work.' [189] This forum attempted to address questions in regard to how artists and institutions can create a critical and rigorous framework amidst the radical transformations occurring in the Middle East. It also asked how such support might 'mirror the dialogue occurring in the region and subsequently keep the outside world aware of those changes.' [190]

However artists working with organisations and institutions on new commissions that involve working with social groups, either in their home country or abroad, often encounter difficulties when there are very limited budgets as well as timelines that the artist is expected to adhere too. In this scenario the artist often becomes a symbolic figure, catapulted into a place that they know little about for a very short period of time, and where the principles of ethnographic practices of participant observation are foreshortened or even ignored, let alone critiqued. In such cases the artist and her co-participants are forced into compromised and often conflicting spaces where there can be no fruitful encounter. The artist becomes more of a facilitator, or seeks to add to their own portfolio without developing relationships with a locality in any depth. Here the artistic enquiry functions only on a superficial level, where the encounter with the 'other' (whether individuals or social groups) has no reflexivity in relation to how the project might transform the artist's own relationship to place and alterity or create any meaningful forum for those they are working with. A question that is commonly asked in relation to artworks that lack a sense of self-awareness, of proximity and distance, is: Where is the artist in the work? As Foster says, 'the focus wanders from collaborative investigation to "ethnographic self-fashioning," in which the artist is not decentered so much as the other is fashioned in artistic guise.'[191]

More often than not artists are working predominantly with a set of *a priori*

[189] Gasworks, Culture, Capital & Residencies in the Middle East (2012)
<http://www.gasworks.org.uk/events/detail.php?id=726> [accessed 24th September 2013].
[190] Ibid.
[191] Hal Foster, 'The Artist as Ethnographer,' in *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), *p.306.*

assumptions. These can take the form of a methodology worked out beforehand and parachuted in with insufficient concern for the specificity of place or the politics of representation, with the work corralled into particular forms that an institution or sponsor can mobilise for their own purposes. This is less to do with art than with management and government policies that insist on particular kinds of social relations and engagement for art. Until recently the Arts Council of England's guidelines for funding for artists was based on educational projects being attached to the production or presentation of the work that reached out into 'community'.[192] One problem with this Arts Council model was that in fulfilling the funding criteria projects became merely symbolic: a couple of workshops with children or ethnic groups, adding to the artwork rather than being a core component of the practice and its concerns. I am not advocating that all art has to have social and political concerns at its foundation, but that such concerns should not be used as a way of accessing funding, and funding bodies and institutions should not impose criteria on artists in this way.

In the current economic climate, government bodies under neoliberalism now conceive of the arts as a 'soft power' to be used in the act of 'relationship marketing' invested in for the benefit of the economy and attracting tourists from around the world.[193] With the private sector and corporate sponsors' colonisation and co-opting of art and its production as a way of adding to their social investment portfolio, exhibition programming inevitably leads to the commissioning and micromanagement of risk adverse projects and censoring, with institutions codifying and commodifying an artwork to suit audiences rather than the work emerging from the site of location.[194] In 2011, the Palestinian artist Larissa Sansour's photographic work *Nation Estate*, which

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[192] Arts Council, *Children and young people* (2011-2015*)* <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/children-and-young-people> [accessed 24th September 2013].
Arts Council, *Engaging audiences* <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/engaging-audiences> [accessed 24th September 2013]. If artist working with 'communities' are to be agents of social inclusion and adhesion then the very term 'community' is deeply problematic as it overrides the politics of difference. See Iris Marion Young, 'The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference', *Social Theory and Practice*, 12:1 (1986), p. 300-323.
[193] Dean Kenning and Margareta Kern, 'Art and Politics,'Art Monthly 369 (September 2013), p.2.
GOV.UK, (2013) 'Policy: Supporting vibrant and sustainable arts and culture.'
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/supporting-vibrant-and-sustainable-arts-and-culture>[accessed 24th September 2013].
[194] Kenning, p.2.

imagines a dystopic Palestine, was censored. The project was nominated by the Musée de l'Elysée in Lausanne for the Lacoste Elysée Prize (2011). However, the French clothing brand Lacoste, which sponsors the award, demanded that Sansour's nomination be revoked, classifying the work 'too pro-Palestinian'. Sansour made the censorship public and the story appeared in the *Washington Post*, followed by the Musée de l'Elysée suspending the organisation of the Lacoste Elysée Prize 2011.[195]

As Foster makes clear, 'the quasi-anthropological artist today may seek to work with sites and social groups with the best motives of political engagement and institutional transgression, only in part to have this work recoded by sponsors as social outreach, economic development, public relations … or art'.[196] There are indeed innovative artist's project that do engage with social groups that are aesthetically and politically important; however, it is critical that the authority of the artist does not go unquestioned and that the artist themselves engages in a vigilant reflexivity.

A Politics of Difference

Irit Rogoff has observed that the responsibility of artists, curators and institutions is to engage with the world on the basis of 'criticality', considering ourselves as part of the subject of our critique.[197] However, if one is too much the native informant, one is too close. If one is too much the ethnographer, one is too far away. Foster describes this as 'critical distance',[198] thus the struggle of the artist is to find the correct distance, but doing so is not an easy task.

There is a danger in assuming that if the artist is perceived as culturally bound up with a place or social group they are working with then they will have greater access to the

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[195] Annie Robbins, 'Swiss museum cancels competition after prize-sponsor Lacoste rejects Palestinian artist', *Mondoweiss* (2011) <http://mondoweiss.net/2011/12/french-museum-cancels-prize-rather-than-accept-lacostes-banning-of-palestinian-artist.html> [accessed 12th September 2013].

[196] Foster, 'The Artist as Ethnographer,' in *The Return of the Real*, p.303.

[197] Irit Rogoff, *What is a Theorist?, The State of Art Criticism*, ed. by James Elkins and Michael Newman (New York and London, Routledge), p.99-100.

[198] Hal Foster, 'Whatever happened to Post modernism?' in *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT press, 1996), p.225.

transformation of alterity and the subversion of dominant power structures. Equally we should be very careful not to assume that as artists we have some privileged insight born out of familiarity. As all societies and cultures are striated and highly nuanced in how they operate, the assumption that someone from a particular strata of a culture would have a greater insight into the complexities of another strata just because they are from the same place would also be misleading.

This draws us into important debates regarding the politics of the other who is both projected on to artworks and appropriated within them. What is also important is that the site of 'artistic transformation' should not be perceived as equivalent to the site of 'political transformation', just because the research is located in the 'field of the other', or elsewhere. Foster terms this as 'quasi anthropological', saying alterity should not be seen as the 'primary point of subversion of dominant culture',[199] where the other is always outside and where perceptions of 'elsewhere' are distorted by realist suppositions that the postcolonial or proletarian other 'has an authenticity lacking in the self'. Foster goes on to say that this realist conjecture of truth 'is compounded by a *primitivist fantasy*: that the other has some access to primal psychic and social processes from which the white bourgeois subject is blocked'.[200] This paradigm maintains the idea of the subject in history who is positioned in terms of truth and where truth is located terms of alterity. What is required is a reflexivity in relation to *primitivist assumptions of* an elsewhere, in which there is a tendency to map over the other and the 'here-and-now self' perceived to be 'superior to the there-and-then other'.[201]

In contemporary artist moving image, including my own practice, these ideas are used critically to agitate the dominant culture, which has a tendency to construct stereotypes and 'stable lines of authority'.[202] As artists we need to resist the inclination

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[199] Foster, 'The Artist as Ethnographer,' in *The Return of the Real*, p.302.
[200] Ibid., p.303.
[201] Brandon Hopkins,"Foster, Hal, 'The Artist as Ethnographer' in *The Return of the Real*. Cambridge: The MIT Press' 1996" Theories of Media, Winter (The University of Chicago, 2003).
<http://csmt.uchicago.edu/annotations/fosterartist.htm> [accessed 12th September 2013].
[202] Foster, 'The Artist as Ethnographer,' in *The Return of the Real*, p.199.

to project political truth onto the constructed other through a reflexive encounter that probes and challenges both the position of the artist and that of the viewer of the work. With work that is produced over a long period of time and is reliant on a degree of embeddedness in a specific locality, it is not about trying to ameliorate points of tension and difference but in many respects to accentuate them. As Marion Young suggests, a politics of difference is a form of emancipation without domination where our understanding of social relations includes the agitations, antagonisms and gaps in knowledge 'in which persons live together in relations of mediation among strangers with whom they are not in community'.[203]

Although Foster's essay has raised many important questions we should see it as a starting point for engaging with the ethnographic turn and the ethics of participant observation. I now want to turn to dialogic aesthetics to examine some of the challenges of working with people and different social groups.

Fieldwork: Dialogical Aesthetics and Collaborative Art Practices in Relation to the Production of White Oil

In his book *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* Grant Kester unpacks the many dimensions and challenges of dialogical aesthetics by discussing a range of artists whose work orchestrates collaborative encounters and conversations. He draws on the work of Steve Willets, Suzanne Lacy, WochenKlauser and Jay Koh among others, whose projects are concerned and engaged with the social political landscape of specific places and social groups and where conversation and dialogue are foregrounded, before and beyond the object of art. Their projects can also be sited in the domain of art and activism, and although none of these artists employ moving image as their primary medium, as I do, there is much to be gained from an examination of the particularities and nuances of dialogical aesthetics, which raises important questions for this research.

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[203] Iris Marion Young, 'The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference', *Social Theory and Practice*, 12:1 (1986)

Central to all projects that employ a dialogical aesthetics is a focus on the particularities of a specific place or social group, rather than any attempt to uncover universal experience. It is a 'provisionally binding' practice, generated by 'local consensual knowledge', and situated within collective interaction.[204] Another important concern is that the relationships between artists and their co-participants are developed and extended over time, allowing for 'a decentering, a movement outside self (and self-interest) through dialogue'. It is the artists' 'commitment to dialogue, no matter how self-reflexive', which creates common systems of meaning in which the co-participants 'speak, listen and respond'.[205] Discourse is here understood dialogically, rather than in terms of a fixed, hierarchical system of a priori meaning,[206] and as such it involves questions of identity formation and the ethical dimensions that arise from intersubjective relations. Likewise, identity is here understood in terms of how it is transformed through our encounters with the world and with other human subjects.[207]

As Kester suggests, in the process of articulating our views we also anticipate 'our interlocutor's responses' and become open to and aware of another's view or position, which in turn creates self-awareness about our own opinions and identities as contingent and subject to creative transformation.[208] In dialogical aesthetics the process of making art is defined in terms of 'openness, of listening … and of a willingness to accept a position of dependence and intersubjective vulnerability relative to the viewer or collaborator', and where subjectivity is formed through discourse and intersubjective exchange itself.[209] We therefore need be aware of the degree to which those with more or less cultural capital are able to speak and be listened to and the different cultural and social frameworks from which different voices speak to 'prevent a biased discourse'.[210] This opens us up to 'the ethics of

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[204] Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (University of California Press, 2004), p. 112.
[205] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*., pp. 84–85.
[206] Kester discusses briefly Saussure's and Lyotard's approaches to language as representing theories of discourse that fail to consider actual human dialogue. See ibid., pp. 108–109 and 214.
[207] Ibid., p. 108.
[208] Ibid., p. 110.
[209] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p.110.
[210] Ibid., p.113.

communicative exchange' and the 'aesthetics of listening'.[211]

Listening was one of the central features of this research in trying to understand the complexities of the OPT and the quarries without imposing or articulating an already formed creative vision.[212] In the first two years, before filming, my time was spent predominantly encountering people from different social groups and organisations in Palestine that were connected to or invested in the quarries (Ramzi, BBrothers, friends and colleagues at the IAAP, WAC, Union, etc.). Listening and attending to the workers' day-to-day lives became the means through which I was able to understand the complexities of the quarries and narratives of colonialism, expropriation of land and mobility, with filming commenced two years later. As the Singaporean-born artist Jay Koh says: 'Well before the enunciative act of art making, the manipulation and occupation of space and material, there must be a period of openness, of non-action, of learning and of listening.'[213] In *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986), the authors developed the notion of 'connected knowing', understood as a capacity to identify with others which is not based upon representing the 'self' through already formed opinions' and judgments, but is directed towards the redefining of 'self' in our 'connectedness' with others.[214] Importantly, there needs to be attempt to understand the particular social, political and cultural context from which 'others speak, judge, and act' so that we might gain some insight into the various power relations that impact on the subjects' speaking voice.[215] This includes articulation, grammar, vocabulary, and rhetoric and the different forms of listening that may be required which can be as complex as speaking.[216] In advocating listening Gemma Corradi Fiumara, like Koh, alerts us to what she calls 'the assertive tradition of saying' that has dominated the act

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[211] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p.106.
[212] Ibid., p.16.
[213] Ibid., p.107.
[214] Ibid., p.114.
[215] Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, eds., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986). Also see Noelle McAfee's novel that attempts to reconcile Habermas' notion of a communicative identity with Julia Kristeva's work on split subjectivity in *Habermas, Kristeva and Citizenship* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), cited in Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p.113.
[216] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p.114.

of listening within Western philosophy and art.[217]

Kester develops a concept of 'political coherent communities' in response to the often-unintentional forms of negation that can occur when artists view their collaborators as a kind of inert raw material to be transformed or improved in some way. He suggest that what characterises working with politically coherent communities is 'a more reciprocal process of dialogue and mutual education', with the artist learning from their co-participants and having their preconceptions about an issue, place or culture challenged and transformed. In many cases the artist often learns far more from their co-participants than the other way around. However, Kester also suggests that it can be harder to engage and 'catalyze' critical self-awareness in those whose identities are bound up with a static set of belief systems in regard to specific social and political issues.[218]

In this research I often felt that I was learning far more from my co-participants than they were from me, and it was unclear to what extent my questions, and then later the process of filming two years down the line, catalyzed a critical self-awareness for my participants. For example, in my field notes I discuss how Ramzi Safid, one of the main participants and narrators of the film, showed me new maps, both literally and metaphorically, in regard to the political, historical and economic implications of the quarries (when I was unable to return to Palestine for a year due to health problems, I kept in touch with Ramzi by asking him to write a dairy while on his night shifts at the quarry). This required that I had a capacity for listening and empathetic identification without imposing any a priori judgements, as I needed to listen and learn about life on the ground in the quarries first. With Ramzi, my listening gave him what appeared to be a much-needed space to speak about and vent his frustrations, anger, disappointments and anguish, and demanded a level of intersubjective vulnerability. Sometimes he took quite a pedagogical stance in our conversations, aware that he was

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[217] Gemma Corradi Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language: A Philosophy of Language* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 9, 23. Fiumara writes, 'we are … imbued with a logocentric culture in which the bearers of the word are predominantly involved in speaking, molding, informing.'[217] Cited in Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p. 107.

[218] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p. 151.

'educating' me about the absolute violence of the Occupation on the day-to-day lives of Palestinians. This dynamic changed as he got to know me and realised that we shared very similar political leanings, not only in regard to the Occupation but also in our views of the world at large and criticisms of the capitalist global economy. Where we differed concerned how we grappled with the geopolitical and historical narratives that have been imposed on the Israel/Palestine conflict, and in our analysis of Jewish-Israeli identities. Our dialogue became a matter of 'collaboratively generated insights' revealing the multiple perspectives and power relations that permeate every aspect of living under Occupation.[219]

Miwon Kwon problematises Kester's concept of political coherent communities, suggesting that the term reduces individuals to a collective identity in which the politics of difference are denied and repressed by 'the isolation of a single point of commonality to define a community'.[220] For her, talk of political coherent communities suggests an essentialist discourse that attempts to define and reduce collective identities to some singular core and therefore makes them 'more susceptible to appropriations by the artist or arts institutions.'[221] Kwon draws her critique partially from Iris Marion Young's essay 'The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference', in which she challenges the very term 'community' in so far as it overrides the politics of difference. For Young, 'community' has a tendency to privilege 'unity over difference, immediacy over mediation, sympathy over recognition', allowing us to presume that we know and understand others as we understand ourselves.[222] In this sense it denies difference: the desire for community is the desire for 'social wholeness and identification that underlies racism and ethnic chauvinism on the one hand and political sectarianism on the other'.[223] In its conception of social life, community sets up an opposition between 'authentic and inauthentic social relations' negating different forms of exchange within particular contexts and the inequalities between

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[219] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p. 95.
[220] Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity* (MIT 2002).
[221] Ibid., p.147 cited in footnotes in Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p. 225.
[222] Iris Marion Young, 'The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference', *Social Theory and Practice*, 12:1 (1986), p. 300.
[223] Young, 'The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference', p. 302.

social groups structured within asymmetrical relations of class power.[224] Young suggests that we replace the word 'community' with other terms, such as 'social group', which do not posit a sense of unity over difference and instead suggest an 'openness to unassimilated otherness'.[225] She proposes an alternative form of social relation, the being together of strangers, where we 'recognize social group difference as a given, something they must live with.'[226]

Perhaps, then, a better term for political coherent communities would be 'political coherent social groups', which also allows for an engagement in the complex differences that are encountered in 'coherence' and that Kwon has refused to recognise. She presumes that collective groups such as quarry workers or public housing tenants know no better than to, in Kester's words, 'embrace these forms of experience and that it is the artist's responsibility to instill them with a properly self-reflexive attitude'.[227] I share Kester's position that identity is much more complex and that it is deeply problematic to assume that the only insights that matter 'are those that explore the contingency of collective identity or that position the artist as an epistemologically privileged provocateur'.[228] In the case of *White Oil*, defining myself through solidarity with the workers in the quarries against the oppressive and exploitative conditions of the Occupation and neo-liberalism does not exclude the complexities and contingent nature of identity and social relations. Rather it opens up the possibility for discussions based upon a shared understanding of the impact of the Occupation which might further conversations engaging with the antagonisms and inequalities of particularity relations and stratifications.

In *White Oil*, the context of the film likewise cannot be extrapolated from the historical and political narratives that impact on the lives of the quarry workers and how this group of people have been 'shot though' by decades of colonialism in which they have lost all civil rights. Equally, enquiries around identity formation in Palestine are

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[224] Young, 'The Ideal of Community

[225] Ibid., p. 319.

[226] Ibid., p. 238.

[227] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p. 162.

[228] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p. 163.

complex because of the tensions of living under Occupation and the effects of colonial discourse on subject identities. However, new and unanticipated forms of knowledge can and may be produced, in relation, for example, to the need for a Union for the workers through which they might enhance their solidarity with each other and potentially secure better conditions of work and pay in Palestinian-run quarries. Or, in relation to the need for social space in the OPT, thinking creatively about how disused quarry spaces could be used in the future as social spaces. In this sense the aesthetics of *White Oil* are located not simply in the narrative or in the montage, its form and content, but in the act of making, in the dialogues that emerged both before and after filming and that have contributed towards establishing solidarity with my co-participants. I would like to suggest that the film also has the potential to enhance solidarity beyond the conversation with my co-participants by generating a dialogue with other stakeholders and social groups in Palestine and beyond about how various forms of activism, lobbying, reclaiming, and decolonising might be activated to address the issues around the quarries.

Evoking Subjectivity and an Ethics of Dialogue

An important aspect of dialogical aesthetics is how subjectivity is constituted as a prerequisite to communicative interaction. In his essay 'The Ethics of Dialogue: Bakhtin's Answerability and Levinas' Responsibility', Jeffrey T. Nealon asks how we might produce an ethical agency that does not reduce the other to the desires and 'categories of the self … in a kind of subjective colonialism', but instead responds to the other's uniqueness and singularity.[229] In Mikhail Bakhtin's model of 'dialogical' experience and Emmanuel Levinas' concept of 'responsibility' we find the significance of human contact and the 'face to face encounter' with the other in the formation of subjectivity as a prior requisite for an ethical agency developed through a 'dialogical situation in all its concrete historicity and individuality'.[230]

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[229] Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity* (Duke University Press, 1998), p. 1.
[230] Nealon, *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity*, pp. 37, 118.

There is, however, an essential difference between Levinas and Bakhtin in their theorising of the framework that allows the subject to exercise some agency in the world. For Bakhtin subjectivity is formed through dialogical interactions that are grounded in the social, historical material specificity of the other, with the self transformed through its encounters with the other. This is not to say that our willingness to interact in an ethical way occurs through some abstract sense of duty. Rather, it is a question of an ethics that is 'constitutively linked to corporeality, the direct experience of "lived" time and place, and our affective and meaningful relationship with concrete others'.[231] For Levinas, on the other hand, our encounter with the other is not an opportunity for transcendence; it is rather a 'precondition for agency and subjectivity itself' that has the potential to result in 'openness' to the other, counteracting defensiveness and fear.[232] In this sense Levinas perceives our capacity to identify ourselves as subjects as a gift to us from the other. He differs from Bakhtin in that he is concerned with the abstract rather than the material specificity of the encounter with the other, and in doing so refuses any knowledge of the other which may fix the other's identity. He insists that by imposing an a priori conceptual framework we inhibit the multiplicity of the other and perpetrate a 'conceptual violence'. As Kester notes, the other is 'less an interlocutor for Levinas than an intuition: an amorphous undifferentiated event about which we can know nothing and before which the only form of "communication" we can risk is the mute gesture of submission'.[233]

If we follow Levinas' concept of 'responsibility', in which we know nothing about the subject we are engaging with but still assume a sense of obligation towards the other, how can we learn from the other discursively (or understand the historical and material conditions that affect the other)? How do we evaluate the extent to which a dialogical encounter with the other produces a shift in our own subjectivity and conceptual and cultural frameworks, as well as the potential 'benefit or harm caused

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[231] Nealon, *Alterity Politics*, p. 37.
[232] Ibid., pp. 35, 39.
[233] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p. 120.

by our actions on the other's behalf'.[234] As Sara Ahmed points out, Levinas' position, by refusing to engage in the 'particular' (without reducing the particular to the naming of the other by race, class or gender and turning the other into a 'theme, concept or thing', but engaging with differentiation as something that happens on the level of the encounter), negates a politics of difference. [235]

For Bakhtin, language is not an abstract system but a material means of production wherein the body is altered and exchanges and encounters take place through dialogue. As he says: 'the thinking human consciousness and the dialogic sphere in which this consciousness exists, in all its depth and specificity, cannot be reached through a monologic artistic approach'.[236] We are engaged in endless translations of the world because all encounters are relational, which in turn generates an engagement with difference that has the potential to expand our capacity to cross over into the worlds of others, whether this be socially, cultural or politically.

For Bakhtin dialogue requires a reciprocal mode of exchange and encounter which opens 'participants to the "excess" that is made possible by the provisional blurring of boundaries between self and other'.[237] This reciprocal mode of exchange is essential to a dialogical aesthetic and is where new forms of subjectivity are produced through 'unexpected insights' via collaborative interaction. Dialogue is thus a creative 'hybridisation' that re-enacts the tensions implicit in any social framework and the messy reality of communication. Dialogue here is understood as extending beyond the written or spoken word alone to embrace the way reality is perceived in 'the form of still latent, unmuttered future work'.[238] This includes how tone, sound and body language are interpreted in dialogue, expanding our perception of voice, as well as how language is affected by social, cultural and historical shifts. As a methodology, Bakhtin's dialogism locates dialogue within intersubjective relations that generate new meanings through historically and socially located interpretations that go beyond

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[234] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p. 121.
[235] Ahmed, S. (2000) *Strange Encounters*, p.145.
[236] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 270.
[237] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p. 122.
[238] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 90.

dominant systems of representation in the formation of new subjectivities engaged in and effected by the politics of difference.

Bakhtin's model offers many insights helpful in understanding my own experience and encounters with my co-participants in this research. It is impossible to chart or measure in any simple way how they or I were changed through our interactions; suffice to say I still feel their presence in many ways. It is a sensuous feeling embodied in colours, tones, sounds, touch, gestures and smells. It is in how subsequent encounters have been affected by the intensity of my encounters in Palestine. It manifests in longings and losses and in not knowing what remains of our encounters. In a sense of enormous privilege that my co-participants for a while shared with me the precariousness of their lives through our encounters.

Strange Encounters in Ethnography

The dominant modus operandi of ethnography has been to make the strange look familiar, moving one system of meaning into another without challenging its assumptions. However ethnography must be understood as a temporal and spatial practice based on exchange in regard to how one culture is translated into another.

In her book *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, Sara Ahmed examines how ethnography as a discipline has been predicated on translating 'strange cultures' into 'the language of the one who knows'.[239] She explores the ontological and ethical dimensions of encountering the stranger and how ethnography can be perceived as a discourse that gathers knowledge in an attempt to get closer to other subjects.[240]

In his contribution to *Writing Cultures*, Vincent Carapanzo refers to Walter Benjamin's interpretation of translation as a 'provisional way of coming to terms with the

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[239] Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 58.
[240] Ibid.

foreignness of languages'.[241] However, as Ahmed makes clear, while 'coming to terms with' implies 'dealing with', it can also be reinterpreted as 'coming (into) the terms of' – in other words, translation can serve as a re-terming of the foreign or strange so that it becomes familiar and understandable within the context and norms of the ethnographer's own culture (usually a western Eurocentric and predominantly white culture). As Ahmed writes: 'Ethnographic knowledge would not be knowledge of the stranger, but knowledge of the familiar: knowledge which creates the strange in the familial in order then to destroy it.'[242]

Michael Agar offers a model of the ethnographer as 'the professional stranger' who wanders into a place they know little about in order to learn and collect information about a particular social group. However for Ahmed the professional stranger dissolves difference through radical identification. According to her, ethnography defines itself as the professionalisation of strangerness: *the transformation of the stranger from an ontological lack into an epistemic privilege.*[243]

Ahmed moves forward the concept of 'stranger fetishism' by discussing the formation of the stranger as a 'corporeal and discursive figure' who has been detached from the specific historical processes of his or her production. She questions why some bodies are recognised as 'strangers' and others not, and why the stranger in certain contexts is perceived as at one remove from ourselves, rather than as an intrinsic part of ourselves in an ongoing process of identity formation.

The desire to recognise a stranger is a way of 'assimilating the unassimilable into the body,' but there is always something left over that cannot be recognised. For Ahmed, 'there are no friends or strangers,' but only those who are recognised as such. In acknowledging this she suggests that an 'ethical mode of encountering others is a way of working with that which fails to be contained within ontology (being), but also the

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[241] Vincent Crapanzano, 'Hermes's Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description', in Clifford, J. and Marcus, G.E. (eds.) *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p.51. Cited in Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (London: Routledge, 2000).
[242] Ahmed, *Strange Encounters*, p. 58.
[243] Ibid., pp. 59–60.

figures of "the stranger" or "the other".' [244] In order to do this we need to examine the particular conditions, the *mode of encounter*, in which beings are constituted in relationship to each other. It is not just about the face to face encounter. Hence her critique of Levinas: encounters are never just between self and other for there is always 'more than one *and* more than two in any encounter.'[245]

Encounters involve surprise and shift the boundaries of the familiar between two or more strangers by opening towards the other in the creation of boundaries where the stranger is encountered through an ongoing negotiation of proximity and distance. In ethical communication it is a question of the ways in which proximity and distance are held together and how one might get close enough to others to be touched by that which is not immediately graspable. 'In such an encounter, "one" does not stay in place, or one does not stay safely at a distance … It is through getting closer, rather than remaining at a distance, that the impossibility of pure proximity can be put to work.'[246]

Encounters are both temporal and spatial as they occur in historical-geographical mediation and open up prior histories of encounters and the geo-political imaginations of the Other, incorporating them in the new encounter as traces of broader social relationships. To be precise, it is the mode of encounter that gives the encounter with the other its particularity and differentiates it from other encounters, and which should not be read as reducing the other into a 'theme, concept or thing'.[247] The particular is not attached to the other or present on the body or face, nor does it mean that we can assume that we can grasp the other. What is of importance, as Ahmed suggests, is 'what made this encounter possible, its (historicity) and what does this encounter make possible in the future.'[248]

Later in this chapter I explore the meanings and emotions generated in my encounters

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[244] Ahmed, *Strange Encounters*, p.141.
[245] Ibid., p.141-143.
[246] Ibid., *p.*157.
[247] Ibid., p.145.
[248] Ibid.

with my co-participants and the broader social relationships embodied therein (signs of strangeness or familiarity, authority and power, historical and geographical representations).

The Nomadic Artist

In exploring the implications and potential of dialogical art in visual ethnography we also need take into account the differences in the unequal relations that exist in projects where the fieldwork takes place in so-called developing countries, conducted by artists from countries imbued with 'economic power and symbolic capital.'[249]

The nomadic artist is privileged in their ability to move between one site and another, home and abroad, in the research and production of work. Although Foster critiques the potentially pseudo-ethnographic approach that artists take to working abroad, his argument is largely related to the *degree* to which they embed themselves in a place and its locality and the *level* of social engagement that emerges as part of the process and production of the work.

The writer T.J. Demos alerts us to some of the privileges of the nomadic artist in an essay on the white South African photographer Pieter Hugo. Prior to 1994, Hugo was banned from entering many parts of Africa, like Ghana and Nigeria, as a protest against the brutal Apartheid regime that operated from 1948 to 1994 in South Africa.[250] Demos reminds us that Hugo's practice as a photographer, where he primarily engages with Africa and different African social groups, has emerged as a result of the collapse of Apartheid. However Hugo's newfound freedom is privileged by his having access to the resources necessary to travel, unlike many of his black African counterparts. Although the apparatus of Apartheid are no longer in operation, little has changed for most black South Africans in terms of their economic status. The redistribution of wealth acquired by those under white supremacy and colonial rule has never been

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[249] Rutten, 'Revisting the ethnograhic turn in contemporary art', p.467.
[250] T. J. Demos, 'There's No Such Thing as a Happy Ending, The Photography of Pieter Hugo', in *Pieter Hugo* (Munich: Prestel, 2012), pp.216-220 (p.2).

contested as part of the post-Apartheid regime. Demos writes, '[Hugo] exemplifies the nomadic contemporary artist, who is symptomatic of postcolonial globalisation, and more specifically represents the new category of the "Afropolitan", who travels the continent in an era of post-apartheid African reintegration.'[251]

Working in Palestine it has been important to highlight the challenges of doing fieldwork in a country with very different cultural, social and geographic backgrounds from my own, as well as being a deeply troubled region with a complex economic and political history. As a western Jewish woman, I have significant privileges, including mobility globally and in Israel and the West Bank, which all of my co-participants are denied as a consequence of Israel's Occupation and the Separation Wall. Access to Israel and the West Bank is also far easier for me than for other non-Jewish activists and artists, who are subjected to intense questioning about their movements in the region when landing at Ben Gurion Airport. Being Jewish I am invited to see Israel as my home. Conscious of this, I considered at great length whether a journey I made into Israel in an attempt to track the stone expropriated from the West Bank should be included in the film as way of alluding to my privilege and freedom of movement. Such footage could contextualise the movement of people and products within the framework of Israel's relationship to the wider world, in terms of both commerce and the Jewish Diaspora. In the end I made the decision that the architecture of the film required that the viewer be kept within the labyrinth of quarries and denied the pleasure of entering into Israel where comparisons in the landscape would be made and the stone's role through its summation in the architecture and facades of Jerusalem and other areas of Israel.

Jean-Luc Godard's and Anne-Marie Miéville's 53-minute film *Ici et Ailleurs* (*Here and Elsewhere,* 1975) also raises many important questions in regard to making work elsewhere. The film emerged out of Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin's struggle to make

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[251] For more on nomadism in contemporary art, see T. J. Demos, 'The Ends of Exile: Toward a Coming Universality', in *Altermodern: Tate Triennial 2009*, ed. by Nicolas Bourriaud (London: Tate Britain, 2009), 74-89. On the 'Afropolitan', see Sarah Nuttall's comments in 'Thinking from the South: Reflections on Image and Place', Figures and fictions: contemporary South African photography (Steidl, 2011), pp. 300-307 (p.302).

Jusqu'a la victoire (*Until Victory*), a documentary about the Palestinian refugee camps, which they worked on together from 1969 to 1970 and which was funded by the Arab League. Godard and Gorin were unable resolve *Until Victory* as a film after months of prolonged, 'emotionally detached' filming and years of editing in Paris, perplexed about the direction they wanted their project to go in.[252] Eventually, with the critical eye and intervention of Anne-Marie Miéville, the film become *Ici et Ailleurs*, a reflective film essay that is a meditation on how to make and look at images that have been overwhelmed by rhetorical framing, propaganda, war, and 'presumptive authorial control'.[253]

In the film Godard interrogates his own work and the intentions and desires he had imposed on the reality before him, and questions his right to 'sculpt a real war into a vision of one'.[254] In the film Anne-Marie Miéville cross-examines Godard, criticising his methods and motivations and constructing a reflective portrait of the filmmaker where the unstable lines of authorship and representation are put into question. *Ici et Ailleurs* does not provide the viewer with information about what was happening on the ground in Palestine, but rather reflects and analyses the organisation and staging of the film itself and the way its subjects have been constructed by the camera.

Within the context of this thesis and the points made above by Demos, alerting us to the privileges of the nomadic artist, and indeed my own privileges as a western Jewish woman and artist, self-reflexivity is significant. Marcus Verhagen's words are pertinent here in regard to the mirroring and entanglement of artistic and global capital:

> The artist, in moving from place to place, shadows the movements of other nomads – of businessmen, tourists, migrants and refugees … in today's world the most powerful are themselves nomadic as they direct and follow the flows of international capital … even as it draws a veil over the difficulties that many, particularly economic migrants, have in travelling from country to country. [255]

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[252] Calum Marsh, *review of Ici et Ailleurs*, (Slant) <http://www.slantmagazine.com/dvd/review/ici-et-ailleurs/2342> [accessed 24th September 2013].
[253] Ibid.
[254] Marsh.
[255] Verhagen, p.806.

The stateless Palestinian, a refugee in their own country and abroad, is denied access entering, leaving or travelling within their own country as a result of the Occupation. In attempting to cross the borders that Israel has put in place, those living in the West Bank must pay hundreds of pounds for visas and border crossings, making the long journey to Amman, Jordan, via the King Hussein Bridge (or Allenby Bridge, as the British named it). This is in contrast to Gaza, which can be likened to a ghetto, where the movement in and out of both people and goods is completely restricted.[256] In these circumstances the nomadic artist can be seen to be both complicit and implicated in the contradictions of globalisation. The artist can succumb to the passive seduction of globalisation and the privileges she/he is afforded, or they can utilise these privileges to reflect on and challenge the global circuits of trade and migration that global capital exploits in its flattening out of difference.

Mirza and Butler's *The Exception and the Rule* (2009) and Orlow's *Benin Project* (2007) take on many of the traits of the nomadic artist, moving from one continent to the other in the production of moving image work. However, they address the privilege of their circumstances and are exceedingly reflexive in relation to the politics of representation and place and circumspect about their position within the work.

Embracing the idea of the nomadic artist, Mirza and Butler have made a number of works in Asia and the Middle East over the last five years while artists in residence at various institutions. In an interview with Gemma Sharpe, conducted between Karachi and London, while Mirza and Butler were in residence making a film in Pakistan, Mirza says,

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[256] As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, in referring to the OPT I focus on the West Bank where *White Oil* was researched and produced. It should be noted that at its narrowest point the distance between the West Bank and Gaza is just 40km and that since the outbreak of the second intifada in 2000, Israel has severely restricted the movement of Palestinians between Gaza and the West Bank. In 2009, since Fatah was voted in by Palestinians, Gaza has become a landmass that could be compared to a prison cell as a consequence of the prohibition of the movement of people and goods by Israel with blockades both at the port as well as overland. There have been various attempts by activist groups in 2010 and 2011 to use flotilla's to brings urgent supplies to Gaza. Most of these attempts have been unsuccessful due to Israeli intervention.

> We are both very interested in 'nomadism', or the artist as a nomad who moves and travels within a frame of work and working. So our engagement with India was first developed over a five-year collaboration with Shai Heredia in 2002, with whom we helped to establish the Experimental Film Festival in India. We also curated the Cinema of Prayoga, a film programme that toured the UK in 2006. Through these projects my understanding of 'nomadism' started to shift my view on Modernism, in particular the complex negotiation that arose from the recognition that I had grown up within a predominantly Western-centric frame of Modernism. [257]

Mirza and Butler have become ardent explorers and archivists of what 'nomadism' might mean. Specifically, in relation to the production and proliferation of images, they have sought to use their practice as a way of interrogating and problematising the relationship of the camera to their subjects, and the camera's agency in public space. More recently their work has engaged with acts of resistance against neo-liberalism through footage they have accumulated while participating in protests in the UK and other locations where they have been resident artists. As it is highly relevant to my own research, I will discuss *The Exception and the Rule* (2009) as a model of practice.

This single screen film was produced as part of their residency in Pakistan, and directly probed and critiqued the conditions of the artist working abroad in an attempt to grapple and understand a culture and place. Drawing on structuralist filmmaking and visual ethnography, Mirza and Butler negotiate the politics of place using film, video, found footage and photography to frame everyday activities within a period of civil unrest in Karachi, Pakistan. Their reflexive strategies incorporate performances to camera, public interventions and observation, and these methods are also explored in depth in Butler's PhD thesis.[258]

Acutely aware of the problematics of the artist as author, and of the participant observer relationship, Mirza and Butler always clarify the collaborative nature of their work. Not just in terms of their collaborative practice as 'Mirza and Butler', but also in terms of how their work is produced in dialogue with those who participate in their

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[257] Gemma Sharpe, *Artists at Work: Karen Mirza and Brad Butler*, (Afterall, 2010) <http://www.afterall.org/online/artists-at-work-karen-mirza-and-brad-butler> [accessed 12th September 2013].

[258] Unpublished thesis, Brad Butler, 'How can structural film expand the language of experimental ethnography?' (University of the Arts London, 2009).

projects. One of the central themes in *The Exception and the Rule* is the partiality of vision and how this affects our 'ways of seeing'. The frame of reference and title for the film is Bertolt Brecht's play of the same name, which is one of several 'Lehrstucke' or teaching plays, developed to educate people first and foremost about socialist politics.[259] Function rather than content is privileged in Lehrstucke, through various performance modes aimed at breaking down divisions between author and audiences with reflexive gestures that reveal the 'mechanisms of theatre'.[260] Mirza and Butler drew on this way of working in conceiving and producing *The Exception and the Rule* to broker a dialogue between author and audience. Throughout the film the viewer is constantly made aware of the camera, the performativity of my co-participants, and the structuring of the edit through various framing devices and reflexive gestures that 'reveal the Western orientation of the film'.[261] However the frame also tells us what we are not seeing of Pakistan, what is left out, and this becomes the generative image of the film. The slippage and gaps between images, text and sound further intensifies this; the voiceover and on-screen text directs us willfully, exposing and disorientating our trust in what we see and hear. Our knowledge of Pakistan, as western viewers, allows us access to only a partial experience and level of engagement in the work. As Butler says, 'In Europe, many viewers recognise the Acconci or Dan Graham references and in Cairo … viewers read the conditions of the film's production. They recognised the constraints of making a film somewhere like India or Pakistan.'[262] In *The Exception and the Rule* we are lost in a labyrinth of worlds: performative, filmic, staged and unstaged, never seeming to get any closer to Pakistan and its complex politics, landscape and culture, as it seems to slip through our fingers. The visual images of Pakistan that circulate through news media or the hyperbole of Google's image search engine lodge themselves within our imagination, leaking into and overlaying Mirza and Butler's film like a suffocating text. Which representation of Pakistan the spectator is intended to privilege and how the different representations might speak about each

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[259] Reiner Steinweg, 'Brechts Modell der Lehrstücke. Zeugnisse, Discussionen, Erfahrungen (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1976), p.140 cited in Chris Perry, Locating *The Exception and the Rule*: One reading in an open system (2011), p. 4**.** <http://www.mirza-butler.net/index.php?/project/texts/> [accessed 12th September 2013].
[260] M. Esslin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils, (*London: Methuen, 1985), p.115 cited in Chris Perry, Locating *The Exception and the Rule*: One reading in an open system (2011), p. 4**.**
[261] Chris Perry, Locating *The Exception and the Rule*: One reading in an open system (2011), p. 6**.**
[262] Sharpe, *Artists at Work: Karen Mirza and Brad Butler*.

other is unclear, as reflected in the voiceover of the film itself: 'I couldn't get it; I couldn't seem to connect things.'[263]

Uriel Orlow's *Benin Project* is situated within the slippages and interstices of ethnography, film, performance and theatre. The focus of the *Benin Project* is the Benin Bronzes, which have been relocated in over 500 museums and collections worldwide after being looted by the British in 1897 as part of Britain's Empire building. Orlow spent six months researching the Benin Bronzes in the British Museum and British Library and then embarked on a two-week production trip to Nigeria. The work is configured as a modular installation with video works, etchings, and a map as a wall drawing named *Worldwide Benin* showing the different locations in which the Bronzes now reside.

Two of the video works, *Lost Wax* and *A Very Fine Cast*, show the different phases of casting brass replicas of the Benin Bronzes and other sculptural works in Nigeria today. Most relevant to my research is *The Visitor*, constructed through a series of stills as a video-essay on Orlow's audience with the present king of Benin, Oba Erediauwa and his court of chiefs. The piece documents the conversations that occur between Orlow, the king and his court, centring on collective memory and the demand for restitution of the Benin Bronzes from the locations and institutions in which they are now held.[264] The discussion around the stolen artifacts is very awkward, an aspect Orlow has deliberately included in the film to highlight 'the slipping in and out of gaps of cultural and historical difference that occur' in the exchange between Orlow and the king and his chiefs.[265] Mixing historical facts and empirical footage of his visit to Benin, Orlow casts himself as if in a play along with the characters he meets by employing a fictional third-person female voice as a narrator (a nod to the narrator in Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil* [1983], where a female voice reads from a fictional letter). The narrator acts as an invisible speaking voice or spectator set apart from the characters we see on screen who are all male. This mechanism acknowledges, as Orlow states, 'the subjectivity of

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[263] Chris Perry, Locating *The Exception and the Rule*: One reading in an open system.

[264] Uriel Orlow, *Benin Project* (2007) <http://www.urielorlow.net/work/benin-project> [accessed September 11th 2013].

[265] Ibid.

the gaze, of an encounter with a culture and its history' through the distancing of the third person.[266]

Thus in advocating that dialogue start with self-reflective listening, so that as artists we might interrogate the 'ethics of communicative exchange' rather than adopt a position of presumed equality, it is helpful to draw on Trinh T. Minh-ha's concept of 'speaking nearby' and the 'crisis of representation' in ethnography that was signalled by her 'antiethnographic' film *Reassemblage* (1982). Her film adamantly rejected ethnographic conventions for an anti-representational intention:

> I do not intend to speak about
> Just speak near by
> The Casamance Sun and palm
> The part of Senegal where tourist settlements flourish.
> A film about what?[267]

Rather than attempting to speak about or for the other she suggests we aim to 'speak nearby.' [268]

Voice and Feminist Ethnography

Work by feminist researchers directed towards identification and solidarity with their subjects and/or informants has been the subject of much critical debate within ethnography. In her essay 'Against Empathy, Voice and Authenticity', Patti Lather asks 'what is it to claim voice, authenticity and empathy as the grounds of research?'[269] She suggests that any attempt to do so on the basis of 'empathetic' or 'dialogical knowing' is a practice of violence. Instead she proposes we approach our research by not trying to situate ourselves or others in any fixed place but in 'spaces in between' where there

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[266] Unpublished interview with Uriel Orlow. Liz Bailey, 'Why have some artists turned to anthropology in their practice and how has this turn been interpreted and critiqued?' (2008). <http://www.lizbailey.org.uk/painting_pages/essay%20pages/artist%20as%20anthropologist.htm> [accessed 24th September 2013] (para 30).
[267] Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Framer Framed* (Routledge, 1992) p.96, 182.
[268] Rutten, 'Revisiting the ethnographic turn in contemporary art', p.470.
[269] Patti Lather, 'Against Empathy, Voice and Authenticity', in Jackson, Y. A., and Mazzei, A. L., (Eds.), *Voice in Qualitative Inquiry: Challenging conventional, interpretive, and critical conceptions in qualitative research*, London: Routledge, 2009, pp. 17-26. p.17.

are 'constantly changing intersections of interpretation, interruption and mutuality.'[270]

Drawing on the work of Doris Sommer and Kamala Viseswaran, she challenges ethnography's claims to the 'real', as well as Western feminist ethnographic traditions that aspire to romantic ideals about *giving voice* to the 'other', as a 'violation and betrayal inherent in ethnographic representation' which only seeks to make apparent the unequal status between artist and collaborator and the presumption that we can speak on the behalf of other:[271]

> Forcing understandable identities, overlooking differences "for the sake of a comforting, self-justifying rush of identification,"[272] the will to understand the Other is therefore a kind of violence, "an appropriation in the guise of an embrace".[273] This is how empathy violates the other and is part of the demand for totality. A recalcitrant rhetoric is about inaccessible alterity, a lesson in modesty and respect, somewhere outside of our desire to possess, know, grasp.[274]

These are strong words and challenging for any artist who seeks to create a forum in which particular social groups and issues are more visible and audible. Lather's point here is not about the worthiness of art projects that attempt to include multiple voices, but that representation is very messy and that it is the failures of representation that often open up the most pertinent questions. Instead, Lather proposes that 'We occupy the very space opened up by the ruins of the concept of ethnographic representation'[275] and set out to 'move away from the wish for heroism and rescue through some more adequate methodology and towards a learning that can tolerate its own failure of knowledge and the detour of not understanding'.[276]

On one level *White Oil* operates as an experience of the men portrayed through the film's failure to represent them, by constructing an economy of exchange that

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[270] Patti Lather, 'Against Empathy, Voice and Authenticity', p.17. Also see J.Robinson, White women researching/representing 'others': From antiapartheid to postcolonialism? *In Writing Women and Space*, A. Blunt and G Rose, Eds, (New York: Guilford, 1994), pp. 197-226.

[271] Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis, I, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

[272] Doris Sommer, 'Resistant texts and incompetent readers, *Poetics Today*, 15(4) (1994),pp, 523-551, p.543.

[273] Ibid.

[274] Lather, 'Against Empathy, Voice and Authenticity', p.19.

[275] Ibid.

[276] Ibid., p.18.

'interrupts voyeurism and the erasure of difference'.[277] It is a film that is hard to read in many ways. The speaking subject is seldom shown, owing to a careful displacement of image and sound through off frame dialogue. The static frame and wide-angle shots, the use of sound and divergences in the script, withhold expected empathy and create a respectful distance between subject and viewer (discussed in more detail in Chapters Four and Five). In the editing process, it was about pushing the limits of knowledge, as well as exploring how far old significations could be shattered to both alienate the viewer and compel them to engage in the film. It was never about attempting to show the 'whole picture' but rather the uncertainty and partiality of knowledge and the impossibility of ever being able to account for the reality of others and of lives that we can never really know. To use Lather's words, the film works within 'an economy of displacements that condenses something other than individualized and psychologized motivations … where we do what we can while leaving place for what we cannot envision to emerge'.[278]

Encounters in the Landscape

In *White Oil* my encounters in the landscape are highlighted by foregrounding in the work, though intermittently, the way my co-participants refer to me both verbally and through their gaze. The fact that I am never addressed directly in the film links to the issue of language and highlights the fact that my involvement is mediated, to some extent, through friends and students who assisted in the making of the film (Faris Arouri, Hasan Daraghme and Khaled Jarrar). My projections of what I am seeing and hearing are also made apparent by incorporating dialogue that makes acute my co-participants' awareness that they are being observed and that my gaze is a projected gaze. This othering of the self, and the selves of the other, creates an immanent rather than transcendental relationship, through co-existing, informing and implicating each other.[279] This self-othering is crucial to a revised understanding of ethnography and politics where reflectivity disturbs subject positions without becoming narcissistic.

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[277] Lather, 'Against Empathy, p.19.
[278] Ibid., p.21
[279] Foster, 'The Artist as Ethnographer,' in *The Return of the Real*, p.304.

At an early point in the editing stage I considered using a first-person documentary diarist voiceover to speak about things that were not visible in the film, such as the accumulation of dust in the residents' houses living next to the quarries, the buildings in Israel constructed out of the stone, the transport of the stone from the OPT to Israel, and the export of stone from the Israeli port of Ashdod. However, I was hesitant about this strategy, as I was not interested in my voice being the speaking voice or in speaking for others, or in my looking being the focus of the work thereby instating myself with more agency than I already had. In the context of Palestine, as mentioned earlier, I inevitably had a greater agency than did my co-participants given my ability to move freely. This discrepancy is referenced in the film through the build-up of dialogue, particularly with the BBrothers when they speak about areas which are out of bounds to them and also in their reference to me returning home to the 'outside world' and telling me how good the coffee is in Palestine.

Ramzi Safid – Security Guard at Rafat Quarry, Ramallah, West Bank

> [His] limitless sorrow … abolished all the barriers [between us and enabled us to reach out and connect].[280]

Ramzi and I first met in 2009 when I returned to Palestine in search of the writer Franz Kafka's quarry photographs that were rumoured to be in Jerusalem and housed in private collections. The photographs had been either taken or commissioned by Kafka around 1911, as part of his research as an employer of an insurance company into the accidents that occurred at quarries in Austria and around Prague in the former Czechoslovakia.[281] My intention had been to explore the way that the meanings associated with these images have evolved through their relocation and the changes to the social, political and representational landscapes of which they are part. My initial methodology was to use the images to activate encounters in the landscape. On my preliminary field trip (October 2009) my aim was also to visit an Israeli quarry

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[280] Zabel Essayan, *Among the Ruins* (Constantinople, 1911, latest edition, Works, vol. 1, Antelias: Armenian Catholicosate, 1987), p.31, cited in Marc Nichanian, 'Catastrophic Mourning', in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, eds. David L. Eng, David Kazanjian (London: University California Press, 2003), p.117.
[281] Corngold, S., J. Greenberg, and B. Wagner, eds, *Franz Kafka, The Office Writings*, trans. by Eric Patton with Ruth Hein (Princeton University Press, 2009).

called Sal'it on the outskirts of Jerusalem in Area C. The employees of this quarry, who are predominantly Palestinians, were fighting a legal battle against poor working conditions and the employers' disregard for pay slips. As I was unable to get access to the Sal' it quarry, I visited three other quarries that I had noticed on my journeys between Jerusalem and Ramallah.

Meeting Ramzi and visiting the quarries precipitated a change in direction in the research. The quarries' proximity to residential areas was striking. I learnt about the importance of these sites as a source of livelihood for many Palestinians and the devastating impact that the Occupation was having on the quarries in the West Bank. (In previous visits to the West Bank, on my Friday walks through the craggy hills with the Palestinian walking group Sha-shat, I had noticed the scars in the landscape from the quarries, but at the time I was not aware of their significance.) My focus shifted from the Kafka photographs to a much more in-depth engagement with the present-day quarries in Palestine. The encounter with the quarries in the West Bank was so overwhelming and multi-layered, it was absolutely necessary that these vast and multiple spaces of absence took centre stage in my investigation as they epitomised so many aspects of a geography and geology of disaster that are the result of a region ravaged by ethnocide, colonialism and globalisation.

The charisma and power of Ramzi's words and character began to shape the research. He affected my life by opening up and demarcating an uncharted territory in which both my practice and ways of seeing have been considerably altered. He has highlighted the capacities and possibilities as much as the foreclosures of engaging with the question of Palestine and the quarries, showing me new maps, both literally and metaphorically. In my reflections I draw on my conversations with Ramzi, about his desires, hopes and disappointments, to contextualise his role within *White Oil*. His stories are about changing human values and how communities have been divided as a result of the Occupation. His 'minor literature' grounds what João Biehl and Peter

Locke describe as 'an ethnographic ethics' that gives us a sense of becoming.[282]

The minor can be understood as a form of cultural production from within a dominant culture; a kind of 'becoming a stranger' in ones own tongue. As the artist and writer Simon O'Sullivan says, 'The minor … names the production of a specifically collective enunciation; the calling forth of a people-yet-to-come who in some senses are already here, albeit masked by typical representational models (precisely the major).'[283] This is particularly relevant for the characters of *White Oil*, who disturb and challenge representations of Palestine and Palestinians: their minor literature is a politics that subverts and transforms our understanding of the West Bank. For Deleuze and Guattari, a 'minor literature' is political because in it the individual subject is inextricable from the social body and speaks in a collective voice: 'The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating in it.'[284]

Ramzi spends five nights a week sleeping in a portakabin overlooking the quarry at Rafat on the outskirts of Ramallah, before going to his day job as a plumber for the municipality. His life is bounded by the conditions and long hours of work. The quarry is near Qalandiya checkpoint in Area C (under Israeli security and administration). Ramzi owns a small piece of land in Area C where he has built a small house for his family without a building permit, knowing full well that the Israeli authorities would not issue him with one. Built in 1995, the existence of his house has gone unnoticed by the authorities. But everyday on returning home there is the fear that it will no longer be there.[285]

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[282] João Biehl, and Peter Locke, 'Deleuze and the Anthropology of Becoming', *Current Anthropology*, Volume 51, Number 3 (June 2010), pp.317- 351 (p. 319).

[283] Simon O'Sullivan, Notes Towards a Minor Art Practice, Drain: Journal of Contemporary Art and Culture, Issue on 'Syncretism', 05, online journal (October 2005) <http://drainmag.com/index_nov.htm> <http://www.drainmag.com/contentNOVEMBER/RELATED_ESSAYS/Notes_Towards_Minor_Practice.htm> [accessed 20th September 2013].

[284] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature (University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p.17.

[285] A former student at the IAAP, Bisan Hussam Abu-Eisheh's installation *Playing House* (2008-2011) documents the remnants of a friends home in Jerusalem that was destroyed by the Israeli government.

After four prison sentences without charge, as a result of his political activity with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Palestinian Marxist national liberation movement founded in 1967, [286] Ramzi lived in Guatemala for a number of years, searching for a new life. In our conversations he talked about his experience as a member of the PFLP in the 1980s,[287] his time in prison, and the transfer of power from Israel to the Palestinian Authority, which has effectively imposed a police state subcontracted by Israel. He also discussed the Arab Spring and his hopes for the future of his children, which I have had to exclude from the film to limit the scope of the project.

My meetings with Ramzi took place over a period of two years, visiting him in the evenings at the portakabin. We spent many hours in conversation, most of which were recorded. There were occasions when I did not record, when the conversation was too emotional, both in his expression and my response. Ramzi, however, never asked me not to record; these were decisions that I took. The ability to manage the nuanced and subtle distantiation that is needed in filming and recording at times came undone, and challenged my own emotional boundaries. The reader should not underestimate the distress and anguish on hearing and witnessing accounts of Palestine's catastrophic history, both past and present. This was also magnified by my frustration, guilt and shame in regard to the Jewish State's founding on the dispossession of another. It was not always easy when meeting with Ramzi to negotiate my own struggles and find a critical distance.

The family had been given permission to build a four-story apartment but instead built a five-story apartment. Rather than being approached to dismantle the fifth floor, the Israeli army arrived without warning in the middle of the night and gave the occupants less than one hour to evacuate the house destroying the entire building with explosives. In ten glass vitrines Abu-Eisheh displays the remnants of personal items found in the vicinity of the house.

[286] It has consistently been the second largest of the groups forming the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the largest being Fatah.

[287] Jamal, who translated some of Ramzi's dialogue back in London had parallel stories of being in prison and also confirmed Israel's strategy in arresting young men without charge around the age of sixteen, just before they are about to take their school exams. They are then asked to collaborate with the IOF and threatened with extended detention if they do not comply. Nearly every male Palestinian I know has served some time in an Israeli prison for refusing this request. In Ramzi's case this first arrested impacted irretrievably on the rest of his life. He had been top of his class and was keen to continue his studies, but was arrested before his exams and held for18 months. He never returned to education going underground as part of the (PFLP), for some years. This story is not included in the film, along with many others stories as I had to be selective with the material.

For Ramzi too, his meeting with me inevitably brought up many complex emotions. Although he did not share with me directly the affects of my presence and my gaze, his gestures and movements, sighs and pauses, spoke volumes about his own struggles and disappointments. One of course never knows what another is feeling or thinking, however, in the words of the Palestinian Lebanese journalist, historian and activist Samir Kassir, in his book *Being Arab*, we might considerer the following:

> the gaze of the Western Other… prevents everything, even escape … the Other's gaze constantly confronts you with your apparently insurmountable condition. It ridicules your powerlessness, foredooms all your hopes, and stops you in your tracks time and again at one or other of the world's border crossings. You have to have been the bearer of a passport of a pariah state to know how categorical such a gaze can be. You have to have measured your anxieties against the Other's certainties – his or her certainties *about you* – to understand the paralysis it can inflict.[288]

To some extent this is provoked by my gaze standing in for the gaze of the Other and the West as well as the Arab world, which has largely turned a blind eye to the fate of Palestinians over the last five decades. In his book *Black Skin, White Masks*, Franz Fanon is concerned with how surrounding social conditions affect psychological states, both in their function and dysfunction.[289] For Fanon, the identity of the colonised or occupied is inherently fragmented due to the contradictions and negations it suffers under a colonial regime whilst at the same time being circumscribed by and dependent on the colonial gaze.[290] In Ramzi's eyes, I was perhaps at times the past colonial gaze of the British, as well as being implicated in the colonial gaze of Israel because of being Jewish. However, our political positions, my solidarity with Palestine, and our attraction to each other as people were also part of our complex dynamic. Through our affection for each other the 'gaze' was eventually undone, as was my privilege as the nomadic artist.

Although he is passionate and committed in telling his story, Ramzi is inevitably faced with the tragic fact that, so far, Palestine has failed to be released from the suffocating

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[288] Samir Kassir, *Being Arab*, trans Will Hobson, introduction by Robert Fisk (London, New York, Verso, 2006), p.2.
[289] Franz Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks*, (Pluto Press, 1993)
[290] F. Charles Peterson, *DuBois, Fanin, Cabral: The Margins of Elite Anti-Colonial Leadership* (Lexington books, 2007), pp. 92 -93.

hold of Israel and the gaze of the world on its desperate fate. Ramzi's account of the increasing pressures of life under Occupation which have resulted in the fragmentation of the Palestinian society and the role of the Palestinian Authority in the creation of a police state becomes a story of shame as much as suffocation and oppression.[291]

On a practical level, Ramzi sometimes did not answer my calls and only occasionally returned them; this meant that I was never sure if my visits were an imposition. However, he was always warm and attentive when I visited. I came to realise that the structures and stresses of his life, holding down two jobs, meeting the demands of family life, as well as his deep melancholy, were partially if not wholly the reason for the discontinuity in communication. Arrangements to meet were normally quite open. Ramzi would tell me which evenings he was working and at what time he would be at the quarry and I would visit after a day's filming in another quarry or after teaching. Taking a taxi from the centre of Ramallah where I had accommodation, I sometimes had to mediate some difficult assumptions about my visits from the taxi drivers. A western women taking a taxi on her own to a quarry on the outskirts of town in the evening, to be picked up some hours later, visiting a single man in a portakabin, leads to all sorts of possibilities in the imagination. At times these journeys were very uncomfortable as I was beholden to the driver. In a society driven by a very strong sense of patriarchy, and where women are seen infrequently alone at night, I was breaking many taboos. I was allowed to some extent to transgress these gender boundaries because I was a western woman and an outsider. However, one should note that issues around public and private space are not straightforward for Palestinian women or for women across the Arab world. Every Arab society has very different historical and contemporary attitudes to women and gender issues. Although this subject is not addressed in the thesis, it is interesting to contextualise Ramzi's relation to me as a woman within the history of the Palestinian liberation movements, in which he played a part in the 1980s and 1990s, and the role of Palestinian women in those movements. I would like to suggest that Ramzi's openness with me may well

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[291] The consequence is that people are afraid to talk, do not answer the phone unless they recognise the number calling, and are extremely cautious in building new relationships with those outside their immediate community. A student at IAAP once said to me, 'nobody does anything alone here.' My diary entry 30th October, 2009.

have had to do with the historical background of Palestinian women as activists and resistance fighters, and it is through this lens that our relationship could be perceived (see Appendix 1).

Birzeit Brothers

During the production trip in April 2011 I also spent five evenings with four brothers and their associates, who own and work a small quarry in Birzeit, a small town a few kilometres from Ramallah. The Birzeit Brothers home is a town called Shyukh near Hebron. However, they spend stay five nights a week camping out in a metal shipping container in their quarry as the journey time with the checkpoints and Separation Wall from Birzeit to Shyukh takes approximately two and half hours each way (see Appendix 2).

The politics, reminiscences and anguish articulated in the day-to-day lives of the BBrothers, as they sat around the fire at night watching over their quarry and machines, reflect those of Ramzi. The BBrothers, a generation younger, seem resigned to how things have turned out as the physical, social and political landscape of Palestine has dramatically altered, with the Separation Wall, the checkpoints, and the emergence of the Palestinian Authority subsequent to the Oslo agreement. The BBrothers, like nearly all Palestinians, raise a Palestinian flag animated only by the wind on their temporary home, the metal cabin at the quarry. This symbol signifies both a people's call for self-determination as well as the demise of a resistance movement and solidarity between Palestinians, with fractional political parties, neo-liberalism and a fragmented society contributing to the Occupation's steadfast hold. From our conversations it was clear that for the BBrothers the hardship of earning a livelihood and feeding their families in Hebron had got the better of them, with dreams of a different kind future, or any hope at all, long buried in the dust and rubble.

Visiting the brothers over five non-consecutive nights over a period of four weeks, bringing meat for the Zarb, a traditional way of cooking in a stone and mud oven, we hung out with them for five to six hours at a time. It was a wonderful experience full of

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laughter and warmth, with Khaled mediating between us.

One of the important aspects of this particular quarry was the way the BBrothers and their friends shared and interacted with each other, so that the quarry at night was taken over by a sense of communality. In the evenings after dusk, friends from the surrounding vicinity, as well as a young security guard Ahmed, who works for a wealthy quarry owner called Babour, came together around the campfire. In the scenes in *White Oil*, the BBrothers and their friends share their lives over coffee and tea made with fresh sage sown around their camp, with meals prepared in a Zarb. Talking, singing, muttering, joking and laughing they reveal some of the social, economic, political, cultural and spatial dynamics of Palestine to the background of mobile phones as a source for music and the radio.

The BBrothers initially only spoke to me through the camera and my sound recording device, which seemed to provide a safe distance from which they could place me. I never tried to challenge these subtle but distinct boundaries that they had established but waited until they came towards me. Gradually, in our second and third meetings, the BBrothers started to speak and gesture to me directly, and as their world slowly unfolded before my eyes I also became one of the crew. However, it was clear this was only possible due to the presence of Khaled and the camera, which was an intrinsic part of the dynamic of the group as well as animating relations. Although I rarely addressed the BBrothers directly because of the language difficulty, except through gestures around basic things like tea, coffee and food, our conversations revolved quite naturally around the camera with my presence acting as a focus and stimuli. Sometimes the BBrothers addressed me through Khaled who translated. This address was usually an enquiry about what and how I was framing with the camera, how I was seeing, accompanied by their projections of how they thought I perceived them and Palestine. The camera was to this extent the apparatus that permitted me to be there, and I was an extension of the camera. The camera and I were perceived by my co-participants as a unit mediating relationships that might otherwise have been problematic in this highly gendered space.

The Camera as Apparatus

Visual ethnography is influenced by specific political, technological and material contexts. With the advent of the lightweight portable camera, filmmakers, artists and visual ethnographers have in recent years been able to work alone or with minimal numbers of people, freed from the obligation of making films that were mainly financed by television broadcast companies.[292] This has also enabled a more intimate and sensory relationship with a place and its people, thereby resolving some of the challenges involved in fostering relations. The advance in camera technology and design, with the addition or incorporation of a mini TV screen, has also changed the way filmmakers see and how they form relationships with the camera. As Chris Wright writes: 'Vision is no longer directly connected to the eye of the camera-operator, who becomes instead a kind of relay, one point in a circuit.'[293] The apparatus that once connected the scene of action, the camera, and the eye of the camera operator in a single line is disrupted, resulting in a very different kind of engagement of the filmmaker with her subject. Instead a feedback loop is established between two positions: the camera and what it is pointed at, and the operator and the camera's screen. 'Previously denied the choice – the camera-operator saw what the camera saw – she or he is now torn between looking at the screen, and looking at the scene; a constant play between the two.'[294] No longer does the camera come directly between the filmmaker and what is being filmed, as the correlation (between eye movement and camera movement) has been disrupted and is no longer necessary. One looks with the camera not through it as everything is already displayed on the screen, collapsing the boundaries between filming and viewing.[295] Filming in this way means that the ethnographic aspect of filmmaking mediated through the camera engenders relations

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[292] In Renewing ethnographic film: Is digital video changing the genre?' MacDougall (2001) discusses how the advancement of technology changed his way of working and the kinds of films he was producing with a specific focus on his experience and encounters in the making of his seminal *Doon School* films.

[293] Chris Wright, 'The third subject, Perspectives on visual anthropology,' in *Anthropology Today*, Vol 14 No 4 (1998), p.19.

[294] Wright, 'The third subject, Perspectives on visual anthropology,' p.19.

[295] Ibid

as the vital component of communication.[296] My choice of camera, the Canon 5D, essentially an SLR photographic camera that also records high quality video and has a digital screen as a viewer, was informed by thinking through these relations as well as by the need for a device small and light enough for me to carry on my own and that would not inhibit building intimate relations.

Sound was recorded through a separate small zoom device, which I would move quite randomly around the campfire picking up conversations. The device would be left running for long periods, and I would continue filming noting where gatherings were happening, and move the device appropriately (initially I thought that Khaled would assist with sound recording but it soon became apparent that he felt much freer to engage in dialogue with the BBrothers without the sound recording device). This way of working worked limited my bodily presence and created a very fluid environment, allowing me to pick up a lot of conversation, sounds and general banter around the fire, which were very atmospheric. However, this also produced a huge amount of sound material to listen to and translate, which was very time consuming with many conversations being only partially audible. There were often multiple voices speaking at any one time, the BBrothers talking over each other, speaking quickly or animatedly, and often the sound of the wind or an Israeli F16 fighter plane would drown out the audibility of the conversations. However, this partial grasp of the environment is also reflective of ethnography, of the histories and spaces that divide us and the challenges and failures of translation. As Ahmed says, 'The proximity of this translation as encounter hence leads not to knowledge, communication or sympathy, but to a sense of limits of what can be got across, to a sense of that which cannot be grasped in the present. That which cannot be grasped is mediated by this encounter...'[297]

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[296] Grimshaw successfully argues against any simplistics of visual media as 'techniques', without intention to their theoretical implications for anthropology as a whole (Banks and Morphy, 00.36-52).
[297] Ahmed, *Strange Encounters*, p.148

Corporeal Images

> The challenge [is] to seek out revelatory moments, those flashes of connection between what would otherwise be lost in flux … filmmakers ha[ve] to find ways to clarify situations by holding fast to what unfold[s] … It is about finding the shape rather than marking the line of film.[298]

One of the most important aspects of filming is how one extends one's own feeling of being into seeing, so that object and subject dissolve. It is about making connections with life, becoming part of the things that one films, not as a distant observer that the term observational cinema perhaps implies but actually does not subscribe to. Observational cinema requires an acute attention to its subject, and the filmmaker has to give of themselves in the most nuanced and complex of ways. It is not just a process of connecting, nor of just empathy or listening. It is a 'being there' in which images are produced in time and space through the 'corporeal body' of the filmmaker. MacDougall locates this as a 'seeing [that] not only makes us alive to the appearance of things but to being itself'.[299] The corporeal image is an image where all the senses are brought to bear in the making of it.

In filmmaking one is never a passive observer but is implicated in the act of filming through the positioning of the camera and one's own body. MacDougall articulates this well: 'Meaning is produced by our whole bodies, not just by conscious thought. We see with our bodies, and any image we make carries the imprint of our bodies; that is to say, of our being as well as the meaning we intend to covey.' The image is a product of human vision, although to some it may be considered as just 'secondhand or surrogate seeing'. By looking purposefully and with thought, this process is complicated and invested with both desires and heighted responses. Images become artifacts of this process, mirroring our bodies and physical movements.[300] 'Corporeal images are not just the images of other bodies; they are also images of the body behind the camera and its relations with the world.'[301] In the same way mental images

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[298] Grimshaw and Ravetz, *Observational Cinema, Anthropology, Film, and the exploration of Social Life* (Indiana University Press, 2009), p.119.
[299] MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses*, p.1.
[300] Ibid., p.3.
[301] Ibid

repeatedly complicate and interrupt the train of 'linguistic' thought emphasising how conscious experience is made up of 'emotions, sensory responses and the pictures of our imagination'.[302] In addressing the corporeal aspect of images and image making we are concerned with how meaning emerges from an embodied experience of being there, of the moment in which images are made before becoming separated from the physical encounter with a place.[303] To quote MacDougall: 'At that point thought is still undifferentiated and bound up with matter and feeling in a complex relation that it often later loses in abstraction.'[304]

My relationship with those who appear, or that we hear in the film, is crucial. It is my presence with the camera, whether still and composed, quiet and restrained, animated and engaged, that activates my co-participants, constructing and assembling not singular but multiple narratives, where new relationships and structures that were once indeterminable become visible. The relationships forged in the process of production, between the body, the camera apparatus, my co- participants, the scene at hand, all elucidate a history engaged with the 'now'.

In his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, arguing for a concept of time rather than history, Walter Benjamin is concerned with how history is brought into the '*Now*'. For Benjamin time is pregnant with possibilities from the past, which becomes the making of the present. As he writes, 'History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now.'[305] Rather than being solely a critique of the way in which the past is understood, Benjamin's analysis of history rethinks the way the present can be approached. For him time is *out of joint*, it is not homogeneous, and therefore a *leap* must be made to claim the present. This idea of claiming the present implies that there is an active participation, a move towards something, an encompassing of it. One can also use a Deleuzian term here: to

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[302] MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image*, p.2.
[303] Ibid., p.1.
[304] Ibid
[305] Walter Benjamin*, A Theses on Philosophy, Illuminations*, p.252.

deterritorialise[306] in breaking up the continuum of history and creating an opening in which things and relations can be understood differently. For Benjamin, the historical materialist has the potential and ability to find and distinguish monads,[307] worlds that both extend themselves and have complete self-awareness: 'In the monad everything that used to lie in mythical rigidity as a textual reference comes alive.'[308]

In the embodied experience of filming, monads become moments when one's sensory apparatus, what is in front of the camera, and the images in one's imagination, crystallise and everything comes alive. The dynamic possibilities of the image open up to worlds both thought and unsought, known and unknown, where different strata of time are released. These are moments that one must wait for and one cannot determine when they will come, unfolding through time. Waiting in stillness, looking patiently, they can happen through a pensive gaze or a striking moment in movement where something is realised in an instance.

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[306] I do not wish to conflate Benjamin's ideas of history and time with Deleuze's deterritorialisation, merely to indicate lines of flight that transverse the two.
[307] *Monas*. Unit, the one. Hence, Leibniz's "monads" and the "monadology."
mo·nad 'in the metaphysics of Leibnitz, an indivisible indestructible unit that is the basic element of reality and a microcosm of it' Encarta world dictionary.
[308] Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht, and Georg Lukács, *Aesthetics of Politics*, translation editor Ronald Taylor (New York, London: Verso 1980), p.137.

4: ARCHITECTURE OF *WHITE OIL*

This chapter engages with images, dialogue and sound and their relationships in the single screen film *White Oil*. My interest is in three potentialities of the image: the image as material presence, the image as discourse encoding a history, and the associative power of the image.

The film is structured around the interplay between day and night, and the quarries as a labyrinth of never ending spaces. The day scenes focus on the decimation of the landscape: the machines and non-human elements, settlements and landscape, the sounds of industry and the cutting of the stone. The night scenes, by contrast, are more narrative and intimate, focusing on the social gathering of the BBrothers and their friends and their engagement with the quarry space. In these night scenes the quarry becomes a dwelling with moments of resistance.

Single Screen versus Multi Screen Installation

Having thought carefully about the form and structure of the film, I moved away from my initial assumption that *White Oil* would be a multi screen installation, with which I am very familiar having worked extensively with multi screen in my practice prior to this research project.

My preliminary thoughts were that as I would be dealing with the fragmented space of the OPT the installation form could reflect aspects of this. However this would never have imparted the harsh realities of living under Occupation in a walled-off ghetto, struck through by dividing lines: roads, settlements, checkpoints as well as the cavernous holes of the quarries that have also carved up the land. It became apparent that the fragmented and partial encounter often experienced by the viewer of multi screen installations would only mirror the fragmentation of the OPT rather than critique it.

As Andrew Conio writes,

> The installation format is often perceived as conflating the viewer and the characters as they oscillate between their internal conflicts and the external perpetrations that are not simply brought to bear on their positions but also determine the content and form of what they say and what they do. [309]

Oscillating between screens and images, the viewer is 'unable to resolve the heterogeneity of the semiologies into which he or she is immersed, as well as the divergent subjects and speaking positions.' The spectacle of the multi screen installation often privileges the modes of construction and reception of film at the expense of content by disrupting the narrative drive, and ambiguity and disorientation are often the main effects of this format. As Marc Augé argues, the multiple screen viewing position and the lack of a central, authorised, constructed narrative is far from offering a mode of critical detachment, and often does little more than repeat the logics of supermodernity:

> The world that surrounds the artist and the period in which [they] live … reach [them] only as mediatised forms that are themselves effects, aspects and driving forces of the global system. That system serves as its own ideology; it functions like a set of instructions for use; it quite literally screens the reality for which it is substituting itself or rather whose place it is taking. The unease and disarray of artists confronted with this situation are also our own, and they tend to exacerbate those problems. [310]

After returning from the on-location production trip in June 2011 and working with the material, a narrative emerged, led by Ramzi, the security guard. As well as the political nature of the film and the issues I am trying to raise around geopolitics, expropriation, colonialism, capitalism and the spatial dynamics of the OPT, my challenge has been to construct a single screen film as the optimal outcome for this research where a number of different narratives are posited. *White Oil* is to be experienced like cinema, with a specific screening time so that the viewer is immersed in the space and time of the OPT and the issues at stake, rather than being able to wander in and out of the film

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[309] Andrew Conio, 'Eija-Liisa Ahtiia: the Palpable Event', *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image*, Vol 3, (2012) p.130.
<http://cjpmi.ifl.pt> [accessed 12 September 2013]
[310] Marc Augé, *Non-places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*, trans. by John Howe (Verso, 1995), pp. 110–11.

catching just partial glimpses or narratives. This presentation demands of the viewer that they watch and stay with the film in all its nuances and multiplicities, committing to and engaging with the film from beginning to end.

A Feminist Line

White Oil articulates a feminist line between emotionality, narration and embodiment, which comes about through my approach to the material and locations that I am exploring. Although I am working within a very gendered space and all of the people visible in the film are male, it is my gaze, that of a western Jewish woman, that searches out the landscape for signs of life and expression within it. This raises questions about feminist film theory which sees the camera as inherently voyeuristic.[311] In *White Oil* my gaze is not of the voyeur, but that of the activist, the ethnographer, the teacher, the watcher, the interloper and the stranger marking out proximity through a critical distance.

Although we hear the voices of Ramzi the security guard and the BBrothers, the storytelling is by a woman, myself as the filmmaker. It is my voice that has edited and re-structured the different voices and dialogue that we hear in the film. The film knits together the economic, familial and political, recalling a cinema that is ardently informed by a critique of narrative form and yet resists sterility and abstraction. It is part of 'a critical tradition of feminist artists'[312] that defends the integrity of a storytelling capable of portraying individual and collective struggles, personal and political victories and failures. These are struggles that are embedded in affective (and symbolic) webs of connection, multiple narratives and the nuances and heterogeneity of a culture and people.

Maria Walsh reclaims narrative as having a transformative and deconstructive potential in its own right, where a multiplicitous narrative within a single screen film is capable of delivering the alienated and critical effects that multi screen installations

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[311] Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16:3 (Autumn 1975), pp. 6–18.
[312] Connolly, *The Place of Artists' Cinema*, p. 93.

often privilege. However, most importantly, new narrative forms allow for the creation of 'new narratives on the part of the viewer' by bestowing visibility on a place and culture, and it is here that the single screen film *White Oil* operates.[313]

Narrative in White Oil

In the opening sequence of *White Oil* the tense, gradually heightened sound of the cracking and bursting of compressed stone in the staged laboratory compression test acts as a vital metaphor in its summation of the entirety of the film (figure 6).

(figure 6)

It stands apart from the rest of the film and functions a prologue, evoking a spatial relation and inverting a cinematic hierarchical convention, before the subsequent scene in which the digital sound of the Azan, the Muslim call to prayer, first animates the title WHITE OIL as a performing text.

A wide-angle shot of a quarry follows, showing a desolate landscape with residential houses and industrial buildings in the half-light of the early morning (figure 7). Being so close to Ramallah, from certain perspectives it appears as though this quarry has been excavated to make a space for the city centre to collapse into. Ramallah seems to tip

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[313] Maria Walsh, 'Discontinuity and Potential Space in Salla Tykkä's Trilogy', in Senses of Cinema, *Cinema and the Gallery*, 28 (2003) <http://sensesofcinema.com/2003/28/salla_tykka_trilogy/> [accessed 12 September 2013] (para 2).

(figure 7)

We are not living in the lights,
we are in the darkness, always!
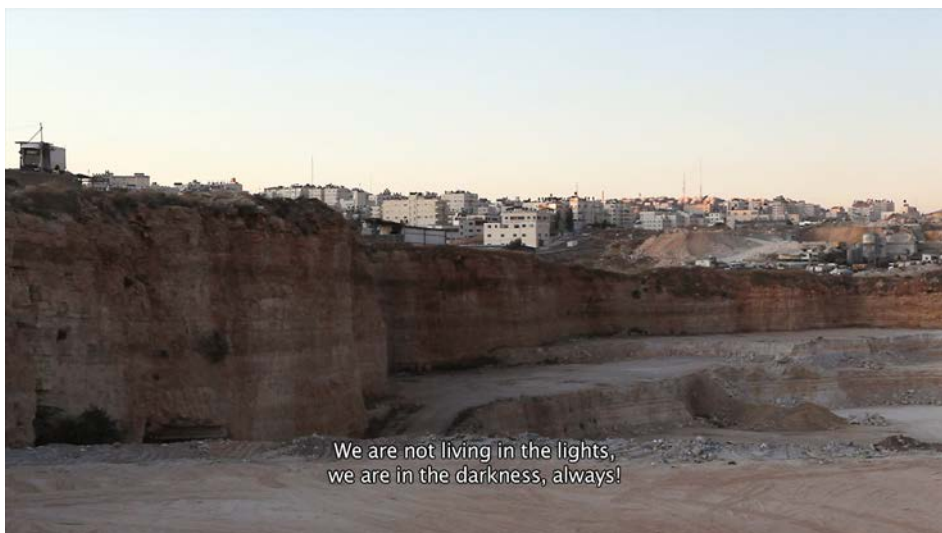
(figure 8)

on its edge, with only the hues of the landscape providing a visual separation of the concave form of the quarry and the built up area of Ramallah. A piece of discarded paper (a letter, a hanky), falls like a feather from the top edge of the quarry into the cavernous space and then out of frame, animating the space.This scene is then filled with the sound of Ramzi's voiceover (figure 8). The timbre of his voice is deep and gravelly, his vocal chords thick and dried out from chain smoking and the dust from the quarries:

This is not a garden but it's calm.
We are not living in the lights, we are in the darkness, always!
We got used to this life...the first two days were very difficult... and then one gets used to it.

It's exactly how when you enter a cell for the first time...

It's like having a seizure, but then you adapt.

That's the beauty of the human mind...things that were unimaginable you bear, you adapt.

For example, you go to the Himalayas and you adapt...after 2–3 hours; it's as if you had been there for 100 years.

In the third scene, a six minute sequence of durational images with a soundscape, we see not only the hollowed out spaces of the quarries but also the surrounding landscape piled high with debris, transforming the landscape of the OPT into desolate heaps of ruins (figures 9 and 10). The sounds of drilling and other machines reverberating through the landscape have been manipulated to create a sonic experience that enters the physical space and body of the audience so that the sound penetrates and vibrates aggressively. The workers and owners of the quarries wear no protective clothing and their constant proximity to the heavy machinery used to excavate the quarries means their fragile human bodies are extremely vulnerable in these industrial spaces. The quarries are clearly dangerous and life-threatening environments. Stone boulders, piled on top of each other, are used to create boundaries and walls to contain some of the quarries but are so precarious that much of the loose rubble threatens to come crashing down. Parts of the quarries that are cared for properly actually increase the danger by giving a false sense of security to the workers.[314] Trees are often left standing next to the quarries with their roots exposed, creating a precarious system that holds the top layers of the soil and debris together. The debris from the quarries is scattered across the landscape like the aftermath of a disaster, as there are few resources for moving the mountains of dusty shards, so they remain heaped up in the landscape.[315]

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[314] Corngold, S., J. Greenberg and B. Wagner, eds, *Franz Kafka: The Office Writings*, trans. by Eric Patton with Ruth Hein (Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 291.

[315] There are a number of Palestinian entrepreneurs who are now working with some of the quarry owners in setting up factories that transform the debris into aggregate and concrete. However permits are required from Israel in a majority of the quarries and have been largely declined. It should also be noted that most of the quarries are not gated or fenced off and with many of them in close proximity to residential areas they become a dangerous adventure playground for children and youth. Many of the people I met in the towns and villages nearby had devastating stories about children and youth who had fallen to their death in the quarries or been maimed for life. A community in a small town Bani Naim, near Hebron in the south of the West Bank, has been pro-active in protesting against the quarries being

(figure 9)

(figure 10)

In the first shot of this scene a small figure walks towards the edge of the screen, pauses and then turns and walks off screen. In this image (figure 11), the Palestinian worker is calm and composed as he demarcates through his movement and gesture the space and scale of the quarries. The figure is diminished in size by the enormity of the quarry space and the framing by the camera, and it is as if the figure has stepped onto a stage as he pauses, with one leg on a rock, and looks up to a sky that is out of

in such close proximity to the town. They have been successful in securing regulations that prevent quarrying in the town and have had all disbanded quarries fenced off. In 2008 one of the disused quarries in the town was transformed into a small park and animal sanctuary for the local community.

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(figure 11)

(figure 12)

frame. As the film progresses the absence of sky in this image and others is accentuated. As well as scale, people register the borders and the transitions of the quarries and their proximity to residential areas. A town is sedimented between a quarry and a settlement where the windows of the houses register as black voids intimating the psychic destruction of the town's inhabitants (figure 12). It is the collision of these destructive forces, both the quarries and the settlements, that makes the air unbreatheable, from the particles of dust, and from the suffocation of a people living under siege.

Images in Perpetuity

There is perhaps nothing more uncanny than images that seem to register perpetuity. They slide into other images, places and times inviting us to recall something, to reconsider and contest their meanings in assembling new or repressed narratives. In *White Oil* an image of the sedimented layers of stone exposed through quarrying offers us an image as both material presence and as discourse encoding a history (figure 13). The image draws our attention to the geological layers of history exposed through the graft of a machine that has stressed its surface. We are caught between the man-made world and the earth's geological strata, the latter refuting any claim to identity or ownership of a place.

(figure 13)

The fractured vertical surface of the quarry takes on an epic proportion in the following images (figures 14 and 15). Two Palestinian workers are seen praying in front of scarred and ravaged quarry face. During the first and second Intifada, stones were an important symbol for Palestinians as a form of resistance – every Friday Palestinian youth would throw stones at Israeli soldiers during demonstrations.[316] Today the stone has very different connotations. It has become the money-maker used in building

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[316] Many international and Palestinian activists see stone throwing as only a cultural and symbolic form of resistance and not real resistance. For more on this see Minoo Koefoed, 'Cultural Resistance in Occupied Palestine: Contesting the Myth that "it's not real resistance"', *Resistance Studies Magazine* (2012 #1) <http://rsmag.nfshost.com/wp-content/uploads/Koefoed-rsmag-12–01.pdf> [accessed 2 July 2013].

(figure 14)

(figure 15)

settlements and advancing the post-Oslo state building project.[317]In the distance we hear the sounds of machines in the quarry and the wind unfurling as a worker finishes his prayer and a fellow worker pours a glass of coffee and walks towards the camera, and then off screen- his movement towards the camera accentuating the way everyday behaviour is affected by technology (the camera). This scene of the two workers praying in the quarry invites associations with the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, a site I visited many times in my twenties, contemplating its façade, structure and symbolic meaning and its role in shaping and maintaining religious, political and

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[317] Q&A with Yazid Anani and Judy Price, *White Oil* screening, Filmhouse, Nuremberg, Germany, June, 2013.

national identities for Jews. At the time I was not aware that the plaza was once the home to the Maghariba (north African) community, which had been destroyed by Israeli forces on the evening of 10 June 1967 (referenced in Chapter Two). In this image a wall of limestone appears as an irrefragable barrier, a hymn to geological durations as well as a backdrop to prayer, as the grinding battering demands of industry give way to associations with another 'sacred' wall, raising questions as to when the sacred becomes profane, the profanesacred – through the simple act of prayer or the investments of blood-soaked religious iconography and the representational violence it inevitably entails? However, something else happens here too. Through the act of prayer, this *any space whatever* is transformed into a place – a space becomes a place when an area that was previously undetermined and unbounded is given meaning.

Cinema of the Seer

In Walter Benjamin's image of the Angel of History, the angel is forced to watch the destruction of the past as its wings are caught in the wind and it flies backwards into the future, its face turned towards the past.[318] 'Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet.'[319] The Angel with its back to the future indicates a blindness to consequences that shapes and brings about the future.

> The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been broken, but the easterly wind blinds his teary eyes, and the sea beckons him to sail into the future. He cannot resist the calling of the West, whose voice, like that of the sirens, calls him backward into what we call progress. Meanwhile, the pile of debris before him grows skyward.[320]

The implication here is that the only position open to the angel is that of an impotent observer. The scene can also be likened to Deleuze's cinema of the seer, where

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[318] Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History'.
[319] Ibid., p. 249.
[320] Udi Aloni, Slavoj Žižek, Alain Badiou and Judith Butler, *'What Does a Jew Want?': On Binationalism and Other Specters* (Columbia University Press, 2011), p. 149. This book was published shortly after the murder of his dear friend, Juliano Mer-Khamis, director of The Freedom Theater in the Jenin refugee camp, where Aloni helped him run the Cinema Department.

characters no longer know how to react. The figures in the third scene of *White Oil* are powerless and without agency (figures 10, 11, 14 and 15). This scene sets the stage and drives the rest of the film, with Ramzi and the Birzeit Brothers counteracting this impotence. These durational shots with small figures animate the space through time and set up a space of indeterminacy wherein time and fatigue become the main feature of these images. The people in the images of the first scene are not characters, and we learn nothing about them as the film progresses. These small figures in the landscape, unlike the substantive co-participants of the film Ramzi and the Birzeit Brothers, are seers without any agency, performing as stage-hands moving the rubble away, digging and excavating the stone. They are rendered as characters imprisoned in this landscape of 'any-space-whatever', as we move from one image of ruination to another ('any-space-whatever' is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five).

Images, Dialogue and Sound

The durational images described above are interwoven with the subtitled dialogue of Ramzi and the Birzeit Brothers, enabling a more complex navigation of the subjective space of the quarries and the geopolitical issues at stake. In part, the script structures the film. If one thinks of the film as a maluable cylinder then the dialogue wraps around the cylinder, tightening in places and affecting the emotional and political tension of the images, transforming the shape of the film. Alternatively, and without contradicting this metaphor, another useful image – and one that directly refers to Deleuze's time-image (crystal image) – is to think of the film as a crystal where lines and contours are traversed and the dialogue and subtitles are a layer that makes visible other layers. Like the sedimentations of the stone, images and dialogue coalesce to release different time frames and significations within the film. The images are actual and virtual, historical, mnemonic and subjective as well as having imaginative values.[321] In *White Oil* the dialogue and images have equal weight, with images never being slaves to the script or vice versa. They are worked through in

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[321] T.J. Demos, 'Zarina Bhimji: Cinema of Affect', in *Zarina Bhimji* (Ridinghouse/ Whitechapel Gallery/ Kunstmuseum Bern, 2012), p. 20 (also available as a PDF at UCL, *T.J. Demos: selected publications*) <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/arthistory/about_us/academic_staff/dr_tj_demos/further_publications> [accessed 9 November 2012], p. 22.

relation to each other, allowing each other their own language where different material, abstract and metaphoric readings are unleashed in relation to the politics of the image and the issues at stake.

Twelve minutes into the film the grating sound of the gate at Rafat quarry acts as a transition between the durational images and Ramzi, a character with agency, who commands the screen with his anguished and passionate dialogue and becomes the narrator of the film (figure 16). Ramzi anchors the work in the political and away from the spectacle of the visual, locating the film in the West Bank.[322] His words convey something of the spatial dynamics of the West Bank, now closed off by the Wall, recalling how the quarries were once a short cut to Jerusalem bypassing the checkpoints (figure 17).

Ramzi:	On Friday there isn't much work and I come here early…
	After the Friday prayer I start my shift…
	She was working on a project. We got to know each other, hung out together, chatted… that's how the story went.
Faris:	Have you worked at the quarry for a long time?
Ramzi:	I've been here since I returned from abroad.
	Seven years, Seven years…Seven years
Faris:	You found your way to the quarry before the water board?
Ramzi:	My uncle used to work here.
	Here in this quarry, we used to have about 20 security guards.
	In the days when they were still doing a lot of work.
	The West Bank was open then, there was no wall.
	A lot of drug addicts and thieves from Jerusalem used to come through this way. This was the old Qalandiya road, the road that comes out by the old airport.

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[322] A wide-angle shot of the quarry, but this time in the bright light of day, shows the concave form of the quarry from the built up area of Ramallah on the horizon, and from this perspective can be seen the wealthy district of Almasyoun with its tall stone-clad buildings on the left-hand side of the screen. On the right-hand side is the poor neighborhood of Um-Alsharayet made predominantly out of concrete.

(figure 16)

The West Bank was open then, there was no wall
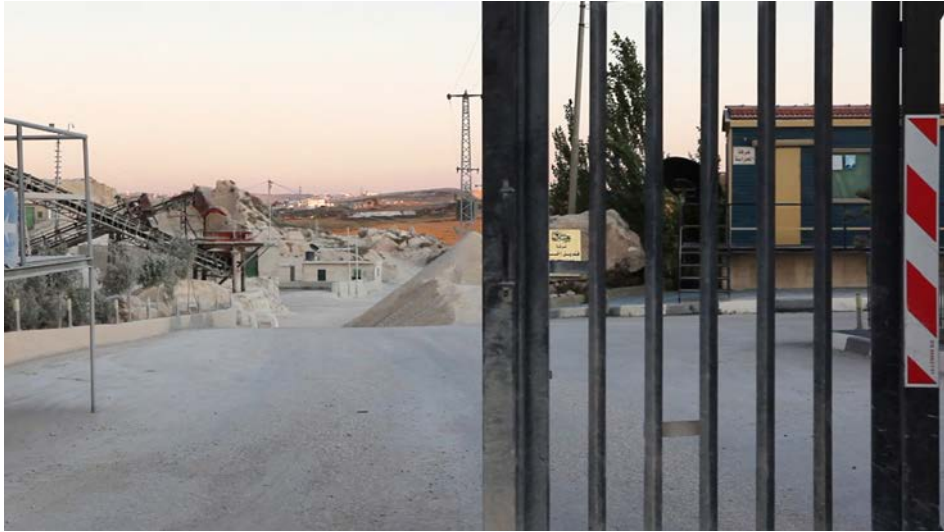
(figure 17)

(figure 18)

The metal bars of the heavy gate that introduce this scene also prepare us for what is to come later, as do the vertical lines inscribed in the stone being cut at night halfway though the film, preempting Ramzi's story about his time in prison (figure 16 and 18).

He was imprisoned four times in an Israeli jail near Hebron in the 1980s and then in 1996 by the Palestinian Authority, where he found himself in exactly the same cell in the very same prison, now known as Al-Dahria (the Hebron correction and rehabilitation centre), that he had been confined to years before by Israel.

Ramzi:	They took us from here in a joint Israeli and Palestinian patrol.
	This journey began at 7pm.
	They took us from Ramallah Islamic club.
	It was a prison for the Palestinian Authority where they'd built some cells.
	It took us till 5am to arrive
	It was December and it was very cold in Al-Dahria.
	Really this arrest, I felt it more than any other time I had been arrested.
	We asked for a blanket to put on the floor.
	They gave them to us and we slept on the floor.
	In the night I was sitting down… suddenly someone is banging on the door.
	He opened the door and came towards me and said ' to the interrogation room.'
	When I was going for interrogation I saw a friend of mine sitting there.
	You know – the tip offs they got about us, they were about me and this other guy.
	So I said to him 'Nael, what are you doing here?'
	They'd put a sack on his head, and sat him on a small chair.
	So I said 'Nael, is that you' and he said 'yeah, Ramzi'.
	anyway, we go inside, into the room…and it was the same system, the same system.
	I was sat on the chair, and there was two standing, and one by the door.
	I started laughing...so he asked why I was laughing
	So I told him that in 1989 I was in this very same room.
	In '89, I was in the same place in the room next to this, being interrogated.
	The problem is that they (PA) are working for Israel. They are collaborators.
Faris:	The Israelis were the ones that taught them.
Ramzi:	Faris, it's really tragic, it's truly tragic, oh god.

We are first introduced to the BBrothers in a panoramic landscape of a quarry that brings different 'load stones' to bear: biblical time, work time, Occupation time, geological time and film time (figure 19).

(figure 19)

The silhouette of a young man in full shadow, seated in profile, dominates the foreground, the blackness defining the space of a void. Against his outline we see the striated landscape, a quarry that resembles an auditorium in its lines and shape, and the land above with a road and houses. A sense of definition is formed through the silhouetted shape alone and evokes the question, 'what is this definition?' Is it the same as the Palestinian people's struggle to find a definition or is this definition of a shape no more than a void and a catastrophe? Yet this catastrophe is an agent, a figure that the audience would like to bring into view, a pure cinematic form and composition at one and the same time a person, a voice and a narrative. He speaks not through direct dialogue but through the voices that speak around him. This visual contrast between the foregrounded black silhouette and the yellow hues of the landscape in the background, coupled with the separation of voices and faces, conveys the tension of a story to come.

The figure poses contemplatively and then digs in his pocket for a mobile phone. The luminous screen of the phone blinks as he gazes at it. As he fidgets with the phone we are party to a conversation in which the BBrothers recount their family history in

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relation to the quarry. We learn that there are eight brothers in this family, that most of them work in the quarry and that they inherited this livelihood from their father. Pointedly, they refer to their grandfather and the fact that there were no quarries in his time. Family generations construct a timeline of the quarries and it is not difficult to work out that the quarries were not a significant industry in the West Bank before 1967, when it was under Jordanian sovereignty before being occupied by Israel. Later on in the film, Ramzi's story resonates here, when he tells of the financial loans that were offered to families and towns by the Israeli administration in 1967 to expand the quarry industry in the West Bank, subsequent to the Six-Day War.

Khaled interviewer:	So you are eight brothers who own the quarry together?
Samir:	There are eight of us.
Khaled interviewer:	All of your brothers work here?
Samir:	No, the eldest works in the ministry of public works. One works at a school, and another one runs a garage in Bethany.
Samir:	Our father also worked in this business, it runs in the family.
Khaled interviewer:	And your grandfather too?
Samir:	No, just our father.
Alaa:	There were no quarries when my grandfather was here. In their time they didn't have quarries.

This conversation is violently interrupted by the sound of an F-16 fighter plane which erases all other sounds and images as it disrupts and cuts through the dialogue about family generations, exposing the violence of this landscape. The sound and the image react violently, disturbing the atmosphere and reflecting a fall through the gap between the seeable and sayable. (Later on in this scene we hear the squeaking and squealing of the mechanised parts of a sewage truck that is out of frame and that the BBrothers reference, but we never see. The industrialisation of this landscape brought into sharp view again.)

The topography of this quarry is transformed into 'scenography forming an exegetical

you get a heart attack and you think you're falling

landscape with a mesh of scriptural signification'[323] when the silhouetted figure exits the frame: revealed is a pastoral landscape and industrial quarry landscape with sheep being herded up a dirt track in the distance (figure 20).

The image is not just that of the figure, the landscape and some sheep. They are, to use Rancière's words, 'operations that couple and uncouple the visible and its signification or speech and its effect, which create and frustrate expectations'.[324] These are not operations derived 'from the properties of the cinematic medium [for they] presuppose a systematic distance from its ordinary employment'. Cinematic narrative convention would employ a 'shot reverse shot' technique to explore this developing dialogue, showing the faces of those talking, cutting between shots with the camera and panning and zooming to show expressions and details in the landscape. In *White Oil*, in this instance, the image is held for nearly one and half minutes, drawing out time in the image and the viewer into a deeper reading of the considered framing: the landscape, scars, sheep, silhouetted figure, stone, residential area, debris scattered across the landscape.[325]

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[323] Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 135.
[324] Jacques Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, trans. by Gregory Elliott (Verso, 2009), p. 5.
[325] The durational and locked off images in *White Oil* delineate time within the landscape as well as my preoccupation with photography and the relationship between the still and the moving image, which I discuss in more depth later.

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As the figure exits the frame the dialogue ruptures the scene as one of the BBrothers says 'whole mountains have been erased', and continues to talk about the devastation of the landscape around their hometown Shyukh near Hebron (figure 20).

> *Alaa:*   She should also go to Hebron, to Shyukh and film.
> She will get a real shock.
> All the quarries in Palestine combined from A-Z are nothing compared to quarries in Shyukh.
> Especially Shyukh... whole mountains have been erased.
>
> *Samir:*   On top there is a road that a car can go through and on either side, there is a valley.
> They've taken everything out and now they're carving a tunnel underneath to get the stone out.
>
> *Alaa:*   If you're on that road, and you look down...
> you get a heart attack and you think you're falling.
>
> *Khaled*:   Is it a proper road?
>
> *Samir:*   Yes, it's a dirt road, like that one.

By compressing action into perceptions and movements within one single image a number of different circuits are both created and retracted, undoing the link between perceptions, actions and affects.[326]

Actual and Virtual Images

In *White Oil* images are full of virtual potential, ever capable of further crystallisations. Landscapes of loss, both of land and community, of absence and exile, devastation and expropriation, these images are not limited in their interpretive possibilities but distill and evoke different constellations in which the images enquire into themselves. Images operate through the relations between whole and parts, between visibility, the power of signification and affect, 'between expectations and what happens to be met'.[327] Images are also mobilised to draw attention to stasis, cinematic construction and narrative: the viewer is implicated in the narrative through durational images that extend the viewer's gaze beyond the motor-sensory. These different visual languages

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[326] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, p. 5.
[327] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, p. 3.

articulate a number of intensities and affects that not only delineate and evoke the context and subject of the film but also assemble a number of meta-narratives that are enhanced by the use of dialogue, images and soundscapes.

There are images that function as memory: the windows of an abandoned Israeli bus through which we see a quarry in the distance (figure 21); the pulse of a flashing red light and the moon (figure 22); or the light against the metal shipping container with the haunting sound of Umm Kulthum singing *You confused my heart* (figure 23).

But the owners from Deir Tareef accepted the offer and prospered

(figure 21

Images also provoke and entice: a plastic bottle used to attract mosquitos suspended from a ceiling gently swaying (figure 24); the Separation Wall with discarded blue and white plastic bags fluttering in the wind, bringing associations with the Israeli flag hoisted high in the distance (figure 25).

(figure 22)

(figure 23)

(figure 24)

(figure 25)

(figure 26)

There are images that move the viewer away from the spectacle of the landscape to a reflective encounter with it: red and white tape flutters in the wind over a steep slope that has been relegated to a rubbish heap, evoking a landscape in crisis (figure 26). Fragmented and broken objects that have been discarded glint in the sun, demarcating modernity and consumer capitalism. A line drawn across the landscape by the flickering and quivering red and white tape signifies an area out of bounds, a no-man's land, an industrial landscape locating the lacunae of the film. This image is both a political and a poetic evocation of a landscape that is being transformed. The Biblical narratives and myths that permeate this landscape are unfounded – merely projections of a place called Palestine that exists only in the viewer's imagination, a

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fictional landscape viewed through the prism of Judeo-Christian narratives. The material substance of the West Bank has been physically elided and transformed into an 'any space-whatever', an industrial landscape full of rubbish and rubble- strewn vistas. A whole hillside's geological time has been stripped out. This image, like all images, silently bears witness. It is a reflexive image that creates a break in the narrative, a vertiginous image both halting and disturbing time.

There are also images that function independently as well as part of a sequence. An image of a cobbled together stone-cutting factory, perched on top of a hill with a view of the West Bank, is followed by an image of a settlement, the two images exposing and reading each other (figures 27 and 28). The play of shadow and light illuminates the wall of the building in the first image and also frames a view of the West Bank and settlement through constructivist lines. In the foreground cut stone is stacked in piles.

This is both an actual image and a virtual image evoking a landscape that is gradually being dismantled, a premonition of what lies ahead as well as what is actually happening in the here and now. The constructivist lines resemble modernist constructive architecture and can be read as a semblance of Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin. His architecture has come to represent both the physical and psychological architecture of Jewish history, housing the memory and trauma of the Jewish people's persecution, incineration and displacement.

However, here the architecture of these histories and memories imposes itself violently onto the landscape of the West Bank, literally cutting out the landscape and another people's history, unable to incorporate the multiple histories and narratives of this region unless they conform to Zionist ideology. The following image of a settlement, with its unified houses and red-pitched roofs constructed as part of the Jewish Agency plans, is meant to set apart the Jewish settlements from Palestinian houses by seizing locality. '[I]n the 1980s, the military recommended that settlement councils impose the construction of red-tiled roofs as part of the settlement-planning

bylaw.'[328] It becomes a way of distinguishing 'us' from 'them', says Weizman, so that settlers can orientate themselves within the landscape as well as serving as a security function as the red roofs can be identified from afar.[329]

(figure 27)

(figure 28)

[328] Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p. 127.
[329] Ibid., p. 127.

The Politics of Representation

The viewer is a key referent in *White Oil* in making sense of the multiple narratives woven together through images and subtitled dialogue. The dialogue is often fragmented, particularly with the BBrothers, taking the viewer off course so that they have to piece together different events, landscapes and stories in the film. This grappling with the dialogue creates an ontological insecurity, displacing the viewer from their comfort zone and disrupting any sense of stability within the work. The viewer's gaze is also reflected back to them through moments of reflexivity in which my co-participants seem to talk directly to the audience, aware of the power of the camera as an apparatus and vehicle to a world outside of the OPT and this state of exclusion.

White Oil deliberately attempts to engage with the complexity of the Palestinian reality. In doing so it intentionally plays with representation, rupturing its *seal*, exposing its construction and stereotypes, particularly in regard to how Palestinians are portrayed in the media as victims, terrorists or religious fundamentalists.

A particular moment in Ramzi's account of his arrest and interrogation asks us to reconsider our relation to how Palestinians are represented. No longer involved in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Ramzi at the time of his arrest was dancing Dabka, a traditional Palestinian dance.

> *Ramzi:* Arrests were common under the Israelis (before the PA was established)
> I was arrested three times.
> Of course I was interrogated each time although I was never charged or convicted.
> The imprisonment that affected me the worst was the one by the Palestinian Authority.
> Early in the day somebody from the secret services came to see me at work.
> He said 'we got a tip off with your name and we are going to arrest you tonight.'
> 'Why would they arrest me...for what?'
> I hadn't been involved with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine for nearly three years.
> I was completely done with them, I had no relation with them.

At the end I was in Al-Funon (a group for heritage arts). Then I left Al-Funon.

I was dancing Dabka with them.

Faris: That's why your face seems familiar.

The interviewer's remark, 'That's why your face seems familiar', sits rather awkwardly in the film but has sense of urgency in reflecting and questioning the international world's representation of the Palestinians. We are not given the pleasure of Ramzi's face here, but the mesh of a window from his portakabin blurring the view onto the quarry yard at night. His reference to dancing Dabka can be seen as a Deleuzian moment of becoming in which we might rethink the Palestinian as a dancer attempting to dance their way out of this crisis, as well as referencing Palestinian folklore and culture. This moment brokers another type of image and is a transformative moment, both for Ramzi, the intercessor of the film, and for the spectator.

There are a number of occasions when the BBrothers' knowingness and awareness of how colonial and western representations are played out for the audience across the projected screen. For example on one occasion Mohammad is framed to represent one or another of Palestine's divided political and religious parties, Fatah vs. Hamas, as a way of provoking representations of Palestine by the West. The dialogue below has a jovial rather than aggressive tone:

BBrother: Looks like she recognised Mohammad. He's come running like a goat.

BBrother: This guy is from Hamas! He's a Hamas man. Tie him up and take him with you to hand over to the PA! He's a Hamas guy, this boy…

Ahmed: [muttering that he is not a Hamas guy]

BBrother: Yes, you are a Hamas guy! And I will say it to your face, and I will say it in front of the foreigner, so that she can get you put in jail, report you to the authorities.

Ahmed: Why, Hamas? I am not Hamas, man [nervous giggle]

BBrother: But here you are, wearing a green hat.

BBrother: Yes. They should hang you. Slit your throat.

BBrother: He's actually Islamic Jihad.

BBrother: No, he's with the Popular Front.

BBrother: He's with the Guevara bunch!

(figure 29)

This type of comic camaraderie is clearly something acted out for my benefit and is a very knowing performance by the BBrothers to the 'world's eyes' on Palestine. We are not engaged with passive subjects here.

A person who is both observing and being observed operates the camera, therefore the camera is not an eye of surveillance. Thus the importance of the 'freedom and pleasure in both looking and being looked at' is not, as Susan Trangmar remarks, 'a predatory activity but one which connects us to one another...'[330] The gaze of the participant returning the camera's eye, either directly or to the left or right, locates the body of the filmmaker on site. Where is he or she standing? How did she or he come to be there? These are all questions that become component parts of the film and of the complex operations at work. A poignant moment in one of the last scenes of the film occurs when Gassan, one of the BBrothers, returns our gaze and the gaze of the camera as he says, 'They closed Nablus today' (figures 29 and 30).

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[330] Susan Trangmar, *A Play in Time* (Photoworks, 2008), p. 3 of interview.

They closed Nablus today
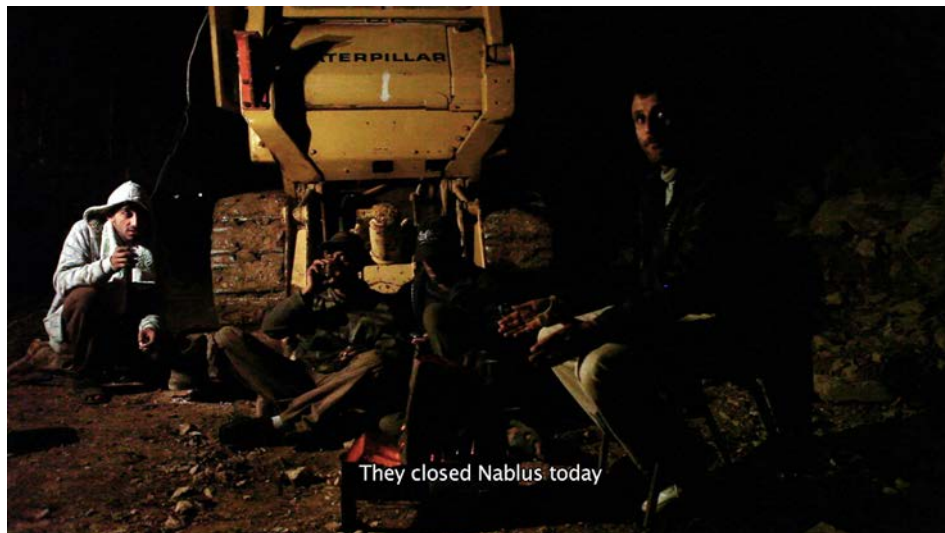
Alaa:	It's smoking a lot.
Mohanad:	I'm not sure about it. I am not sure about it.
Gassan:	I can only smell earth.
Alaa:	Man, you know it is very hot.
Gassan:	Well, can you smell meat roasting?
Bassam:	That's just steam from the heat, the mud is drying out, drying out. It's not leaking. It's just steaming, you can see it on the top bit.
Radio playing:	…latest news
Alaa:	…choke on it!
Gassan:	A settler got killed today in Nablus.
Alaa:	Serves them right.
Gassan:	In Nablus. They closed Nablus today.

Who is this gaze directed at? Is it directed at the filmmaker, someone standing close by to the camera or the camera as the gaze of the world on Palestine? We are not sure to what extent this is a constructed moment, as Gassan's gaze is not a singular gaze but a multiple gaze that implicates us all (figure 30). The dialogue that follows intensifies the moment, as does the sharp cut to the smoking volcanic-like stone and mud of the steaming Zarb (figure 31).

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(figure 31)

This gaze and image evokes more than anywhere else in the film Ariella Azoulay's *The Civil Contract of Photography*, in which she rethinks the political and ethical status of photography. Azoulay proposes that in addressing others the photographic/filmic image can serve as a form of civil knowledge and a potential space for political relations in a contract between the viewer, the person behind the camera, and the person imaged, in a tripartite relation.

Through these relations we have an obligation to engage with images and the injustices and tragedies that they portray as more than mere evidence. A central feature of her argument is that the viewer stops *looking* at photographs and assuming a passive gaze, and starts *watching* images. In this way the ethics of spectatorship is challenged; the viewer becomes active and implicated in the image and bound by a contract of citizenship and responsibility to what is visible in the image in addressing our lives together.[331] By applying Azoulay's compelling and urgent ideas to the images of *White Oil*, my co-participants, myself and the viewer are bound together by a mutual responsibility for the images, creating a citizenship in which the Palestinian quarry worker or owner may reclaim a space and a political position (this is explored in more depth in Chapter Five).

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[331] John M. Woolsey, 'The Citizenry of Photography', *Reviews in Cultural Theory*, 1:1 (Winter 2010), p. 23.

Saffron Coloured Stone of Jerusalem

In *White Oil*, Ramzi narrates the story of how his hometown and another neighbouring town were offered competitive loans by the Israeli authorities to expand their quarries after the 1967 War:

> Traditionally quarries existed in Beit Nabella and Deir Tareef.
>
> After the 1967 War the Israeli authorities gathered the owners of the quarries.
>
> They met with the head of the Israeli Civil Administration at the time.
>
> They offered the owners competitive loans to expand their quarries…
>
> …to use the stone to build the state of Israel.
>
> The owners of the quarries in my town Beit Nabella
>
> refused the offer and chose to shut down their quarries.
>
> The owners from Deir Tareef accepted the offer and prospered.
>
> Now Deir Tareef is well built.
>
> It's a city.
>
> But our town, Beit Nabella, is a dump.
>
> It's really declined.
>
> There is nothing there, just citrus orchards on the outskirts
>
> and the downtown is derelict.
>
> There is nothing there apart from a few stone walls from the old school.

Ramzi's reference to the competitive loans offered to Palestinians makes visible another aspect of the quarries and the effect that economic competition has had on Palestinian communities. Not only did the Israeli civil administration loans play a central part in the building of houses and settling of Israelis in the occupied areas, they also contributed to the fracturing of Palestinian society, not just by the cutting up of the physical landscape but by psychologically playing one community off against another.[332]

In the development of the narrative of *White Oil*, we also learn that particular stone from Birzeit, where the BBrothers have their quarry, is widely sought after by Israelis. As well as being the saffron-coloured stone that is used predominantly in Jerusalem, it

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[332] Jews immigrating to Palestine from Northern Europe in the 1920s also used money as bargaining power to purchase land from Palestinians within the 1948 borders.

has properties that make it look much older once it has been extracted and exposed to the air.

> *Bassem:* This particular type of stone in Birzeit is the oldest stone of any of the quarries. It's older than that in Jama'een, Njasa, and Shyukh. It's the oldest stone, this very one.
>
> *Khaled:* Is this why the Israelis like this stone?
>
> *Bassem:* Yeah... Some Israeli engineers examined the stone, they visited a house that was built in the last year or so but looked like it had been built 50 years ago. They like the way the stone discolours.
>
> They want this stone so they can feel like they've owned the place for a long time.
>
> Like they have an old presence here.
>
> But I am also one of the people who used yellow stone to build their house, I used Birzeit stone.
>
> Because it's good stone and it doesn't absorb water.
>
> White stone, after 10 or 20 years the colour changes and it becomes disgusting looking. But yellow stone…

Placed two thirds of the way into the film the dialogue registers a shift in the story line where a different perspective is introduced. The dialogue by Ramzi and the BBrothers is very suggestive and starts to construct a picture in the viewer's mind about the stone's inherent value in reaffirming Jewish presence in the landscape. This has been contextualised extensively in Chapter Two, where I discussed the construction of Israeli national identity and how architectural structures have become 'symbols in the landscape of historical legitimization'.[333] In relation to other components in the film, Israel's appetite for the stone takes on new meaning. This is followed by a dramatic scene of a large block of stone being maneuvered into a stone-cutting factory and then sawn into thin strips (figures 32 and 33).

However, the stone buildings in Israel are never shown, as I demarcate this narrative through the stagehands of the Palestinian workers. A more conventional documentary would have given the viewer the pleasure of entering into Israel, inviting comparisons between the ravaged landscape of the OPT and the built up and privileged landscape

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[333] Yaacov, 'Truth Will Rise From the Land', p. 64.

(figure 32)

(figure 33)

of Israel. The stone's role would be materialised and visualised through the architecture and facades of Jerusalem and other areas of Israel. I purposely moved away from this approach as I am interested in how sound, dialogue and images can evoke a sense of place and its people and politics through a poetic encounter with the landscape, allowing the filmic material to provoke the audience to think and make connections.

Affection Images

The BBrothers' fragmented conversations are often heard while they are only partially visible through the light of the fire. The sound of music playing from their mobile devices is used to locate the viewer in the landscape as the brothers return to the screen at different times of the day and night. The makeshift structures they have assembled in constructing the campsite, their temporary home at the quarry, are distilled in affection-images, with close-ups of objects and gestures taking on other forms.[334] A bare, bracketed light hung on the side of the metal shipping container imbues the scene with an orange glow (figure 23). As the light registers against the hardness of the metal transforming its surface, the colour elevates and illuminates the surface contours and lines, as a mosquito dances to the sound of the Egyptian singer, Umm Kulthum[335] generated from a nearby mobile phone.

> You confused my heart with you
>
> And I am hiding and concealing
>
> Tell me what should I do with you
>
> Or what should I do with my heart
>
> I want to complain to you from the fire of my love
>
> I want to tell you about what is in my heart
>
> And tell you about what is keeping me up at night
>
> And tell you about what is making me cry
>
> And to describe to you the exhaustion of my soul
>
> But my self-pride prevents me
>
> Oh cruel one look in my eye
>
> And see what it is written in it

Laughter is hard and with the crackling of the fire the quarry landscape is taken over by a sonorous encounter with the BBrothers and their campsite. Sound here can be considered as a humanising temporality, creating a poetics that floats across and binds the locked off shots.

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[334] 'The affection-image is the close-up, and the close-up is the face…'. Gilles Delueze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Athlone Press, 1997), p. 87 and 110.

[335] She is regarded as the greatest Arabic female singer in history even three decades after her death in 1975.

(figure 34)

Objects and conversations complicate this scene: an oil can, with a picture and the name 'seahorse', foregrounds a scene of Alaa preparing a fire (figure 34). Turning the oil can on its side he uses it to balance the grill on the fire. The seahorse oil registers the distance between the campfire and the sea, no more than 40 miles away yet out of bounds for Palestinians living in the OPT. This oil imported from Turkey also serves as a visual reminder of the conversations about the increasing price of diesel and oil. Most small family-run quarries are under threat due to the price of oil. Those that can afford to are transferring to electricity. The conversation below by the BBrothers makes reference to these issues, as well as alluding to the wider colonial projects and wars undertaken by governments and global conglomerates in the name of oil.[336]

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[336] The expropriation of raw materials here is certainly analogous to what takes place in other parts of the world, and is rooted in colonialism. With the shifting market of globalisation we see how powerful multi-national corporations expropriate raw materials in developing countries. In the Niger Delta oil is expropriated by Shell and has continuing devastating environmental consequences for the local people. In 2005 I co-directed with the writer and artist Andrew Conio a film called *Refining Memory*, which was commissioned by PLATFORM. The film focused on the underlying forces and circumstances that led to the destruction of the Niger Delta and the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight colleagues who had instigated public protests against the destruction of their land. The film explores issues of loss, memory, memorial and representation; how artistic practice engages with circumstances that globalisation makes part of the fabric of our everyday lives; and the role of art in repositioning these issues back at the centre of our relationship with the world. Judy Price and Andrew Conio, *Refining Memory* (Platform, 2005) <http://platformlondon.org/p-article/remember-saro-wiwa-short-film-refining-memory> [accessed 16 September 2013].

Brother 1:	We're really happy when the stone is clean and good quality.
	The strength of people is really important too.
	Especially when the economy is doing well when there is money.
	A litre of diesel used to be one shekel
	Quarries got it for even less.
Alaa:	Here in our country, especially in Hebron around Shyukh almost half of the quarries have stopped working because of the high prices of diesel.
	With the electricity a small proportion have gone back to work.
Brother 2:	They couldn't carry on that way.

Oligarchy increasingly permeates Palestinian society with only wealthy quarry owners able to afford to make the transition from oil to electricity. The larger Palestinian quarry owners also sell stone to Israel, embracing a neo-liberal economy. Neo-liberalism has steadily replaced the Palestinian resistance movement with the PA emphasising state building initiatives with a focus on material gains, shifting popular political consciousness towards living conditions.[337]

Neo-liberal policies have gained traction and credibility with the Palestinian middle class in their desire for personal prosperity and cultural capital for their children through private education. This has given the PA political legitimacy by linking directly to the privatisation of state enterprises and neocolonial relations of production and exchange. This, however, is attributed to social, cultural and political models and policies that the economist Raja Khalidi maintains are 'an alien creation of the Washington-based international financial institutions… [resulting in the] steady erosion of Palestine's development potential … and the gradual depletion of its natural resources', both water and stone.[338] It is against this backdrop that we must understand the quarries' contribution to the Palestine economy and the PA's support for entrepreneurs who find ways of profiting at any cost, with little or no sense of social responsibility to their own community or ethical culpability.

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[337] For more on this see Raja Khalidi, 'After the Arab Spring in Palestine: Contesting the Neoliberal Narrative of Palestinian National Liberation', *Jadaliyya* (2012) <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4789/after-the-arab-spring-in-palestine_contesting-the-> [accessed 16 September 2013].
[338] Ibid.

Does he work for Burbar?
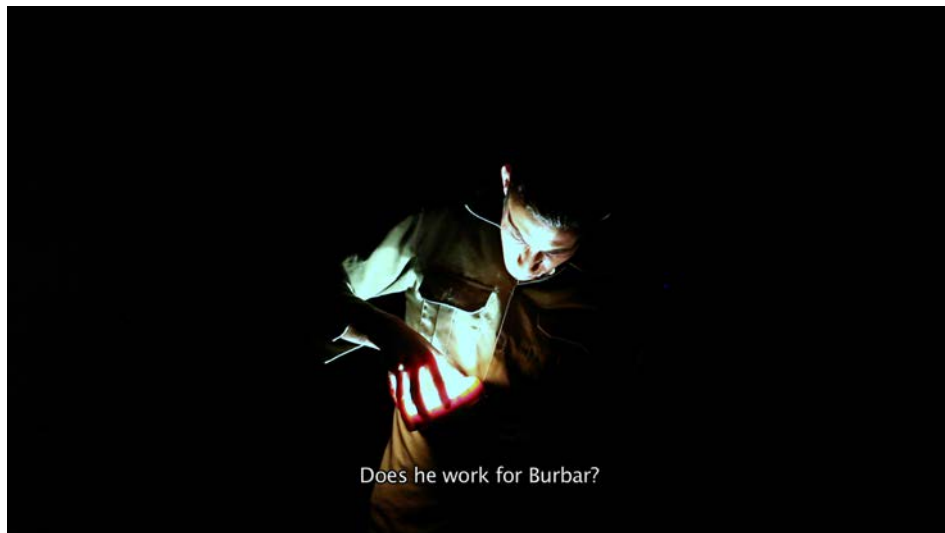
The BBrothers' conversations allude to this economic class distinction. Ahmed the young security guard, who we see in the film, is also a topic of conversation for the Bbrothers and illuminates the different strata in Palestinian society and the exploitative relationship of the landowner to the worker (figure 35).

Khaled:	Does he work for Babour?
Samir:	Yes, he's a security guard – he walks around the place [using a Hebrew word for security guard].
Khaled :	Does he stay up all night?
Samir:	Yes
Khaled :	Is Babour's quarry is bigger than yours?
Chorus of voices:	This whole mountain is his.
Samir:	This guy, he got the Rawabi contract, to build the stone walls. It's a four-year contract. [pause]
Alaa:	Do you know what the real tragedy is? If he comes here to check on the equipment here and is busy with something here, and then someone steals some part off the excavator down in the valley, Ahmed is held responsible and has to cover it. Look, say I wanted to settle a score with Ahmed, I could just take the batteries off the excavator, just out of malice. And they come in the morning and try to start the excavator, and they find the batteries are not there Ahmed would have to pay for it. The pair of batteries is worth 1,200 shekels, He'd be wailing like a muezzin, that's a month's salary for him. Lost in one blow.

The issue of capital, and the acceleration of the Palestinians' immersion in a neo-liberal society subsequent to the signing of the Oslo Accord in 1996, are lamented by Ramzi. He discusses the opening up of banks and credit systems he claims had not previously been part of Palestinian society within the West Bank before 1996. This is not strictly historically accurate as the Arab Bank was founded in 1930 in Jerusalem by seven Palestinian investors. With 600 branches spanning thirty countries in five continents it has since become one of the largest banking conglomerates in the Middle East.[339] However, what Ramzi is referring to here is the rise of neo-liberalism and the push by the PA for Palestinians to invest in property and material growth, which only became possible as a credit system became more readily available.

Ramzi: Because my other job is working with the water board I see all the different social classes.

I go around and visit people everywhere, all social classes.

People are poor, they can barely make ends meet.

Their car, their house, their furniture is on credit and their mobile phone is on credit.

Both the man and the women both work but can barely keep up with their payments.

They have got us living in a life that is not ours.

And this is one of the policies of the Oslo authority.

The Oslo authority imposed this on us.

This living day to day just to get a crumb to live on.

They've created a system that makes us chase our daily bread...

...and doesn't give us time to think about any thing else.

So they got us this lot, the Palestinian Authority.

The first thing they did was to set up banks and open the doors to credit and debt.

You know the person who is worse off around here? It's the street cleaner.

The street cleaner used to have 3–4,000 dinars at home as well as his wife's gold jewellery in savings.

Every aspect of life has changed.

This country is no longer ours now.

Ramzi's dialogue at the end of this scene leaves us with a deafening reminder that the

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[339] Arab Bank, *Beginning the Journey* (2013)
<http://www.arabbank.com/en/avisionfulfilled.aspx?CSRT=4716726333281015104> [accessed 16 September 2013].

Occupation and neo-liberalism have destroyed all possibility of a sense of a future for him or his community.

The Politics and Poetics of Sound

A soundtrack builds on the resonances of the visuals in *White Oil*. All of the sounds were generated and recorded on location but are edited in such a way as to create affect as well as signification. The sounds are haunting, violent and relentless, predominantly composed from the mechanical noises from the quarries. There are sounds that are used to conjure up time in the image and what is outside of the frame, distilled from the wind, mobile phones, voices and military sounds formed through a composite of ambient sounds, sync sound, non-digetic sounds and dialogue to reframe the referent, or to haunt and disturb the characters in the film. The suggestive and expressive possibilities of sound have been produced by the careful synchronisation of wild tracks with things happening in the images, which are often multi-synchronous. Sounds are also held from one image to the next.

It is the poetic and political possibilities of sound, how it can infiltrate and disarm an image, creating tensions and vulnerabilities rather than fulfilling the expectations of the viewer, that informed the decisions I made in the soundtrack. As Daniel Deshay says, 'It is that slight distance in relation to the image and reality where the poetry can be found and it is in this space that the imaginary can be constructed' [340] and different worlds are brought together exploring their relationships.

Sound is the space where the poetic and the political are co-enacted, and sounds are also never quite what they seem. The sound of the Azan, the Muslim call to prayer, is part of the everyday sonic environment in Palestine and the Middle East, but also for those living near a mosque in many other parts of the world, including in my near vicinity of Finsbury Park, London. However in many films the Azan is used to establish a Muslim Oriental setting, with the call to prayer reduced to a stereotypical sound effect

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[340] My notes from the School of Sound Symposium, April 2009. Although they are relevant to the general context of this practice-based research I have not provided detailed descriptions of these pieces due to space within this thesis.

that provides a mystical acoustic omnipresence. As Edward Said wrote, 'The Orientalist is principally a kind of agent of ... comprehensive visions.'[341] In *White Oil* this kind of orientalist framing is countered by the sound of the prayer tuning in and out through the kind of digital recording device that is now predominantly used in producing the ancient sound, rather than a voice performing it in real time. The Azan is digitised and orchestrated through the mosque in the centre of Ramallah, connecting with all the other mosques in the West Bank. The call to prayer indicates the time of day but is also a sign that the circuits are working and have not been interfered with by a military incursion in the OPT. The digital interface and sounds of tuning in that we hear at the start and end of the Azan in the second scene of *White Oil* also references modernity. It functions as a parody disrupting the distance that a western audience might take by locating the sound within a contemporary landscape of technology.[342]

Sound is often figured as a site of the imagination and the unknown, with moments of reflection and quietness agitated by different sounds, be it the barking or howling of dogs or the croaking of grasshoppers. In an early scene with the BBrothers we hear the squeaking and squealing of the mechanised parts of a sewage truck that is out of frame and that the BBrothers reference but we never see. The industrialised landscape brought into view with the dialogue references areas that are out of bounds:

Gassan:	The smell is killing us, man!
	It's dumping the sewage up there.
Gassan:	During the Easterly winds the smell really kills us.
Khaled:	Is the settlement near here?
Gassan:	Yes, it's just there on the top of the hill.
Khaled:	Can you excavate there?
Gassan:	No it's forbidden, it's considered Israeli territory.

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[341] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 239.

[342] The film *Muezzin* (2009), directed by Sebastian Brameshuber, is a documentary set around Turkey's national Call to Prayer Competition and portrays the scene and its members as religious 'musicians' whose ethics regarding 'money and fame' approximate very closely the 'underground' attitude found in different western music scenes, and particularly in hip hop. The film diffuses a western orientalist regard for the muezzin by revealing the technology that generates the sound through microphone checks, discussions about the direction of mosque loudspeakers, and phone-recorded practices. *Muezzin*, dir. By Sebastian Brameshube (produced by Sebastian Brameshuber and Gabriele Kranzelbinder, 2009) <http://www.muezzindocumentary.com/?page_id=40&lang=en> [accessed 16 September 2013].

Khaled:	And here you're not in area C?
Gassan:	No, here we are under the Palestinian Authority.
BBrother:	Past that pile of rubble is the border with Israel.
Gassan:	It's off limits.

Throughout the film mobile phones are used as a locating sound for the BBrothers as we return to them. Music is also generated by the mobile phones. A reoccurring song in the film is *You Confused My Heart* by Umm Kulthum, the Egyptian singer and songwriter.[343]

As Ramzi recounts his story about debt and the legacy of the Oslo Accords, a repetitive mechanical clicking sound creates a sense of time against the yellow hue of the sky at dusk over the quarry yard, where a small digger moves repetitively in out of the frame (figures 36 and 37). Broken and abandoned cars are scattered across the landscape in the background, suggestive of another wasteland. A voice is heard in the distance but cannot be made out, its repetitive nature like an echo. Is this a voice of authority giving orders? Is it a call for help? The sound intensifies a sense of the prevailing exhaustion and time in the landscape as well as acting as a barometer for the tension in the image.

but can barely keep up with their payments

(figure 36)

Every aspect of life has changed,
this country is no longer ours now

(figure 37)

Sound is also harnessed not just in terms of narrative and content but also in order to produce an aesthetic effect using the resonance and the timbre of the voice, as well as signifying dialect, place, class, gender and generation. Ramzi's voice is deep and melancholic and has a resonance that evokes a sense of time and place. The BBrothers' Hebron dialect is different to that of the interviewer from Jenin, suggesting the heterogeneousness and nuances of the demographic of the OPT, although this is only audible for an Arabic speaking audience, or those with a highly trained ear for intonation. Alaa shouts into the quarry auditorium where the Israeli soldiers now stand, 'Come in, come in' appropriating a Bedouin dialect.

In another scene the sound of a voice through a tannoy repeats rhythmically over a panoramic scene in which a quarry and a settlement dwarf a Palestinian town, indicating the entrapments of this landscape (figure 38). To a non-Arabic speaker this voice might sound like someone giving orders, especially in a landscape constantly surveyed and framed by the military. However, an Arabic speaker will recognise it as the voice of the vegetable seller wandering from village to town selling his produce from Beit Jala near Bethlehem:

> parsley from Beit Jala... Parsley from Beit Jala... Potatoes From Beit Jala
> Local potatoes … Beautiful Potatoes ... parsley from Beit Jala ... Potatoes From Beit Jala ...
> Carrots from Beit Jala ...

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(figure 38)

Nevertheless this call, reverberating through the landscape, is equally as poignant to an Arabic speaker: there are few vegetables to be found growing in Jama'een with its agricultural land either deemed inaccessible or destroyed through the settlements and the quarries or contaminated by the dust and the sewage.

Towards the end of the film the sound of the steaming Zarb, through the heating up of the stone and the mud, has been amplified to create a stronger sensation. This sound, juxtaposed with the voices of the BBrothers speaking overhead, takes on other associations.

> In Syria, they're kicking off
>
> They're starting to behave like Gaddafi
>
> They all end up using the same techniques, like Gaddafi
>
> That's it, it's like prayer beads when the thread breaks
>
> They will all fall now
>
> One country after another
>
> Do you know who they caught last Thursday?
>
> Adeeb Derriyah, he had a load of stone exactly like the one you've got there.
>
> They took him through the Khan junction to the weighing station.
>
> The police officer pulled him over and he had a load of stone, just like that.

In this context the sound of the sizzling volcanic surface of the Zarb can be read as a

landscape erupting. The smoking oven creates a sense of claustrophobia evoking Syria's desperate fate, as the civil war there turns even bleaker. There are no other references to Syria in *White Oil* and the inclusion of this dialogue here is to acknowledge the uprisings in the Middle East, contextualising the making of the film in a particular time and place.

Orientation in the Darkness

During the in-between moment between light and dark, we hear the BBrothers concerned and agitated, muttering and calling out into the velvety blue abyss that frames this scene (figure 39).

They are over there, by the trees

(figure 39)

Alaa:	What? Yeah, yeah.
Gassan:	Where are they?
Mohamad:	What's going on?
Alaa:	There's five soldiers here.
Samir:	They are over there, by the trees'
	Behind that pile of rubble
Gassan:	Which pile of rubble?
Mohamad:	Stop pointing at them, we can see …
Samir:	Yeah, no need to point...
Alaa:	Ahmed is down there.
Gassan:	Where are they?

The sounds of those off screen scuffling around in the dark can be heard: the echo of bodies and voices in the metal shipping cabin. A level of fear and concern regarding their companion Ahmed is articulated, before we are made aware of the soldiers in the following image.

Built up by a single durational landscape shot at sunset with a settlement in the distance and a valley below, the surveying of this landscape sets up a number of dynamics. We are also asked 'Who watches the watchers?', which creates what Elizabeth Cowie identifies as the un-canniness of looking back.[344] The viewer is placed as the referent and made to feel uneasy about whom they, being both the viewer and the soldiers, are searching out and for whom and where they are looking in this landscape. Foucault speaks of the idea of surveillance as not being about a specific look at a specific time by an actual gaze or camera but as a generalisable surveillance: one could be being looked at anytime, in any place, from any direction. This can turn into an internalised fear in which one becomes one's own surveyor. This scene in *White Oil* sets up the idea of a permanent surveillance, behind 'any rock'. The time of the shot is not specific. However the context of this landscape, set up through the proceeding shots and unfolded in the dialogue and images that follow, creates an encounter with the soldiers in the quarry that redistributes the image in a number of other circuits, exposing the surveying, military and controlling features and architecture of this space. As we attempt to orientate ourselves in this darkened landscape by listening for sounds that are in keeping with the landscape, the silence creates a disturbance, a sign of trouble.

In the following image soldiers are seen gathering around a figure (figure 40). Alaa's voice calls out mockingly into the night sky, breaking the silence, 'Come in come in', performed in a Bedouin dialect.

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[344] Elizabeth Cowie, *Recording Reality, Desiring the Real* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011), cited in Jeffrey Geiger, 'Documentary: Negotiating The Public Sphere', *New Formation*, 74 (2012), pp. 144–149 (pp. 146–148).

Welcome, welcome

(figure 40)

Then a few seconds later:

Khaled:	Do they normally come here?
BBrother:	No, they don't, it's the first time.
Alaa:	Yeah, maybe they're holding a press conference.

There is something enormously empowering about this scene. The standard images of Israeli soldiers humiliating Palestinians are reversed here. Alaa's voice, both mocking and satirical, performs the role of putting the viewer in an ambivalent situation. A lone figure, Ahmed, walks towards us and then the film cuts to a pulsing red light and a luminous white moon suggesting a sense of urgency (figure 22). Between these two intensities a space is opened up and the silhouettes of the soldiers are glimpsed prowling up the hillside towards the moon. Their movement tracks our movement: the hunted must always be aware where the hunter is.

Gassan:	Hey Ahmed.
Ahmed:	Hey Abu Qasem.
	Oh, they took my ID card and searched me.
Samir:	I'm telling you, they are coming this way because they have seen us all piled up here.
Mohamad:	Alaa, if you go higher up you might get a better view.
Ahmed:	Hey Abu Qasem.
	They are up there, where they dump the sewage.

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Yes, where they dump the sewage.

They're leaving, they're leaving.

The scene then cuts to the warmth of the fire, the sound of coffee bubbling, and laughing and joking as the brothers and their associates settle down to an evening around the fire. Later on, light circles from car headlights, like strange apparitions in the distance forming patterns on the horizon whilst also resembling a light tracking and surveying the landscape. These lights remind us of a presence outside the intimacy and intensity of the BBrothers campsite – worlds that are out of reach – and that this is a territory under military occupation and control, as does the sound of the drones and helicopters hovering in the dark sky above.

However, it is the fundamental everyday things that are deceptively profound in the film: the conversation about the sage bush or going to sleep in a hotel with no stairs (figure 41).

is hanging up there without even stairs

(figure 41)

Basem:	Mahmoud, what do you dream when you sleep?
Mohamad:	Wallah, honestly we don't dream when we sleep.
Gassan:	You know here our work is hard labour, so we're so tired. When you're head hits the mattress you just black out.

Alaa:	People like us, old people, who are broke, messed up, and in debt, dream about paying off their debts and not having so and so asking for their money back. Just finally having some peace and quiet. That's as far as my dreams go!
Samir:	Even if you ever dream it starts where you fall asleep, and ends at the nearest army checkpoint.
Mohamad:	We should go for a walk to the mattress now.
Alaa:	You mean to the hotel?
Alaa:	Wallah, this hotel of yours is hanging up there, without even a stairs.

These scenes of the BBrothers huddled together around the campfire might in another context or time remind us of a group of Palestinian resistance fighters hiding out in the hills during the first or second Intifada, with a Palestinian film unit documenting the uprisings. But the words of Ramzi subsequent to the night scenes about the financial debt that has crippled most Palestinians and disabled any form of political resistance, juxtaposed with the BBrothers' tales of financial and physical hardship and the exploitation of Ahmed the young security guard by the Palestinian quarry owner Babour, construct another reality.

Both anguish and vitality simmer beneath occupied Palestine's sky. As will be seen in the next chapter, Deleuze can be helpful in finding an analytics that can 'illuminate the interdependence of these twin intensities'.[345] *White Oil* attempts to make visible not merely darkness and domination 'past and present, but [also] the minor voices of a people'[346] living in a state of exclusion. The voices of Ramzi and the BBrothers – speaking from the shadows and brought into the light through the moving image – articulate everyday struggles and interpersonal dynamics that demand an in-depth listening. They are the voices of a forgotten or 'missing people' who speak within alternative 'universes of reference' capable, perhaps, of one day propelling a resistance and transforming the Occupation's capture of Palestine.[347]

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[345] João Biehl, and Peter Locke, 'Deleuze and the Anthropology of Becoming', *Current Anthropology*, 51:3 (June 2010), pp. 317–351 (p. 319).

[346] Ibid., p. 319.

[347] Ibid., p. 320. See Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical* (University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 64.

4: BESTOWING VISIBILITY

Time-Image (Crystal Image)

Gilles Deleuze's concept of the *time-image* (also termed the crystal image) has been a consistent presence in the making of this work and in my thinking about moving images. However it is important to make clear that I do not map Deleuze's ideas over *White Oil* but enter into a productive dialogue where I use his ideas as a springboard to engage with and think differently about images.

In his two cinema books, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Deleuze distinguishes between two different types of cinema. The movement-image is characteristic of a cinema wholly dependent on movement and action, with characters as the main drivers of the narrative of the film – they perceive and react to events in the film by taking action directly in response to what is happening around them. It is a form of spatialised cinema with time determined and measured by movement, and shots linked to each other through the actions of the image as a sensory-motor image. In the movement-image time and the image are completely subordinate to movement.[348]

Contrary to this, and of concern for *White Oil*, is the time-image which functions very differently: 'The time-image itself deals not with things occurring in time, but with 'new forms of coexistence, ordering, transformation'.[349] By freeing itself from the sensory-motor schema, the time-image is no longer subordinate to movement and action or limited by representation but instead produces a cinema in which the characters do not act and react directly to things around them. Deleuze terms this a 'cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent',[350] where the characters 'record rather

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[348] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Athlone Press, 1989), p. 5, and David Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Duke University Press, 1997), p. 80.
[349] Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. by Martin Joughin (Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 123.
[350] Deleuze, *Cinema 2,* p. 2.

than react'.[351] This inability to react and capture time is exemplified in the cinema of the Italian neo-realists and the French new wave, with directors such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Roberto Rossellini, Federico Fellini and Jean-Luc Godard in post-war Europe. This was a new cinematic politics that left one unable to act although still conscious of the lack of political alternatives.

Films that have the characteristics of Deleuze's time-image re-create the object and subject of the film through a purely cinematic logic of the pure optical and sound image where images are invested by the senses.[352] For Deleuze the optical and sound situation is 'neither an index nor a synsign', but creates a whole new breed of signs which he calls *opsigns* and *sonsigns.*[353] These signs refer to a range of images that can be banal, exceptional or limit circumstances. However, images that are perceived in this way must be reflexive, subjective images wherein the characters in the film do not act without seeing themselves.

Both seer and agency, which is different from the agent, are employed in *White Oil*. Ramzi and the BBrothers mobilise agency by their participation in the film when they speak to and through the camera, and they also have qualities of the seer: they are reflexive, having an awareness of themselves in relation to the camera and myself. They understand their circumstances and use humour and a knowing emotional language to relay this. They are very attuned to the representation of the Palestinians in the international media and they exploit and play with this. However their words are never didactic; they have strong poetic and political undercurrents with a complexity of both emotion and thought relayed through their words, gestures and facial expressions. We are not engaged with passive subjects here, as is the case with the smaller figures roaming the landscape.

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[351] Deleuze, *Cinema 2,* p. 3.
[352] Ibid., p. 4.
[353] Ibid., p. 6.

Any-Space-Whatever

In the time-images of post-war European cinema Deleuze attaches great importance to 'any-spaces-whatever' in emphasising the revolutionary potential of this new cinema. 'Any-spaces-whatever' are spaces that have been dehumanised, ruined landscapes created by war, industry or city planning, characteristic of the transformation of the European post-war landscape. In thinking about space dominated by 'rubble-strewn vistas', a number of philosophers, artists and film- makers began to imagine a world without place:[354]

> These were 'any-spaces-whatever,' deserted but inhabited, disused warehouses, waste ground, cities in the course of demolition or reconstruction. And in these any-spaces-whatever a new race of characters was stirring, kind of mutant: they saw rather than acted, they were seers.[355]

Antonioni's *Red Desert* (1964) is a provocative engagement with modernity and the industrial landscape through the sublime. In the film we follow the main protagonist, Giuliana, the bourgeois wife of a shipyard owner, who wanders through a desolate industrial landscape dominated by power plants, the air thick and yellow with toxins from the factories. In one of the opening scenes Giuliana is seen with her young child approaching the entrance to the shipyard where the workers are on strike. It is clear from her expression and body language that she is in a state of anguish. Anguish and a pervading sense of alienation continue throughout the film and are explored through the rupture between the bourgeois, the worker and the industrial landscapes of modernity. As Matthew Gandy makes clear, 'In the cinema of Antonioni, the depiction of landscape moves beyond the physicality of space as a locus for action towards an engagement with the aesthetic effects of landscape on the psychological state of his protagonists.'[356]

A characteristic of many of Antonioni's films is their presentation of a series of

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[354] Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, xi.
[355] Ibid.
[356] Matthew Gandy, 'Landscapes of Deliquescence in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Red Desert*', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, 28:2 (June 2003), pp. 218–237 (p. 220).

apparently disconnected events using long durational takes to explore the alienation of humans in the modern world. In his cinema, 'space and time as transformed by post-war modernity are the primary sites within, upon and from which an immeasurable violence is played out'.[357] Antonioni's cinema presents us with 'any-spaces-whatever' and what Deleuze describes as 'dehumanized landscapes, of emptied spaces that might be seen as having absorbed characters and actions, retaining only a geophysical description, an abstract inventory of them'.[358]

Red Desert, like many of Antonioni's films, draws on the body in the landscape, not as the 'subject of movement or the instrument of action' but as the revealing of time through bearing witness to time creating time-images (crystal images).[359] *White Oil* also draws upon the body in a similar way; however, the filmic pleasures of fatigue and waiting in the western cinematic context of Antonioni are transformed into the real fatigue of an unbearable waiting of the Palestinians. In the same way the relationship between sight and sound, the seen and the spoken, are captured to give moving image powers to capture time in the image.

In drawing out the political implications of Deleuze's theories of cinema, Laura U. Marks argues that 'any-spaces-whatever' are 'not simply the disjunctive spaces of post war and postmodernism, but also the disruptive spaces of post colonialism'.[360] We can see this disruption of space in relation to Israel's Occupation and colonisation of the West Bank: the building of settlements and the way in which the West Bank is exploited as an industrial park, of which the quarries are part. In their introduction to *Deleuze and Space*, the volume's editors Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert refer to the opening passage of Edward Casey's *Getting Back into Place,* where he challenges us to imagine a world without place:

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[357] Hamish Ford, 'Antonioni and the Mystery of Reality', *Cinemascope.It*, Special Issue, 18 (July–December 2012).

[358] Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 5.

[359] Ibid., p. xii.

[360] Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Duke University Press, 2000), p. 27.

It is impossible to do, he says, citing as proof the very terror such a thought evokes. We can scarcely think of anything more terrible, he argues, than the absence of place. 'Our lives are so place-orientated and place-saturated that we cannot begin to comprehend, much less face up to, what sheer placelessness would be like.'[361]

This absence of place is something that most Palestinians have had to negotiate for the last 60 years. The physical and psychological space and place of Palestine has diminished significantly over the last seven decades and has been replaced by a sense of place and space that is deeply fractured, infused with longing – a place of the past and the future, but as yet no present. This *state* is perhaps a difficult concept for most of us to imagine. What is it like to live somewhere that is imbued with memories of a place that once was, and a landscape that is now not only colonised and occupied, but in its very material form is disappearing and being transformed into an industrial landscape? It is a landscape that is no longer recognisable, excavated of its raw material to construct 'another place' (Israel), and any sense of the place one once knew is eradicated. What is like to live in a non-place with an identity that is a like a mirage or a hallucinatory dream?

White Oil attempts to 'sort through the rubble'[362] created by the violent dislocation of the Palestinians within their own land. Interweaving durational and pure optical and sound images with dialogue, the film arouses an emotional or visceral response from the spectator by means of affection-images where 'emotion or feeling opens us to the experience of time'.[363] In *White Oil* images are used not to persuade the viewer but to immerse them in the complex relations at work in the OPT so they might glean something of the power relations that mark out this territory. These relations are temporal and spatial as well as human and industrial and can be broken down into a number of strata and sedimentations. The affective dimension encompasses emotions of fear, sorrow, anger and fatigue as well as vitality, laughter, intimacy and community.

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[361] Ian Buchanan and Greg Lambert, eds, *Deleuze and Space* (Edinburgh University Press, 2005), p. 1, and Edward Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Indiana University Press, 1993), p. ix.
[362] Marks, *The Skin of Film*, p. 28.
[363] Ibid.

For Deleuze, what cinema does is capture time in the image by making visible the invisible reality of time, of presents which pass and of pasts preserved or sedimented. The time-image has the potential to capture whole worlds with meaning derived from the relations between images as well as within a singular image. In this sense the images in *White Oil* reveal like a kaleidoscope different time frames and spaces that co-exist all at once, in which the different surfaces, aggregates and subjectivities of the embodied spatial relations of the quarries and OPT become visible. This is significant for this project in relation to how the West Bank is fragmented into different spatial and temporal realities as a consequence of the Occupation and the Judeo-Christian narratives that are projected onto the landscape. *White Oil* disrupts the common indexical relationship to time and allows for the infiltration of porosity and fluidity to transform the audience's historical encounter with time and the spatial dynamics of the OPT.

Intercessors

In *White Oil* truth lies in the partiality of vision, the alternative narratives of history and the performative modes of operation that Ramzi and the BBrothers play and act out for themselves. The self-awareness and performative aspect of the participants in front of the camera and the emotional intensities that have been drawn out through the editing process construct what Deleuze terms the 'Powers of the false', with the participants the 'intercessors' of the film.[364] To quote Deleuze:

> [Intercessors] are fundamental. Creation's all about [intercessors]. Without them nothing happens. They can be people … but things too, even plants or animals … Whether they're real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, you have to form your intercessors … I need my [intercessors] to express myself, and they'd never express themselves without me: you're always working in a group, even when you seem to be on your own.[365]

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[364] Deleuze, *Cinema 2.*

[365] Deleuze, *Negotiations*, p. 125. I have replaced the word mediator with the French word intercessor as used in the original text, as the translation in the English version evokes the idea of mediation which seems contrary to Deleuze's critique of mediation.

For Deleuze 'intercessors' are the agents of cinema, real characters who make up the artefaction of the documentary film.[366] These characters are not unassuming compliant informants of documentary but, as Marks makes clear, they are 'resistant characters who dispute the filmmaker's construction of truth'.[367]

To be clear, an intercessor is not a mediator but a creator in every sense of the word, mobilising movement across bodies and thoughts. Finding intercessors is essential for a filmmaker as they enable the filmmaker to speak. Without them we cannot avoid falling into the trap of the 'master's or colonist's discourse'.[368] Intercessors construct a minority discourse by 'telling tales' or stories to effect and shape the constitution of a people, counteracting the established fictions rooted in colonist discourse. As Deleuze says,

> A people isn't something already there. A people, in a way, is what is missing, as Paul Klee used to say. Was there ever a Palestinian people? Israel says no. Of course there was, but that's not the point. The thing is, that once the Palestinians have been thrown out of their territory, then to the extent that they resist they enter the process of constituting a people.[369]

However, what is clear, as David MacDougall points out and Marks expands on is that the subjects most likely to collaborate with documentary filmmakers are those who have an agenda of their own. 'They may be unusually "enquiring of mind," marginal to the community, or already in an intermediary position between community and explorers from outside, but in any case their agendas exceed and transform those of the filmmakers.'[370]

Ramzi is perhaps most similar to Jean Rouch's characters, who have their own stories to tell. The BBrothers fall between Jean Rouch's characters and Trinh T. Minh-ha's

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[366] Marks, *The Skin of Film*, p. 68.
[367] Ibid.
[368] Deleuze, *Negotiations*, pp. 125–126.
[369] Ibid.
[370] Marks, *The Skin of Film*, p. 68. Also see David MacDougall, 'Whose Story is it?', in *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from V.A.R., 1990–1994*, ed. Lucien Taylor (Routledge, 1994), p. 32.

evasive interlocutors, as they shy away from the camera, play with representations and the dynamics of the group and what they perceive to be their audience: the foreigner, ciphered through myself, the female western filmmaker. As well as sharing the hardship of their situation the BBrothers are equally as elusive in talking about the politics of their position. Nearly everything is masqueraded through humour and anecdotal stories which are often partial and fragmented. In *White Oil*, we do not know to what extent stories have been enhanced, or what has been left out by the BBrothers in the act of talking or through consensus as a family and group of friends. We do not know to what extent my edit intervenes to heighten this fragmentation and partiality of information. What is clear is that there is much more at stake than we are being told, and filming at night intensifies this partiality of viewpoint and vision that the viewer has on this pillaged and besieged territory. Shame, fear, terror, anger, anguish, redundancy and hopelessness are all played out in front of the camera, as well as fearlessness, vitality, spirit, laughter, communality, comradeship and generosity.

The intercessors in the film are also Faris and Khaled, my collaborators who perform as interviewers on my behalf. They too have their own agendas and interest in the film and in the participants' stories that relate to and expand on their own experience of living under Occupation. Together these 'intercessors' evoke and posit a number of narratives and layers of the social and political landscape of the West Bank which I mobilise against the official versions of history creating crystal images that falsify the latter whilst respecting the partial views of my 'intercessors'.

These intercessors create a minority discourse bestowing visibility on the constitution of the Palestinian people as well as drawing attention to the environmental disaster of the quarries and the expropriation of the stone by Israel. They transform the quarry spaces from sites of expropriation into sites of cultural production by re-encoding them with local knowledge, personal histories and experience disrupting spectatorship for the viewer as well as the Occupation's siege mentality.

Powers of the False

As noted above, the intercessors of the film, Ramzi and the BBrothers, are conscious of their performance and perform for the camera. Their reflexivity in relation to the camera, and my gaze as a western women standing in for the gaze of the wider world, is palpable. With the BBrothers particularly, although the partiality of many of the images at night enhances the theatricality of the mise-en-scène, whatever sustains the dramatic life of the characters is de-dramatised through their acting out and the duration of the image. This is most evident in the first night scene with the BBrothers where Alaa is preparing a fire to make coffee and tea. 'Say to her cooking on the fire is the best. Even coffee will taste different', says one of the BBrothers, drawing attention to my presence. Equally Alaa's composure is a register of this de-dramatisation as he remains within the frame, not looking at the camera although he is fully aware that it is positioned no more than two metres away. This moment is intensified when Alaa gets up suddenly to act out raising a piece of metal at one of his compatriots, Ahmed the security guard, who has stepped into the frame, and again when Alaa returns to caring for the fire with a knowing smile. Another example appears towards the end of the film, when Ahmed unscrews his torch to check the bulb and then later disappears into the dark of the night with only the light of the torch visible. The durational shot and temporal dimensions of the image created through the fixed frame also suggest a space and time outside of representation, where narration becomes 'temporal and falsifying at exactly the same time' and there is something out of the frame that is not seen but inferred.[371]

In her unpublished paper, 'The Power of the False in Pedro Costa's *In Vanda's Room*', Patricia Bras discusses Costa's use of the durational static frame in relation to Vanda, the main character in his film, who plays herself. Bras posits that the characters' awareness of the camera introduces a symbolic failure in representation through the uncanny and 'falsifying' performance of the characters which upsets the distinction

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[371] Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 128.

between reality and fiction.[372] She describes the intention employed as a 'subversive gesture that [rearticulates] the social body' and displaces the undifferentiated frontiers between the real person and the fictional character. These social bodies, the BBrothers and Costa's protagonist Vanda, are rearticulated to refuse any overarching representation of these 'people' by a 'falsifying element that suggests the contingency of new political subjectivities'.[373] This is expressed through the articulation of the intrinsic elements of the filmic medium: the frame and duration of the image exposes the limits of representation towards an opening out of meaning. Rancière adds another dimension to this in regard to the instability of the relationships between the 'perceptible and the intelligible', which he suggests can be interpreted as the 'unlimited character of the powers of representation'.[374]

In stories of loss, hardship and political upheaval in an Occupied land we cross over, not only into the worlds of Ramzi and the BBrothers, but also into the creative realm of making meaning, living myth, and the possibilities of human endeavour. The characters in *White Oil* correlate with Deleuze's description of the cinema of Jean Rouch, in which

> we notice in the first place that the character has ceased to be real or fictional, in so far as he has ceased to be seen objectively or to see subjectively: it is a character who goes over crossings and frontiers because he invents as a real character, and becomes all the more real because he has been better at inventing.[375]

In this sense, as Michael Renov has remarked, the constructiveness of documentary is as creative as fiction. However he warns us that we must not collapse persuasion and falsification nor propaganda and fiction. For Renov truth 'depends on fiction, finding its

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[372] My notes from unpublished paper by Patricia Bras, 'The Power of the False in Pedro Costa's *In Vanda's Room*', (2013), Powers of the False Conference, Institute Francais and Cinema Lumiere, London, May 2012.
[373] Ibid.
[374] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, p. 130.
[375] Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 146.

shape and substance through the agency of human intervention'.[376]

White Oil stages a rite of passage not only for my co-participants, the intercessors of the film, but also for myself as the filmmaker. The filmmaker's subjective and emotional engagement in the 'collision' between the apparatus of filmmaking and reality erases the distance from which a position of judgement is possible.[377] For Deleuze, the filmmaker sets out to pass judgement but instead becomes the subject's double: 'an equal forger of affects born of the tension between representing and being represented'.[378] This 'becoming' of political subjectivities in the documentary process can also be perceived as the creative 'powers of the false', where film reveals the inherent performative and 'creative nature of selfhood' as well as the connections between the filmmaker and her co-participants who are all bound up in the inventive and always provisional ways in which we make meaning and truth.

The reflexivity of the filmmaker in relation to her subject adds a further layer of complication reflected in Silke Panse's remark on Stella Bruzzi, 'if the real is performative then a notion of authenticity through an 'alternative honesty' of the performance, often including a reflexivity by the filmmaker becomes the truth in which all that is inside of the frame and text is read.'[379] However the text is never just what is inside the frame, what is directly in view, particularly in moving image. To cite John Berger, the photographer will select that particular 'sight from an infinity of other possible sights'; it is the photographer's 'choices' that create this image, and even these 'choices' could be construed as hiding the truth from the viewer.[380] The framing, setting up the subject and landscape, the duration and cut from one image to another, as well as the constructed soundscapes, implies not only the performative and

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[376] Michael Renov, 'Introduction: The Truth About Non-Fiction', in *Theorizing Documentary*, ed. Michael Renov (Routledge, 1993), p. 10.
[377] Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentry* (Routledge, 2006), pp. 10 and 79.
[378] My notes from unpublished paper by Trent Griffiths, 'Who Told the First Lie? Beyond Judgement in *Forbidden Lie*', presented at Powers of the False Conference, Institute Francais and Cinema Lumiere, London, May 2012.
[379] Silke Panse, 'Book Review, *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction* by Stella Bruzzi', *Film Studies*, 3 (Spring 2002), pp. 93–96 (pp. 94–95).
[380] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin Modern Classics, 2008), p. 2.

constructed nature of the images in which non- fiction soon becomes a kind of fiction, but also that any sense of veracity of truth is exceedingly complex and unattainable. The question of truth is no longer what is at stake. Instead it is the 'power of the false', the non-fiction film/documentary that makes visible a number of relations and assemblages posing questions about the circumstances of the participants and their relationship to the landscape and context in which they are filmed, as well as the gaps in representation. As Rancière says, 'To pretend is not to put forth illusions but to elaborate intelligent structures.'[381] It is the arrangement between things and actions in order to make visible or audible other things that is crucial, and in order to do this, 'The real must be fictionalised in order to be thought.'[382]

Precarious Lives

The intercessors of the film speak not only as for themselves but also as characters that make visible the lives of over 20,000 Palestinians who work in the quarry industry and have no other choice because there are so few employment opportunities in the West Bank as a result of the Occupation. The consequence is that there are many Palestinian employers who exploit the situation, paying their employees extremely low wages for working long days in poor working conditions. As a result many Palestinians risk their lives illegally crossing the Separation Wall and the checkpoints to find better paid jobs in Israel. This is the subject of Suad Amiry's book *Nothing To Lose But Your Life: An 18-Hour Journey with Murad*, in which a Palestinian woman shadows an illegal Palestinian worker from the West Bank crossing into the town of Petah Tikva in Israel.[383]

The lives of these workers, whether in the OPT or forced into working illegally in Israel, are 'precarious lives' – the subject of the philosopher and theorist Judith Butler's book

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[381] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. by Gabriel Rockhill (Continuum, 2004), p. 36.
[382] Ibid., pp. 36–37.
[383] Amira Suad, *Nothing To Lose But Your Life: An 18-Hour Journey with Murad* (Bloomsbury USA, 2010).

Precarious Lives.[384] Butler critiques the radical vulnerability and exposure to objective violence that makes visible the subjective violence of the everyday in the lives of those who are invisible.[385] In *White Oil* the precariousness and vulnerability of my co-participants' lives is made visible through their words and the images on the screen. These lives are rescued from media representations of Palestinians as being only victims or terrorists, demanding that the viewer engage in a much more complex relation with the precariousness of these workers lives by dissecting the nuances and heterogeneities that exist within cultures and places. By interweaving dialogue and images the viewer is asked to stop, to listen and not only witness my co-participants' lives and stories but also think themselves into this space. Although this is done with a minimum of speech and action, the partiality (fragments) of these stories plays an important role in demanding that the viewer think for themselves, make connections and reach out and touch these precarious lives.[386]

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[384] Judith Butler, *Precarious Lives* (Verso, 2006).

[385] In *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (Verso, 2009), Judith Butler continues this critique through a collection of talks and essays about how war is 'framed' in the media to prevent us from recognising the people who are killed or are to be killed as living fully 'grievable' lives like our own. Her scrutiny of these issues looks at how media representations and political discourse construct frames that differentiate 'the cries we can hear from those we cannot, the sights we can see from those we cannot, and likewise at the level of touch and even smell', which she argues can be attributed to certain 'embedded evaluative structures [where a] life becomes perceivable at all' (p. 51).

[386] In Israel and Palestine this inequality in how lives are represented can be mapped in the attacks on Gaza in 2009 and 2012, where the Israeli state sacrificed hundreds of innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza, including women and children, for the lives of a few Israelis. Another example was the exchange of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in 2011, when Israel handed over 1,027 Palestinian prisoners as part of an agreement with Hamas after Shalit had been abducted in 2006 by Hamas militants. This exemplifies Butler's point about whose lives are given more or less value, with one Israeli life worth more than the life of a Palestinian. To be clear, I am not insinuating that these Israeli lives are of less value but that all life should be mourned equally, and that a state's willingness to sacrifice even more lives as a war instrument is ethically corrupt. This includes the political motivations that drive the 'trauma industry' that pervades Israeli media and its society and garners support from its citizens by perpetuating representations of Palestinian life as less valid than Israeli Jewish life. For more on this see Edna Lomsky-Feder and Eyal Ben-Ari Trauma, 'Therapy and Responsibility: Psychology and War in Contemporary Israel', in *The Practice of War*, ed. Aparna Rao, Michael Bollig and Monica Boeck (Berghahn Books, 2008), pp. 111–31.

The Civil Contract of Photography

In *The Civil Contract of Photography* Ariella Azoulay rethinks the political and ethical status of photography.[387] She proposes new relationships for how photography is understood in regard to the photographer, the subject of the photograph and those who view it, revising our understanding of the power relations that perpetuate photographic meanings. Azoulay makes a case for how the photographic images can serve as a form of civil knowledge, and a potential space for political relations, where the act of photography is posited in terms of an agreement between the viewer, photographer, and photographed subject in a tripartite relation. As an artist using a camera, Azoulay's work provides a context in which to explore the political power of the image and create a conceptual framework for a dialogue and contract with my co-participants in Palestine through the lens of the moving camera.

Azoulay focuses on two groups: Palestinian noncitizens in Israel and women in western societies. What both groups share is that photographs have not, until now, become a way of claiming protection from the ongoing assault on their bodies, psyches and equality as citizens. Azoulay insists that photography, and I extend this to filmic images, must be thought of and comprehended as inseparable from the injustices, oppressions and disasters that have befallen so many people throughout history. She puts forward the proposition that anyone, even stateless persons like the Palestinians, who addresses others through photography or indeed is the photographer, becomes a citizen in the citizenry of photography through the tripartite relation.

Azoulay seeks to place photography back in the realm of politics as a visual tool in the making and unmaking of citizens, creating a context in which we have an obligation to engage with photographs and the injustices and tragedies that they portray as more than mere evidence. Azoulay replaces the terms 'shame' or 'compassion' with the term 'contract' in order to de-territorialise the way in which images of catastrophe and

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[387] Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (Zone Books, 2008).

trauma have been challenged by Susan Sontag in her ethics of viewing and critique of our inability to engage. Sontag's claim was that photography desensitises its audience and that people are left with a memory of a photograph but not the context.[388] A central feature of Azoulay's argument is that the viewer stops *looking* at photographs and assuming a passive gaze, and starts *watching* images. In this way the ethics of spectatorship is challenged; the viewer becomes active and implicated in the image and bound by a contract of citizenship and responsibility to what is visible in the image through addressing our lives together.[389] The modes of circulation of the image in the public sphere create a civil contract of photography through the public's responsibility to images of those who live on the margins, are dispossessed and subjected to abuse and catastrophe.[390]

Azoulay proposes a different kind of citizenship that is freed from nationalist perspectives. Central to her proposition is the idea that 'photographs bear traces of a plurality of political relationships that might be actualised by the act of watching, transforming and disseminating what is seen into claims that demand action'.[391] This takes into account the plurality of 'agents' involved in the production and circulation of images: the camera, the photographer, the photographed subject, and the viewer create a 'new ontological-political understanding of photography'[392] where no single individual is granted the power to command meaning alone.

Applying Azoulay's compelling and urgent ideas to the images of *White Oil*, the participants, myself and the viewer are bound together by a mutual responsibility for the images, creating a citizenship in which the Palestinian quarry worker or owner may reclaim a space and a political position. Photography and filmmaking become a contract for the rehabilitation of Palestinian citizenship within the political arena,

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[388] Susan Sontag, 'Looking at War: Photography's View of Devastation and Death', *The New Yorker*, 9 December 2002, p. 94.
[389] Woolsey, 'The Citizenry of Photography', p. 23.
[390] Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, pp. 16–17.
[391] Ibid., pp. 25–26.
[392] Ibid., p. 23.

changing the passive gaze towards them and moving beyond empathy, shame, pity or compassion.[393] In *The Civil Contract of Photography* all parties engaged in the making and dissemination of images of Palestinians are called on 'to recognise and restore' the citizenship of the Palestinian by considering how we 'bring back politics as a space of speech and action'.[394] As Azoulay writes: *The Civil Contract of Photography* is an attempt to 'anchor spectatorship in civic duty toward the photographed persons who haven't stopped being "there"… [for] political duty is first and foremost a duty toward one another, rather than toward the ruling power.'[395]

In relation to the Palestinian as a dispossessed citizen who might be given citizenship through the photograph or film, this project claims a way of transgressing the anonymity that the Occupation presents for the Palestinians as a group. In the context of Palestine and the film *White Oil* this 'contract' makes visible and gives voice to Palestinians working in the quarries.

The Still and the Moving Image

Bestowing visibility is the subject of Jaques Rancière's thesis about how art makes visible the anonymous and creates political subjectivities. He establishes a connection between the development of photography and film as 'mechanical' arts and the birth of 'new history'. However his reading is different from Benjamin's ideas in his book *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*.[396] Rancière sets up connections between scientific paradigms and aesthetic paradigms whereas Benjamin's thesis separates the technical properties of a form of art from its aesthetic and political properties. Benjamin's thesis is drawn from the crossover between the Marxist materialist explanation and that of Heideggerian ontology ascribing the age of modernity to technology. Rancière sees things the other way round. He suggests that

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[393] Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, p. 17.
[394] Irmgard Emmelhainz, 'Review of Ariella Azoulay, *The Civic Contract of Photography*,' The Association for Modern and Contemporary Art of the Arab world, Iran, and Turkey (2012), pp. 2 and 7 <http://www.amcainternational.org/reviews.html#Ariella> [accessed 23 September 2013].
[395] Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, pp. 16–17.
[396] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Penguin, 2008).

the mechanical should first be recognised as a tool for art rather than 'techniques of reproduction or transmission', in order for it to 'confer visibility on the masses and anonymous individuals'.[397] In exploiting the double poetics of the image, photography and film became an art by making images simultaneously or separately two things, 'the legible testimony of a history written on faces, objects [and landscapes] and pure assemblages of visibility, resistant to any narrativization, intersection or meaning'.[398] By bestowing visibility on anyone – and in this case of this research, the Palestinians – photography and film make anonymous people and subjects the focus of art.

In *White Oil* visibility is extended through the static frame of durational images which are like moving photographs. This relationship between the still and the moving has always been a key component of my practice where the precision of photography is employed alongside pensive slowness to reduce the subjectiveness of the image and create distanciation. Highly composed images draw out scale, borders, movement, space and time in the quarries and the occupied territory. This is not the work of a roaming camera or a camera that lingers for a short period of time. It is the work of a camera whose modus operandi is to frame in a way that distils the different connections and relations in the landscape, drawing out time in the image rather than movement. Very little happens in the images in the way of action, but the observation of detail and relations in the images is of the utmost importance. As the film critic and theorist André Bazin has posited, filming in this way opens up time for thought and affect in the viewer, in whom a more active mental attitude is required to create meaning in the image.[399]

In this sense the images in *White Oil* are not strictly 'ethnographic' but mobilise a different visual language that can also be framed within the discourse of photography and what the anthropologist Christopher Pinney calls its 'transcriptional excess' and

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[397] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, pp. 31–32.
[398] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, p. 11.
[399] Andre Bazin, 'The Evolution of the Language of Cinema', *What is Cinema?, Vol.1* (Berkeley, CA, 1967), p. 37.

'incapacity to fix any image':[400]

> No matter how hard the photographer tries to exclude, the camera always includes. This is what provoked Benjamin's comments about photography's 'tiny spark of contingency,' and Barthes' punctum is in essence the real which slips past the watchful gaze of the photographer, waiting in the image for subsequent recovery. The photograph's *there-then*, *here-now*, also harbours an ineluctable *more-than*.

The effect of this 'ineluctable more-than' means that images have a multiplicity of meanings and that are both virtual and actual. In the moment of setting the frame there is always something that lies elusively outside of the frame of what one sees as the filmmaker behind the camera. There are always other things that come to light in the image as one looks, and looks again. The durational moving image intensifies this with its time-image, in which a shadow, a flutter of a plastic bag or a sound marks out a contingency in the image. The locked off camera, like photography, as Pinney notes, 'will always capture more of the world – its surplus or xenos – than the photographer expects or desires. Photography becomes a xenography that might take its place at the centre of this new form of knowledge production, and action.'[401] The image cannot be pinned down: movement, time, the relation of objects and people, distance and proximity, foreground and background, vision and sound coalesce to produce uncertain and indeterminate forms.

In making visible the hidden blind spots of the Occupation such as the quarries, *White Oil* can be contextualised within the canon of photographic works by Paul Seawright and Admas Habteslasie who also document communities and the signs of life in transitory and indeterminate states and spaces. Seawright's *Invisible Cities* (2007) photographs document the invisible peripheries of African cities and their never-ending expanding metropolises that form on their margins. In African cities, Abdi Maliqe Simone writes, 'urban dynamics are shifted away from actual cities to murky

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[400] Christopher Pinney, 'What is to be done?' *Source 48* (Autumn 2006), pp. 16–17.

[401] Pinney, 'What is to be done?' p. 17. Pinney draws on the concept of 'xenoepistemics' as developed by Sarat Maharaj, 'Xeno-epistemics: Makeshift Kit for Sounding Visual Art as Knowledge Production and the Retinal Regimes', in *Documenta 11: The Catalogue,* ed. Okwui Enwezor et al. (Hatje Cantz, 2002).

borderlands ... where new formulations of sovereignty, belonging and nationhood are provisionally concretized. Exclusion and incorporation, marginality and experimentation, then converge in ways that are not easily discernable.'[402] In *Limbo* (2005), Habteslasie travels to Eritrea to photograph a country between war and peace, recording the signs of a transitory state that has become permanent. [403]

What these projects share with *White Oil* is the marking out of a people's edges, endings and displacements to examine the voiding of spaces and compressed globalities where the corporeal body is thrown out, and where, as Pinney remarks, bodies in the landscape serve 'not as visible objects of knowledge but as vectors of the ineffable'. In *White Oil* bodies moving through the landscape delineate time and fatigue as well as connecting one landscape to the next to evoke the scale of the devastation created by the quarries and a sense of impending disaster and dislocation. In Habteslasie's and Seawright's work it is the people living in a constant state of indeterminacy on the margins of transitory states and landscapes who become 'vectors of the ineffable'. In the case of *White Oil*, the state of indeterminacy is determined and compounded by Israel's political strategies, with the West Bank being recreated as an industrial park fulfilling Israel's colonial and nationalistic vision of growth and progress.

The Partiality of Vision

The static frame of the durational images constructs the partiality of both vision and of what is not visible. This includes the military, religious and geopolitical forces that are alluded to in various visual and intertextual refrains in *White Oil*, and that are expositional from certain perspectives and not from others. What is left out in vision is as important as what is seen, implying that there is a greater depth, a more complex narrative, other tragedies, a greater environmental disaster, a deeper humanity that

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[402] Paul Seawright, *Invisible Cities* (2007) <http://www.paulseawright.info/invisible.html> [accessed 27 September 2013].
[403] Pinney, 'What is to be done?' pp. 14–15.

cannot be portrayed, thereby exposing the limits of film and photography. Partiality of vision, as Anna Grimshaw notes, is also a result of the fact that 'what we see is inseparable from how we see'[404] and that it is impossible to sustain a coherent viewpoint and vision. Our viewpoint or vision is inevitably affected by who we are, by the social and cultural landscapes we have been brought up with and the systems that inform our gaze, which we are never completely separable from. Looking is always informed by other presences that render themselves visible in the most nuanced and indeterminable of ways.

However, framing also abstracts and enlarges by lifting something out of the background so that we can look more closely, distilling and making connections between things that might otherwise have been lost or disregarded.[405] In *White Oil* abstraction delineates scale, borders and boundaries revealing the precariousness of the landscape and imbuing the image with a politics. This occurs in the framing the landscape where people are employed to register the scale of the quarries, its borders, transitions and proximity to residential areas. The framing is often very tight, with the landscape leaking in and out of shot, as a way of describing a peripheral landscape, like the green of the grass, the flowers and the olive trees that are soon to be eaten up by the grinding, insatiable appetite of the quarries.

Images That Watch us and Return the Gaze

The artist Susan Trangmar brings our attention to a register of the observed and the observer: 'There are those episodes in the film in which the subject is not human, maybe animate, maybe not. These episodes contribute to a sense of being for itself.'[406] In *White Oil* it is the empty, evacuated spaces of the quarries that seem to look back at us asking us to recognise the enormity of the cavernous spaces and lines of geological

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[404] A. Grimshaw, *The Ethnographers Eye: Ways of Seeing in Modern Anthropology* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 11.
[405] David MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography and the Senses* (Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 4.
[406] Trangmar, *A Play in Time*, p. 3 of interview.

force. They also ask us to recognise the borders and walls that separate us from them and the screen of the film which acts as another divide between one place and another. However we also stray into the realm of the imaginary and the powers of the false demanding that we consider the divisions between worlds which often seem impossible to broach.

Framing also reveals the sensibilities of the filmmaker: mine is a sensibility that wants to touch – not in a Jean Rouchian way but through stillness and pensiveness. It is about images that watch and touch us and return the gaze of the viewer. Serge Daney in his text *The Tracking Shot in Kapo* (1992) discusses the ethical premise on which the filmmaker via the camera records its subject, and the implications and effects of post-production editing: 'In 1961 a movement of a camera aestheticised a dead body and 30 years later a dissolve makes the wealthy and the starving ones dance together.'[407] In this text Daney remarks on the extraordinary use of a tracking shot by the Italian filmmaker Gillo Pontecorvo in his obscure film *Kapo* (1960), about the concentration camps, which was written about in a review by Jacques Rivette in June 1961 in *Cahiers du cinéma*. The article, entitled *Of Abjection*, does not tell the story of the film, but describes one shot in one sentence:

> Look however in Kapo, the shot where Riva commits suicide by throwing herself on electric barbwire: the man who decides at this moment to make a forward tracking shot to reframe the dead body – carefully positioning the raised hand in the corner of the final framing – this man is worthy of the most profound contempt.[408]

In using a tracking shot at the end of the film Pontecorvo abolishes a distance that he should have kept – an act that for Daney was even more contemptuous because in 1961, when the film was made, the tracking shot required a great effort and rails to

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[407] Serge Daney, 'The Tracking Shot in Kapo', trans. by Laurent Kretzschmar, *Senses of Cinema*, 30 (2004)< http://sensesofcinema.com/2004/feature-articles/kapo_daney/> [accessed 28 July 2013]. Originally published in *Trafic* (No. 4, Fall 1992), it was intended to be the first chapter of a book, Daney's 'cinema-biography', the story of his life as a cinephile in relation to a certain history of what he called modern cinema. What is left from this project is *Persévérance* (1994), a book of interviews with Serge Toubiana.

[408] Jacques Rivette, 'Of Abjection', *Cahiers du cinema,* 120th edition (June 1961), cited in Daney, 'The Tracking Shot in Kapo'.

facilitate. The tracking rails on which the camera was mounted were also synonymous with the rails on which millions of Jews were deported to the camps. For Godard too the tracking shot is also a moral issue. Daney writes,

> The tracking shot was immoral for the simple reason that it was putting us – him filmmaker and me spectator – in a place where we did not belong, where I anyway could not and did not want to be, because he "deported" me from my real situation as a spectator-witness forcing me to be part of the picture. What was the meaning of Godard's formula if not that *one should never put himself where one isn't nor should he speak for others*?[409]

The way in which something is filmed sheds light not on the historical truth of the event but on the gaze and perspective of the maker, the person behind the camera, what and how things are framed, and the role of the editor. It is in this context that the static frame of the camera in *White Oil* can be understood because it partakes of the language of cinema rather than the language of television and reportage or documentary in its conventional form. The static frame in *White Oil* creates a distance and 'otherness' while at the same time including a level of intimacy that has more or less disappeared in contemporary moving images. Daney's words elucidate why cinema has been so important for me as a medium and tool in touching and exploring the world in all its complexity: 'And then I see clearly why I have adopted cinema: so it could adopt me in return. So it could teach me to tirelessly touch with my gaze the distance from me at which the other begins.'[410]

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[409] Daney, 'The Tracking Shot in Kapo' (para 46).
[410] Ibid. (para 47).

6: SITUATING THE FIELD

Filming in Palestine over the last eight years entailed bringing to the fore an already established intuitive filming style. However my research also sought to challenge this and interrogate modes of representation in the context of Palestine, and how the eye and mind have been saturated and influenced by the visual practices of other artists, filmmakers and theorists who have left their mark indirectly, sometimes indelibly influencing and affecting the work. My reading of the images and the film is loaded with my experience of production, as well as my own personal background and history, and that determines to some extent the decisions I have made about the framing of images and subsequent editing, discussed in some detail in Chapters Four and Five.

For example, the framing of the images and structure of the edit (figures 27 and 28) question how Jewish history has been imposed on the landscape of the West Bank. In the foreground a stone-cutting factory creates a constructivist frame through which the West Bank can be seen in the distance. The framing of this image invites associations with the Jewish architect Daniel Libeskind's buildings, which have become emblematic of both the physical and psychological architecture of Jewish history; this is followed by an image of a settlement that is intrinsic to to that history.

Stones in one quarry have been used to construct low-rise walls, barriers and partition spaces and create another border between the viewer and the screen (figure 42). A stone crusher in the middle of this *mise en scéne* releases clouds of dust and the quarry takes on an association with a fortified landscape that seems to evoke and mirror all of the tensions and spatial dynamics of the OPT. This image also brings to mind the Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami's seminal film, *Taste of Cherry* (1997), which has been an influential and poignant film for me for many years. *Taste of Cherry* is the story of a man called Mr Badii, who wants to commit suicide and searches single-mindedly for someone to bury him in an open quarry landscape on the outskirts of Tehran.

(figure 42)

(figure 43)

In *White Oil*, a single figure like a shadow wanders through the open grave of the quarry, stumbling and clambering over a mound of stone, like a haunting. In the film this is followed by an image of houses and then a town cut through by a road and a quarry that severs the frame in two, where the windows of the houses register as black voids intimating the psychic destruction of the town's inhabitants (figures 43 and 44).

The Influences of Kirostami's *Taste of Cherry*

Kiarostami's *Taste of Cherry* has had a significant impact on the aesthetics of *White Oil*, not least in the yellow ochre hues of the landscape, the location in the Middle East, and an industrial quarry setting on the periphery of urban and residential areas. What is also significant in both *White Oil* and *Taste of Cherry* is the duration of the images, the slow and serious tempo that allows the audience to reflect on what they have seen and heard.[411] Both films have a strong meditative dimension in keeping with an aesthetic minimalism and a sense of time and mourning in the landscape.

In both films narrative coherence is challenged by a fragmented narration and an aesthetics of digression. In *White Oil* this is important on a number of counts: firstly because I am exploring a landscape that has been fragmented by the Occupation; secondly in recognising the impossibility of having a coherent viewpoint and vision. The film is also expositional in regard to the economic, social, political and historical context of the West Bank and the quarries: Ramzi's prison story, Oslo and debt, the history of the quarries through family relations, the spatial dynamics of Palestine. However, the viewer is required to work quite hard at discerning relationships between the different parts of the script, which moves back and forth in time and

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[411] Alberto Elena, *The Cinema of Abbas Kiarostami* (Saqi Books, 2005), p. 123.

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space throughout the film, breaking any linear or cohesive narrative. The narrative structure is intentionally complex, weaving in and out of a number of story lines and subplots which relay something of the complex spatial and temporal dimensions of the OPT while revealing only partial information. The film relies on the viewer either already knowing something about the OPT or being provoked by the film to investigate further the conditions on the ground through contextualising sources. However, in its partiality and evocation of voids and dead ends, the film intentionally creates a space of openings for the viewer to meditate on both the dehumanised nature of the landscape and the humanity that inhabits it.

In *Taste of Cherry* we know and learn very little about Mr Badii, the main protagonist of the film, apart from his desire to commit suicide. As the film unfolds, Mr Badii drives his car in circles around an industrial deserted landscape on the outskirts of Tehran, meeting various people: a soldier, a seminary and a taxidermist, all of whom are men. He tries to persuade them to bury him for a significant amount of money. In asking these strangers to assist in burying him, we learn not only of Mr. Badii's depression, but also of the state of the country around him. These encounters form the backbone of the film with three main conversations acting as the main building blocks of the film, alternating with long periods of silence. Through these conversations that occur in the car the political and social landscape of Iran is unraveled. Kiarostami describes this process in terms of the necessity 'to envision an unfinished and incomplete cinema':

> When we tell a story, we tell but one story, and each member of the audience, with a peculiar capacity to imagine things, hears but one story. But when we say nothing, it's as if we said a great number of things. ... It's necessary to envision an unfinished and incomplete cinema so that the spectator can intervene and fill the void, the lacks.[412]

This approach is shared in *White Oil* where my co-participants divulge various aspects of the political and social landscape of Palestine interspersed with long periods of silence and image with a soundscape.

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[412] Abbas Kiarostami in conversation with Jean-Luc Nancy, in Jean-Luc Nancy, *L'Évidence du Film/The Evidence of Film: Abbas Kiarostami*, trans. by Christine Irizarry, Verena Andermatt Conley and Mojdeh Famili (Yves Gevaert Publishing, 2001), pp. 84 and 88.

In *White Oil* and *Taste of Cherry*, the intensely cinematic aesthetic and use of wide-angle landscape shots and panorama, with the dramatology of an event that we know not how it will unfold, has led many to assume that the film has been staged and belongs to the genre of fiction. However both films are largely improvised, using documentary techniques such as working with non-actors. In *Taste of Cherry*, each scene with the driver and a passenger talking in a car was filmed separately. Kiarostami sat opposite the driver or passenger with the camera without a script, playing the part of a conversationalist or interviewer without directing, in the way one understands directing in a traditional sense. This method was also key to *White Oil*, influenced by neo-realism, in that it does not project the falsity of fiction in the name of documentary truth but engages with both as 'integral elements of the cinematographic image'.[413] Neo-realism and its legacy have provoked questions about the point at which fiction ends and documentary begins and vice versa: film, we could say, is always to some degree fiction and to some degree documentary, but at what point might fiction approach the truth and documentary become a lie?[414] A term that describes this tension well is 'artefaction', and I attribute it to both *White Oil* and *Taste of Cherry*.

Where *White Oil* differs from *Taste of Cherry* is in regard to the participants and the way Kiarostami purposefully avoids building any emotional links with Mr Badii, the main protagonist. According to Laura Mulvey, Mr Badii becomes the medium for the director's questioning rather than 'a character within a coherent fiction dressed in the trappings of verisimilitude'.[415]

> I didn't want to force an interpretation onto the audiences … instead I tried to make them understand that what they are seeing is just a story. That's why I never introduce the character, and I haven't talked about him or his problems: the man continues to be a permanent enigma to us. So I haven't told his story, in order to avoid any emotional

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[413] My notes from unpublished paper by Sam Ishii-Gonzales, 'Truth of Fiction: On Deleuze, Kiarostami and Close up', delivered at the Powers of the False Conference, Institute Francais and Cinema Lumiere, London, May 2012.

[414] Ibid.

[415] Laura Mulvey, 'Kiarostami's Uncertainty Principle', *Sight and Sound*, 8:6 (June 1998), pp. 24–27 (p. 26).

links with the audience. My character is like one of those figures that architects put in their drawings, to show the scale of the buildings.[416]

In *White Oil* it is the small figures in the durational landscape that take on this role, whilst with Ramzi and the Birzeit Brothers we get closer as they share their stories and emotional links are built. Another important feature of both *White Oil* and *Taste of Cherry* is the provocation of a reflexive encounter with the work for the audience. This is achieved by challenging the audience with ambiguity as a way of drawing out their curiosity and desire to know and understand through the partiality of the stories told, which Mulvey calls the 'uncertainty principle'.[417] These spectator sensations are an essential part of both films and construct an aesthetic in which 'the process of understanding (or not) is central rather than incidental'.[418]

A characteristic of Kiarostami's films is his aesthetics of delay and digression, which lead to an aesthetic of reality. This is not directed, as Mulvey makes clear, 'in simple opposition to fiction, but towards ways in which the cinema acknowledges the limitations of representation'.[419] The limits of representation are explored in Kiarostami's Koker trilogy, shot between 1987 and 1994. *Life and Nothing More* (1992) is the second film in the trilogy and is staged around a car journey from Tehran to Koker taken by a father and his son in search of two boys (who were central characters in the first film, *Where Is the Friend's Home?* [1987]), fearing that they have perished in the 1990 earthquake in northern Iran. Kiarostami films in the same location where he had previously staged a film in an attempt to mobilise a cinema of observation by following 'absences in representation'[420] that are usually displaced by 'an externally determined system of ordering, such as narration[al] coherence'.[421]

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[416] Serge Toubiana, 'Le Goût du caché: Entretien avec Abbas Kiarotami', in Elena, *The Cinema of Abbas Kiarostami*, p. 125.
[417] Mulvey, 'Kiarostami's Uncertainty Principle', p. 26.
[418] Ibid., pp. 24–27.
[419] Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (Reaktion Books, 2006), pp. 124–125.
[420] Ibid.
[421] Ibid.

White Oil experiments with layering various and diverse absences without an experience of an overarching void that is asimultaneously promoted yet filled. These absences are approached from different directions at different speeds so as to think differently in various situations in order to create various effects. For the viewer unfamiliar with the conventions of artist filmmaking the absence of a plot, character acting, narrative thrust or tension, 'standard' filming techniques (pans, zooms, tracking), as well as clearly defined representations (symbols, metaphors) might induce some frustration. These conventions are not only absent but are replaced by long slow, locked-off shots, wide-angle images and often barely perceptible details or subtle allusions.

In *White Oil* absence is productive, not in order to produce another 'representation' but in order to invite 'time' out of time and to think outside of representation. Kiarostami's work flows through my artistic capillaries, delay and digression yield not only cinematic techniques but also encounters and research methodologies that are layered differently in my work: red and white security tapes billowing in the wind, stone shattered under hydraulic pressure, quarries closed for months due to the absence of a machine parts, the empty space of the quarries signifying the disappearance and absence of a place called Palestine. Palpable, concrete, social and political absences of this type cannot be 'overcoded', the hierarchy of neocolonialism cannot be replaced by a hierarchy of 'representation'. Instead, delay, digression, absence and loss have to speak their own language(s). It is the partiality of what is shown, the inability to represent, that produces 'absences in representation' that are often a central feature of artist moving image.

Rupturing and Reassembling Documentary

White Oil can also be situated within the growing field of artist moving image that redefines and interrogates the parameters of documentary. The field includes the work of: Ursula Biemann, Zarina Bimji, Steve McQueen, Otolith Group, Jananne Al Ani, Lamia Joreige, Amar Kanwa, Cleo Barnard, Mark Boulos, Mirza and Butler, Uriel Orlow,

Sarah Beddington, Marine Hugonnier, Hito Steryl, Rosiland Nakashibi, Willie Doherty, Ericka Tan, Pedro Costa, Yael Bartana, Omer Fast, Avi Magarbi and Jayce Salloum; some of whom I refer to in this thesis.

One important objective of these artist moving image works is to challenge the official narratives of history by working critically within a dominant discourse and opening the image to 'possibilities of expression that are both threatening and enabling'.[422] They do this by inventing new languages for film that go beyond the traditional documentary with its reliance on factual information. The approaches of these artists are wide-ranging and include the film essay, the interplay of documentary and fictional modes, and the re-appropriating and reconstituting of archival material in reassembling and reconfiguring memory and history. These projects compose themselves as single screen works and multiple screen installations addressing issues as broad as memory, migrancy, colonialism, post-colonialism, the displacement and reformation of communities, and the objectification of power over the human subject in reflecting on both individual and social agency.

White Oil can be situated within this canon in that it is experimental and lyrical, rupturing and reassembling representations beyond the latent and underlying 'victimising representations of the conventional media reportage'.[423] Rejecting conventional realist strategies of documentary, *White Oil* does not attempt to be true to a conventional time-space unity, but weaves together multiple narratives and spaces by engaging with the quarries as meeting places and 'topio of different life worlds'.[424] The film is a conversation between visual ethnography, documentary, the cinematic and photography and how these different forms and genres can be mobilised in a site of contestation. As Anna Grimshaw suggests, 'How something works – whether as art or anthropology [fiction or documentary], or something else – is

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[422] Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, p. 29.
[423] Demos, 'Zarina Bimji's Cinema of Affect', p. 22.
[424] Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations*, p. 26.

perhaps a more fruitful avenue of inquiry than asking "Is it anthropology or art?"'[425]

In its investigation into the expropriation of natural resources, exploring sites where human geography and geopolitics converge, *White Oil* shares thematics and methods with Ursula Biemann's *Black Sea Files* (2005). Biemann applies the documentary form to her films, both single screen and multi screen installations, and has built up an impressive body of work around the themes of migration, mobility, technology, gender, geopolitics and the movement of natural resources from one place to another. Conducting extensive fieldwork, she draws on anthropology, journalism and what she describes as 'intelligent agency' and the ways in which 'information and visual intelligence is detected, circulated or withheld'.[426]

In *Black Sea Files*, a forty-three minute two-channel video essay, Biemann investigates a new pipeline that traverses the Caucasus pumping Caspian crude oil to the West. Structured into ten video files 0–9, the film sheds light on the oil workers, farmers, refugees and prostitutes who live along the pipeline, bestowing visibility on these people and 'contributing to a wider human geography'.[427]

The double screen video is edited laterally with parallel events and encounters occurring at the same time, bringing together seemingly disparate scenes and events that are in fact deeply connected. The work is also edited in relation to Biemann's own trajectory travelling through the landscape and her reflections afterwards, which become an essential part of the film creating a meta-reflection through the filmmaker's continuing presence. The visuals often have a graphic quality with the overlaying of text on image in different sizes, colours and fonts and partial black inserts which interfere and rupture the images and provide textual information. The double screen is also used as a mechanism to disrupt the politics of affect with scenes often

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[425] A. Grimshaw, *Visualizing Anthropology* (Intellect Books, 2005), p. 14.
[426] Ursula Biemann, *The Black Sea Files* (2005)
<http://www.geobodies.org/art-and-videos/black-sea-files> [accessed 15 September 2013].
[427] Ibid.

edited by choreographing bodies across one screen to another. In *White Oil* it is the interwoven dialogue that ruptures the affect of the image.

Bienmann's video shows how migration is not an isolated event but is always connected to resources, data, capital, images and the invisible structures that affect and drive our lives. One of the most poignant scenes occurs half way through the film, when images of a desolate landscape and billowing smoke fill the screen as harassed men collect rubbish. The voiceover tells us:

> When the Kurdish villages were turned to smoke and ashes the Kurds settled on the fringes of Istanbul and Ankara and began to recycle garbage. On this spring morning the city council of Ankara decided to raze the area to the ground, evict the Kurds and take over the recycling business. We are looking at the struggle of a thousand citizens who are losing their existence. In resistance they set the garbage on fire.[428]

Paper here is as valuable to these people as oil is to others. A man enters the frame on the left-hand screen and explains that because they, the Kurds, did not give the government their votes the government is now stripping them of their livelihood. The screen then cuts to an image of Biemann in an interior space, surrounded by books and reading from hand-written notes into a microphone:

> what does it mean to take the camera to the field, to go to the trenches? How did she get to the point where she stands at the front next to journalists at the moment of the incident, without press pass or gas mask? What kind or artistic practice does video footage document? That of an embedded artist immersed in a surge of human confusion and confrontation. How to resist making the ultimate image that will capture the whole drama in one frame? How to resist freezing the moment into a symbol?[429]

On the right-hand screen images of the protest intensify with black smoke, as riot police enter the scene and people scatter across the landscape and we hear the sound of distressed voices. The camera in the image on the left-hand screen shifts position above Biemann working at a table to show an aerial view. The stillness and thoughtful

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[428] Biemann, *The Black Sea Files*. Transcribed from *Black Sea Files* – timecode: 15.15–17.17.
[429] Ibid.

pose of the artist immersed in reflecting on her material is palpable, yet wholly distant from the traumatic images on the right. In the safety and relative privilege of her home or studio the aligning of these two images creates a rupture and prevents the viewer from becoming entirely immersed in the images on the right. This brings a reflectivity to the experience of viewing and is a key moment in the film. This scene shares Godard and Melville's approach in *Ici et Ailleurs* (*Here and Elsewhere,* 1975), a film about Palestine, referenced in Chapter Three, where they interrogate the intentions and desires they have imposed on the reality before them. Both *Ici et Ailleurs* and *Black Sea Files* are reflective film essays on how to make and look at images that have been overwhelmed by rhetorical framing, propaganda and war. In *White Oil* this staging is made visible not only as a conceptual framework but also by engaging in the politics of representation. This reflexivity is audible in *White Oil* through my co-participant's reference to me as a foreigner and western woman. My presence with the camera in turn provokes my co-participants, who perform and play out different representations while also as undoing them (as was discussed more extensively in Chapter Four). The interviewers are also audible at times in the film, as a way of reflecting the process of making it. Rather than narrating the film myself, I weave together the fragmented conversations and interviews to narrate the complexity of the quarries and spatial dynamics of the West Bank through the day-to-day conversations that emerge from the sound recordings.

Black Sea Files is a very commendable film in regard to the issues Biemann is trying to bring to light around geographies of connectivity and migration by tracking the trajectory of the pipeline and the different interwoven layers of regional history, alliances and local textures. At times, however, the film slips awkwardly into exoticising and co-opting her participants. Biemann's conversations with and questions put to those she interviews along the way reveal her limited knowledge of the participants, and at times she falls into the trap of stereotyping them as purely signifiers in the landscape of her fleeting encounters. This way of working is very different to my methodology, where building relationships over time with my participants was vital.

A particularly uncomfortable moment occurs about half way through the film when Biemann interviews three young women from different parts of Europe who are working as prostitutes. The conversations are mediated and translated by the pimps, who have been paid for their time. However as Biemann reveals in a seminar recorded at Berkeley University, it was impossible to have an unguarded conversation with the prostitutes because of the pimps' presence.[430] In this context Biemann becomes complicit and entangled with the pimps, taking on the role of a punter cross-examining the women in order to get something out of them: in this case information rather than sex. The women are clearly uncomfortable with the camera, with Biemann and with her questions, but are reluctant to move out of the frame or completely refuse to answer due to the pimps' presence. The interview was translated afterwards and only then did Biemann realise that the women clearly did not know who she was or what she was doing there and had not been informed by the pimps about her research. Through the translation it becomes obvious that the pimps were misinforming the women and had created a very coercive set up. Biemann does state that it was perhaps ethically wrong for her to have used this material in the video. She decided to do so, however, in order to prompt an emotional reaction to it through the women's physical discomfort relaying their psychological discomfort and the staging of miscommunication.

In contrast to *Black Sea Files*, where image and dialogue are predominantly expositional, *White Oil* departs from the realist strategies of documentary. In my own work I place a great deal of importance on the image and its power to both evoke and articulate a number of meanings. In *White Oil* the textual and dialogic aspects of the film interweave fragmentary narratives about the people, landscape and history of the West Bank and my co-participants' day-to-day experiences, but do not seek to explain in a linear way. Instead dialogue is mobilised in imagistically, evoking, fragmenting and cutting into the landscape.

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[430] Deniz Göktürk, *Ursula Biemann: A Screening and Discussion of Black Sea Files* (2005), TRANSIT (University of California, Berkeley, 2009) <http://blogs.lscrtest.com/transitmagazine/2008/gokturk/> [accessed 4 September 2013].

Cinema of Affect

In *White Oil* it is the tableaux-like images, with the quarry soundscapes and the landscape of the OPT, as well as the interior images, that register as a cinema of affect, with their considered framing in which light and shadow are both meditative and intensive. However the affective dimension of the images is complicated and ruptured by the dialogue, which, read within the trajectory of the film as a whole, politicises the images.

It is important at this point to clarify the term 'affect'. It is often used as synonymous with emotion or feelings within the discourse of psychology. However, in philosophy and art affect corresponds to a bodily experience. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's writing on affect in *Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi describes it as a prepersonal intensity of the body that takes place in the transition from one experiential state of the body to another, 'implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act'.[431] Affect is the non-conscious experience of intensity; a moment of unformed and unstructured potential stimulated by an outside source, for example a filmic image, that is experienced first as bodily sensation before becoming an emotion. In this sense affect resists language and structure as it is difficult to analyse the feelings it provokes in producing a 'flowing and transformative quality'.[432] For Steven Shapiro affect is both 'symptomatic' and 'productive'. It transcodes and rearticulates complex social processes; however, it does so not simply by representing social processes and historical meanings but also by participating actively in those processes and meanings that it partially constitutes.[433]

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[431] Brian Massumi, 'Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgements', in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Athlone Press, 1988), p. xvi.

[432] Demos, 'Zarina Bimji's Cinema of Affect', p. 23. Also see Brian Massumi, 'The Autonomy of Affect', in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Duke University Press, 2002), and Steven Shaviro, *Post-Cinematic Affect* (Zero Books, 2010), who explains that 'affect is primary, non-conscious, asubjective or presubjective, asignifying, unqualified and intensive; while emotion is derivative, conscious, qualified and meaningful, a content that can be attributed to an already-constituted subject' (p. 3).

[433] Shaviro, *Post-Cinematic Affect*, p. 2.

For Massumi affect is an encounter in the present with a 'critical point, or a bifurcation point…' that becomes a 'turning point', where the same event is experienced in multiple and diverging ways, one of which is selected.[434] For example, without operating as binaries, these multiple levels could include volition and cognition, expectation and suspense, happiness and sadness, past and future, action and reaction, etc.[435] Resonating at different levels or plateaux, they are inclusive of each other.

Writer and artist Andrew Conio distills Deleuze's reformatting of the concept of sensation by amplifying its non-humanness as affect. Importantly, 'affect must be distinguished from affections; and sensation is the thing that happens, the felt is not so much what emerges from within as the "light that causes our eye to flinch, the sound that makes us start, the image of violence which raises our body temperature"'.[436] When we tremble at the environmental and human calamity presented in *White Oil*, the visceral shock and sadness is there for the next person to experience. 'So long as the material lasts, the sensation enjoys an eternity in those very moments.'[437] Importantly, it is through affect that we become part of the world: 'We are not subjects generating our own feelings, like self-enclosed, auto-generative monads producing intensities. Only through affects coming to us do we become what we are.'[438]

In his essay 'Zarina Bhimji: Cinema of Affect', T.J. Demos frames Zarina Bimji's twenty-nine minute film *Yellow Patch* (2011) as a cinema of affect. Produced over a period of six years, *Yellow Patch* was filmed on 35mm. The film mobilises a poetics of the image by focusing on the crumbling facades and interiors of abandoned buildings in India, at sites that were once the gateways to the trade and immigration routes between India

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[434] Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, pp. 32–33.
[435] Ibid., p. 33.
[436] Andrew Conio, 'From Flesh to House,' *Architectural Theory Review*, 14:2 (2009), pp. 131–141 (p. 135), citing from Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 183.
[437] Ibid., p. 166.
[438] Conio, 'From Flesh to House,' p. 135.

and Africa. With an evocative use of sound and image Bimji's film explores the relationship between history, human presence and architecture through these abandoned structures. More poetic than a documentary, the footage is edited so there is no linear narrative, and scenes are selected for their architectural details and the qualities of light and colour that permeate the spaces, accompanied by a soundscape but no dialogue. In many ways Bimji's film is closer to photography with its durational images and highly considered framing and in this regard it shares an aesthetic quality with *White Oil*. As part of her exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery (2012) Bimji presented in parallel a number of photographs very similar to the film images; the photographs were heavily framed and situated around the blackbox space in the centre of the gallery where the film was screened. However, these beautifully coloured, even sublime filmic/photographic images, depopulated of the people and the voices of the film, enter into the space of the contemporary picturesque, and the social and political content is lost.

All the shots in *Yellow Patch* have a meditative stillness, with the camera slowly and hauntingly tracking through space, coming to rest on objects that are resonant with a sense of history: documents piled up in a dusty corner, yellowed and encrusted together by time in what appears to be an abandoned bank or post office; pieces of furniture with their innards displayed through ripped seats, in the muted colours of a time gone by. At times one has the feeling of having stepped into Miss Havisham's house in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, and in this sense the film relies heavily on nostalgia. The writer Amna Malik has remarked that one of the problems with Bimji's film is that nearly all the locations she filmed were in fact part of the Raj, in other words, spaces that were only available to and used by the bourgeois in India.[439] The nostalgia that permeates the work, rather than critiquing the class that sought and gained privileges from its European coloniser, is intensified through melancholy.

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[439] Conversation with Judy Price and Amna Malik, December 2012. My notes from discussion with T.J. Demos, Amna Malik, Christopher Pinney, *Migrating Documentaries*, Whitechapel Gallery, 23 February 2012.

Yellow Patch relies wholly on images of affect which are intensified by the soundscape. However, without any contextual information, or the use of voice or dialogue in the film the viewer has limited access to the issues at stake. The artist claims that this is a way of questioning the partiality that we have in knowing and understanding the past, and demonstrating the impossibility of capturing the entirety of an event or a place through film.[440] Deepali Dewan has observed that her films are in this sense a kind of 'anti-documentary' in that they reject the conventional understanding of documentary as being associated with objectivity, neutrality, truthfulness and evidence. [441] In a conversation with Chika Okeke-Agulu, Bhimji says: 'My work is not an idea of fact or scraps of evidence to support the assertion of history. The process is something about traces as symptoms of strange structural links between history, memory and fantasy.'[442] But even taking this into account, *Yellow Patch*, although evocative, is also frustrating in that its high level of abstraction makes it hard to get close to the political content. The narrative is instead conveyed through the trajectory of Bimji's work and oeuvre in its exploration of the historic triangle of India, Africa and Britain. Halfway through the film I had a yearning for more of a narrative thread, or a shift in the cinematic language of affect and the constant slow pan of the camera which lulls the viewer into a mesmeric encounter with the images, at times ruptured through the film's very sophisticated use of sound. The soundtrack is constructed from distant voices and ambient sounds from on-location recordings and archival material, emphasising a sense of human presence which has been lost in these landscapes.[443] Demos writes:

> Short sound clips of what appear as political speeches echo in a chamber of distant remembrance. Phrases such as 'the soul of a nation, long suppressed…' emerge from the background, as another man's voice explains how he was 'made by the British'. The fact that these and other voices include those of the independence-era leaders Mohandas Gandhi, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Jawaharlal Nehru and Louis Mountbatten – recorded both at the time of India's and Pakistan's postcolonial emergence and after –

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[440] Demos, 'Zarina Bhimji: Cinema of Affect', p. 20.
[441] Deepali Dewan, 'Tender Metaphor: The Art of Zarina Bhimji', in *Fault Lines*, ed. Gilane Tawadros and Sarah Campbell (Institute of International Visual Arts, 2003), pp. 131–38 (p. 136).
[442] Chika Okeke-Agulu, 'Conversation with Zarina Bhimji', *Art Journal* (Winter 2010), p. 69.
[443] Demos, 'Zarina Bhimji: Cinema of Affect', p. 11.

is, however, never clear in the experience of the film; rather, the voices hover in ambiguity and perceptual estrangement.[444]

Oddly, Bimji insists that her film is not about the place and not referential, although she does state that the film was inspired by her father's journey from India to East Africa.[445] In his essay Demos makes apparent that the gaps in *Yellow Patch* provide a political and historical context to her film in relation to the trauma and violence of the refugee. Like many of his generation, Bimji's father migrated from an India that was part of Britain's colonies to East Africa at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to provide labour and resources for infrastructure within the new British African colonies. Migrating specifically to Uganda, Bimji's father built a home and a life in Uganda until 1972, when Idi Amin's brutal regime announced that Asians with British passports had ninety days to leave the country.[446]

Christopher Pinney has remarked that there is a paradox in Bimji's 'insistence on the denial of references' to the images being about Uganda.[447] On one level the film images are indexical but on another non-referential. Like *White Oil*, Bimji's film is informed by scholarly research conducted in libraries like SOAS and the British Library; however, in the end *Yellow Patch* becomes something entirely different and completely detached from what fed into it and created it.[448] With no dialogue or voice over this detachment de-politicises the work. In *White Oil*, because the film and fieldwork drive all of the material in this written thesis, and the characters and dialogue are woven into a cinema of affect, the politics of the OPT is registered on a number of levels, evoking and particularising the quarries.

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[444] Demos, 'Zarina Bhimji: Cinema of Affect', p. 11.
[445] Zarina Bhimji, Press Release for *Yellow Patch*.
[446] Demos, 'Zarina Bhimji: Cinema of Affect', p. 17.
[447] My notes from discussion with T.J. Demos, Amna Malik, Christopher Pinney, *Migrating Documentaries*, Whitechapel Gallery, 23 February, 2012.
[448] Ibid.

Biography of an Object

In *White Oil* the stone, like Sharif's project (outlined briefly in Chapter Two), becomes a cipher for the biography of the collective worker, wherein a complex set of geopolitical relations between worker, owner, land, military and nationalist identities and sovereign state can be located. It is not the objecthood of the stone that is at stake; it is rather the stone as object of production, shaped by the productivity of human social forces, labour and the environment. This unfolds through the quarry workers, their dialogue, and their relations with the stone, where the quarries are re-encoded as sites of cultural production through the process of filming and seizing back locality; all of which makes visible the conditions of labour in the quarries and the 'topoi of different life worlds'.[449] Laura U. Marks' words are helpful here:

> Cinema is capable not only of following the process chronologically but also of discovering the values that inhere in objects: the discursive layers that may take material form in them, the unresolved traumas that become embedded in them, and the history of material interactions that they encode.[450]

The discursive layers revealed by *White Oil* are the strata and sedimentations of local knowledge and experience, and the myriad losses that have befallen the Palestinian community.

Hito Steyerl's single screen film *In Free Fall* (2010) shares the same endeavour in making visible the biography of an object/s. Steyerl employs the setting and characters of an airplane junkyard in the Californian desert to tell the story of the current economic climate.[451] With each new financial crisis planes are abandoned in the junkyard, as it becomes unprofitable to operate them. They are parked or stored and the older planes are dismantled and recycled for aluminum. As the junkyard is located

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[449] Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations*, p. 76.

[450] Marks, *The Skin of Film*, p. 80.

[451] *Free Fall* was first shown in London at the Chisenhale Gallery in 2010. Archive, *Hito Steyerl* (Chisenhale Gallery, 2010) <http://www.chisenhale.org.uk/exhibitions/forthcoming.php?id=108> [accessed 2 August 2013]; Chisenhale Gallery, *'Biography of the Object' – Panel Discussion,* (2010) <http://soundcloud.com/chisenhale-gallery/biography-of-the-object-panel-discussion-2–12–10> [accessed 2 August 2013].

in the Californian desert, some of the planes are also used in Hollywood movies for staging plane crashes and explosions. Steyerl's film works with these narratives and extends them further by creating fictional stories that critique cycles of capitalism through the changing status of the commodity. *In Free Fall* the debris of a Boeing 4X-JYI aircraft, flown by the Israeli Airforce before finding its way to the junkyard to be blown up for the Hollywood blockbuster *Speed*, is shipped to China and converted into recycled aluminum. The aluminum is then used to produce DVDs on which a pirated version *Speed* is printed.

A central concern of the film is the idea of the materiality of the image, the affective labour centred around it, and the objects and processes that determine how images become visible. The Soviet writer Sergei Tretyakov, in his 1929 text, *Biography of an Object*, examines social relations through the life of the object, including the object's destruction. Tretyakov states in his critique of capitalism that: 'the life of individuals is less important than the life of objects'. *White Oil* like *Free Fall* engages with the invisible labour of objects and raw materials used in the production of culture, architecture, nation-building, technology and so on. In a panel discussion on the *Biography of the Object*, Steyerl explains how social forces and energies get compressed and projected within an object:

> Things as we know are not just things, they are not just passive objects, they are not just lifeless fossils or alienated commodities they are and they condense the totality of social forces, of desires, of affects, of projections, of hopes. We invest into them so they act like a container of stored social energy if you like.[452]

The biography of the object is not the objecthood of the object but how things are mediated through it, the processes and practices that create and mobilise objects. Objects are not inert or mute; they tell stories and describe trajectories.

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[452] Chisenhale Gallery, *'Biography of the Object' – Panel Discussion*..

Obscuring the Referential

Raw resources are also the concern of Steve McQueen's film *Gravesend* (2007), an eighteen minute single screen film shot on 35mm. An unapologetically abstract meditation on empire, the film's subject matter is the hard manual labour required to extract the shiny black mineral coltan (columbite-tantalite) in the Congo, and its subsequent processing in the West for use in digital consumer goods such as mobiles and laptops.

Gravesend takes its name from a town in Kent on the south bank of the Thames, from where Marlow, the protagonist in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, set sail for the Congo.[453] Eighty percent of the world's coltan reserves lie in the Congo, with profits fuelling ongoing civil wars. The conditions of labour in coltan mines are dire, with long hours and poor pay. Mining has also caused an environmental disaster polluting lakes and rivers and consuming forests and National Parks.[454]

Although raising many similar issues in regard to the exploitation of raw resources, mining and labour, *Gravesend* differs from *White Oil* in its approach, mirroring Bhimji's translation of historical research into aestheticised imagery. In McQueen's film critiquing globalisation, the workers in the mines are denied agency and function as signifiers in the landscape, unlike in *White Oil* where the quarries are engaged with as a subjective space, and the quarry workers are both seen and heard. Like so many artist moving image works of the last decade, *Gravesend*, lacking narrative contextualisation and direct interpretation, combines the referential and the allegorical, the documentary and the fictional, in an uncertain relationship.[455] With no dialogue or background information, the human conditions in the mines and their

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[453] Hamza Walker, *The Grand Scheme of Things*, The Renaissance Society (University of Chicago, 2007) <http://www.renaissancesociety.org/site/Exhibitions/Essay.Steve-McQueen-Gravesend.591.html> [accessed 3 August 2013].

[454] Alex Farquharson and Jim Waters, eds, 'Steve McQueen', in *Uneven Geographies* (Nottingham: Nottingham Contemporary, 2010), p. 43 <www.nottinghamcontemporary.org/sites/default/files/UG_cat_highres.pdf> [accessed 3 August 2013]

[455] T.J. Demos, 'Moving Images of Globalization', *Grey Room*, 37 (Fall 2009), pp. 6–29.

connection to technology and war are relayed through images in a geopolitical montage moving back and forth between the mines and laboratories in Europe, conveying the latter's advanced state of economic and scientific development.

McQueen contrasts images of the Congo miners, scrambling with their bare hands for the precious mineral, their bodies like shadows, small and lean, with close ups of anonymous laboratory machinery moving up and down methodically, repetitively with an even pace. The sound of the machinery is seemingly calibrated in accordance with the machines' precision, while the images of the Congo miners are silent: although the sound of clawing hands and pickaxes resounds virtually as a signifier embedded in one's body. The shiny stainless steel of the lab machinery flickers with a hardened beauty as it transforms the mineral from its very visceral indigenous environment in the Congo into components used in communication technologies that become the everyday objects of our lives. As Demos writes, 'Whether theorized as a "new imperialism" by David Harvey or as "military neo liberalism" by the San Francisco-based collective Retort, globalization presents us with an image that is ambivalent at its best and cataclysmic at its worst.'[456]

Woven into the film are narratives from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. One of the most powerful and telling shots in McQueen's filmic montage is the slow setting of the sun over Gravesend. The old colonial slogan 'The sun never sets on the British empire', is poignantly evoked, bringing the historical legacy of Britain's colonial past into the present, and symbolising contemporary globalisation as a system that uses much the same means as previous systems of exploitation under colonialism and slavery. To quote Demos, 'Marlow's tale of humanity's "heart of darkness" – lying within Europe as revealed in its treatment of the Congolese – belies the trumpeted imperial

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[456] David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford University Press, 2003); and the artist collective, *Retort*, Iain A. Boal, T. J. Clark, Joseph Matthews, and Michael Watts, *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a new Age of War* (Verso, 2005) cited in Demos, 'Moving Images of Globalization', pp. 7–8.

confidence, as does McQueen's film.'[457]

There is an emotional and subjective distance and obliqueness in all of McQueen's shots that seems to parallel the relationship we have in the West to the visible and non-visible material around us. *Gravesend* marks out the distance between two very different worlds that combine to create this productivity, the world of the labourer in Congo and global conglomerates in the West. It becomes clear that McQueen's main concern is not the devastating reality of the coltan trade, but our position as consumers who are part of, and complicit with, a system that facilitates our access to objects that have become part of our everyday lives such as mobile phones and computers.[458] Although McQueen's film powerfully sets up these conditions it leaves us with narratives that we already know. No transformation takes place within the film and we are left with an overbearing silence where condemnation is couched at the level of economic systems and where blame is ultimately seen to be circular. *Gravesend* portrays no one as either victim or aggressor, leaving the viewer with stilted silence. McQueen's film also gives us cause to walk away in his refusal to deal with the politics of identity, or any subjective encounter with the workers in the mine.

The Conundrum of Representing Palestine

In engaging with complexities and politics of representation, the Otolith Group's *Nervus Rerum* (2008) poses important questions that are highly relevant to this research. Anjalika Sagar and Kodwo Eshun of the Otolith Group are highly influenced by the film essayist Chris Marker, and in particular his seminal film *Sans Soleil* (1983), as well as the films of the Black Audio Film Collective.

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[457] Demos, 'Moving Images of Globalization', pp. 6–29.

[458] Globalisation has also made any viable boycott of Israel and its products extremely difficult. Israel manufactures a number of vital components for mobile devices and computers that are distributed around the world as just one part of a device. Most of Windows operating systems were developed by Microsoft-Israel and the Pentium MMX Chip technology was designed at Intel in Israel. Mobile phone technology was also developed in Israel by Motorola, initially for the military; like most technology throughout the world its development is funded by state security and military.

A thirty-two minute single screen film, *Nervus Rerum* explores the scarred landscape of Jenin refugee camp, a Palestinian city in the north of the Occupied West Bank that was brutally razed to the ground by Israel in 2002 during the second Intifada.[459] In contrast to *White Oil*, which engages with ethnographic insights and the politics of representation in attempting to unravel the 'conundrum of "representing" Palestine,[460] the main characteristic of the film *Nervus Rerum* is 'blankness and disorientation'.[461]

The film's title, taken from Cicero, translates as 'the nerve of things'. A Steadicam is employed to move at an even pace through the narrow labyrinthine streets of Jenin, passing houses and entering domestic spaces, observing with a melancholic distance the inhabitants who survived the Jenin massacre. The camera surveys the streets with a passive observance, and the lens is always at the same distance. Excerpts on dying and life from Fernando Pessoa's *The Book of Disquiet* (1991) and Jean Genet's book about Palestine, *Prisoner of Love* (1986), are read by a women's voice over the images.

One of the main strategies of *Nervus Rerum* is to refuse to make the Jenin refugee camp legible. The employment of the Steadicam slowly gliding through the camp and resting nowhere, with people turning their backs on the camera, produces an opacity that prevents the production of knowledge.[462] As Kodwo Eshun insists, 'the film does not offer an ethnographic shortcut to empathy'.[463] Eshun and Sagar, in their critique of

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[459] Jenin refugee camp was established in 1953 to shelter Palestinians who had fled or had been expelled from their native towns and villages with the establishment of the State of Israel and the partitioning of Palestine under the British Mandate. Jenin was under Jordanian control for nearly twenty years before it came under the control of Israel with the Occupation of the West Bank during the Six-Day War in 1967. In 1996 Jenin came under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority after the establishment of the PA following the Oslo Accords.

[460] Irmgard Emmelhainz and the Otolith Group, 'A Trialogue on *Nervus Rerum*,' *October*, 129 (Summer 2009), pp. 129–132 (p. 129).

[461] T.J. Demos, 'The Right to Opacity: On the Otolith Group's *Nervus Rerum*,' *October* 129 (Summer 2009), p. 114a.

[462] Willie Doherty's video Ghost Story (2007) also employs the Steadicam, to evoke the haunted aftermath of the Irish struggles. The camera moves seamlessly down an empty road bordered by hedges absent of the human. This strategy alludes to the presence of the camera as a surveying, scouting eye and is deeply unnerving in conveying a landscape mired by a violent past and full of ambivalences in the present.

[463] Emmelhainz and the Otolith Group, 'A Trialogue on *Nervus Rerum*,' p. 129.

the politics of representation, suggest that the Jenin camp inhabitants are only ever represented either as victims or witnesses, and that *Nervus Rerum*, in its refusal to provide the viewer with images that function in this way asks us to consider how the dispossessed can be represented differently.[464]

The politics of representation is also addressed in *White Oil* by my co- participants who ardently refuse stereotyping by throwing the viewer off guard; this was explored in some depth in Chapter Four. Images of affect(ion), as discussed earlier on in this chapter, in which highly aestheticised colour images of the landscape and the quarries delineate the strata of the West Bank and the devastation to the land, are brought into dialogue with my co-participants. In articulating and aestheticising forms of action, production, perception and thought, different modes of visibility within the political domain can assemble new and different readings of Palestine.

Sites of Cultural Production

Palestinians are *cast* both into and out of the West Bank. They are both cast out of their homeland, violently through the conditions and consequences of the Occupation and the continuation of the Nakba, and cast into the West Bank like actors in a play or film, as the pastoral figure of the shepherd in the backdrop to a mythical biblical landscape. The Palestinian quarry workers are also the stagehands whose sweat and hard labour provides the Occupier with stone to construct an empire on the other side of the eight-metre-high concrete Separation Wall and the gated and fortified settlements on the hilltops of the West Bank that loom over Palestinians towns and villages discreetly nestled in the hills. The Jewish settlers inhabiting the subsidised apartments in the settlements, with their swimming pools, high levels of services and amenities and great views from the hilltops, are also cast into the landscape like actors in a film. But who is fiction here and who is fact? If memory cannot be preserved because of Israel's over-writing of Palestinian memory, constructing their own cinema-

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[464] Emmelhainz , 'A Trialogue on *Nervus Rerum*,'

scape and redrawing the landscape and everything in it, then as Rancière says in relation to Chris Marker's *The Last Bolshevik*, 'The point … isn't to preserve memory, but to create it.'[465] This has been an important aspect of *White Oil*: how to assemble a film that creates alternative narratives, histories, memories and imaginings through the biography of the collective workers?

This is also the concern of Jean-Luc Godard's complex and disturbing film *Notre Musique* (2004), which creatively addresses important questions about how memory is constructed and poses a series of questions rather than statements. Taking on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Godard's film employs documentary and fictional modes of address and has been an influential film for me for many years.

Through a series of interviews with well-known people who play themselves, *Notre Musique* seeks out questions of statehood and conciliation. This is done by following the lives of two Jewish Israeli women, both fictional characters: one drawn to towards darkness and the other towards the light.

The film is a timeless meditation on war, drawing on the Bosnian war, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the atrocities committed against the Native American Indians and the legacy of Nazi fascism. It is structured in three parts as Dantean Kingdoms: Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, with Heaven and Hell composed of archival footage. The longer middle section of the film, 'Purgatory', is set around a writer's conference in Sarajevo where a range of philosophical ideas are discussed in regard to war and the inability of images and words to represent atrocities.

As well as the fictionalised characters, real people play themselves, including the Spanish writer Juan Goytisolo, French author and sculptor Pierre Bergounioux, French architect Gilles Péqueux, and Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. Godard also casts himself in the film, re-enacting a seminar with his students on text and image and

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[465] Jacques Rancière, *Film Fables* (Berg, 2006), p. 157.

revisiting an idea he had explored with Anne-Marie Miéville in *Ici et Ailleurs* (1975).
Continuing his discourse on the power of the 'real' and the 'poetic', the fallibility of
images and the ethics of montage, Godard sets up a shot and countershot of Jews and
Palestinians by juxtaposing two photographs from 1948. One image shows the Jews
arriving at the port in Israel, and the other Palestinians fleeing into the sea. In
reference to these images Godard says, 'In 1948 the Israelites walk on water into the
promised land; the Palestinians walk on water towards drowning. Shot and reverse-
shot: the Jewish people joined fiction, the Palestinian people, documentary.'[466] This
can be read as saying that with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 the
Jews reinvented themselves, whilst the Palestinians have been restricted to
documentary through the prism of the Israel-Palestine conflict, where they are
marginalised and usurped by representations in the media and only ever defined in
relationship to Israel. The Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish reinforces our
understanding of this in a staged interview with one of the fictional characters, Judith,
in the central section of the film, 'Purgatory', repeating his own lines from a former
interview with an Israeli journalist:

> Do you know why we Palestinians are famous? Because you are our enemy. The
> interest in us stems from the interest in the Jewish issue. So we have the misfortune of
> having Israel as an enemy because it enjoys unlimited support. And we have the good
> fortune of having Israel as our enemy because the Jews are the centre of attention.
> You've brought us defeat and renown.[467]

Notre Musique challenges these representations of communities, and the power
relations that are constructed as a result of this pinning down, by salvaging
representations of Jews and Palestinians and framing them philosophically.

In *White Oil* these tensions are also played out through the characters' articulation of
themselves and the world's gaze upon them. Although it mounts a searing critique of
globalisation, colonialism and the expropriation of raw resources, what the film does
most effectively is impart the humanity of the people we see and hear. In this sense

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[466] Quoted from *Notre Musique*, dir. Jean Luc-Godard (Optimum Home Releasing, 2005)
[467] Ibid.

the film is a poetic and philosophical attempt to probe the politics of representation and bring the viewer closer to these precarious lives so that we might learn to know and care for a people so elided from the world.

In *White Oil* the quarries, as the auditoria in which the film is staged, become far more than sites of labour and bare life. Through the filmmaking process they become sites of cultural production filled with the stories, conversations and memories of individuals and collective workers. John Berger's infamous line resonates here: 'Home is no longer a dwelling but the untold story of a life being lived.'[468]

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[468] John Berger, *And Our Face, My Heart, Brief as Photos* (Writers and Readers, 1984), p. 64.

> [Politics] makes visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise.[469]

The issues at stake regarding the quarries and the wider geopolitical struggles that converge on the OPT are extremely complex. In the fragmented space of the OPT Israeli settlers, Israel's Occupying force and Israeli and Palestinian entrepreneurs are highly reliant on each other. I have attempted to make visible the complexity of these different forces in a geographic space where to render any complete synopsis complete is virtually impossible. In doing so, I have engaged with the quarries not just as industrial spaces but as subjective spaces that the quarry workers reclaim in drawing out the intractability of Palestine's tragic history and the forces of globalisation and exploitation that have rendered this landscape a geographical and geological disaster.

The quarries can be perceived, in Doreen Massey's sense of the term, as a 'meeting place'[470] in which the physical landscape, the human, the economic and the political are folded together and where the participants relationships with the outside world, the camera and the filmmaker are brought to light. Because of the social and political forces that infuse all of the participants' subjective interpersonal relations, the participant observation relation becomes as politically vital as the subject of the film.

Producing a film and written thesis that critiques the devastating effects of the quarries on the natural and social environment of the West Bank has required an empathetic engagement with the quarry workers. It quickly became apparent that there is much more at stake for the quarry workers than I could ever have envisaged. This meant trying not to situate my co-participants or myself in any fixed place and instead learning to work with the particularities and ever-changing interpretations and

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[469] Jacques Ranciére, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 30.
[470] Massey, 'A Global Sense of Place'.

understandings of this very complex situation.

Underscoring this work has been the extent to which the workers' lives are determined by political calculation and stripped of any legal standing or political rights by the Occupying forces, and the ethical implications of this.

Israel has expropriated the stone from the quarries helping to naturalise construction projects in Israel and the illegal settlements in the OPT by imbuing the stone with narratives of Jewish history in the construction of Jewish nationalist identity. Israel has also used the stone as a unifying material in the Occupation of East Jerusalem and beyond, extending its borders beyond the green line and creating strategic military outposts in the West Bank. The visual language of architecture has been used to sustain territorial claims and national narratives of belonging (another name for 'ownership') for Jews in Israel, in the process circumnavigating and erasing the Palestinian's history and their potential to create their own narratives, leaving Palestine in crisis.

Against this backdrop *White Oil* constructs counter-narratives that articulate the conditions of labour in the quarries and what is at stake both socially and environmentally for Palestinians. The film operates as a document of the quarries and a biography of the workers, but also in seizing back locality through the workers' stories, creating an assemblage of perspectives that challenge the dominant Israeli narrative. Ramzi's and the BBrothers' stories create a minority discourse bestowing visibility on the Palestinian people, counteracting the established fictions rooted in Zionist discourse and ideology, and re-encoding and transforming the quarry spaces from sites of expropriation into sites of Palestinian memory and narrative.

Critique has many sides, on the one hand it demands attention and offers new insights, on the other it implicitly creates a space for reimagining possibilities and potentials. A key lesson from 'poststructuralist geography' is that any sense of social relations and locality, which the Occupation's oppressive discourse seeks to obliterate,

is latent and repressed. Within the fabric of the quarries and lived experiences of the workers is a culture that already exists. The camera and my co-participants also activate new experiences and performances in the quarries, turning them into a meeting place in which these spaces can be reclaimed and new social relations and political subjectivities emerge.

Participant Observation and Dialogical Aesthetics

The issues around participant observation and dialogical aesthetics have been crucial in working in a culture and place very different from my own, and have helped me identify the underlying dynamics at stake when working with different social groups. This has included forming close and intimate relations with my co-participants over extended periods of time, wherein conversation and dialogue were foregrounded before and beyond the making of the film. This enabled me to draw on local and consensual knowledge while engaging in the particularities of the quarries and the OPT, as well as situate the work within collective interaction. My co-participants have been not co-opted or represented in the name of making art, but have taken on a collaborative role with an agency of their own. In the context of the OPT this takes on an even greater urgency in a region where people's lives and social relations have been variously subjugated and exploited by the Occupying power. The responsibility and role of the artist in contested environments is not to give legitimacy *to* art through a co-opting of the social sphere or the socially disadvantaged, but to become actively engaged with the issues at stake through the modalities and principles of art, always asking the question: what exactly is it that art uniquely brings to these struggles?[471]

In the context of making *White Oil*, this entailed a detailed examination of the multiple dynamics of the relations between myself as filmmaker and my co-participants, the intercessors of the film. It required negotiating the space and territory of other human beings and recognising their openness and generosity in granting me access to their

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[471] Susanne Leeb, 'We are the Art, Whoever we are', in Libia Castro and Olafur Olafsson, *Under Deconstruction* (Sternberg Press, 2011), p. 2.

intimate and personal worlds. My 'ways of seeing' have been agitated where the political site of transformation is not posited elsewhere, in the repressed other, but in my embodied experience as a filmmaker, which finds its articulation in the film itself. As Chris Wright notes, this is a 'practice that can support some sense of veracity rather than adherence to documentary or realist models of representation'.[472]

Thus an 'experimental-embodied practice' has been essential in encountering this landscape, wherein a certain openness to contingency and chance has provided one of the main methodologies through which new knowledge has been be generated.

However it was never about attempting to show the 'whole picture' but rather the uncertainty and partiality of knowledge and the impossibility of ever being able to account for the reality of others and of lives that we can never really know. To use Lather's words, 'where we do what we can while leaving place for what we cannot envision to emerge'.[473]

The Politics of Representation

White Oil makes visible the precariousness of my co-participants' lives through their words and the images borne out on the screen, helping to counteract the images and representations generated by mass media. In doing so the film challenges a colonial gaze that has promoted and consumed images of Palestine and Palestinians as the backdrop to the biblical Holy Land: the clichés of the Palestinian refugee without agency, vehement terrorist or Islamic fundamentalist. The film is constructed to disturb and agitate these representations, contributing to the formation of new political subjectivities. For Judith Butler it is the visibility and poetics of lives as lives that should be central to politics and the discourses that determine it, with an

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[472] Wright, 'The Third Subject: Perspectives on Visual Anthropology', p. 19.
[473] Lather, 'Against Empathy, Voice and Authenticity', p.21

insistence on a common 'corporeal vulnerability'.[474]

An important aspect of the research has been to explore how relationships are performed in the space, how the camera performs, how I perform and how economy and the land become dynamic. Following Ariella Azouly's persuasive ideas about how we might rethink the photographic or filmic image through the tripartite relationship between the parties involved, the intercessors, filmmaker and viewer create a contract that changes the passive gaze of the viewer, going beyond empathy, shame, pity or compassion. The filmmaker and viewer are instead obligated to engage with the injustices and tragedies portrayed as more than mere evidence by crossing over into the world of those we hear and see on the screen. They are asked to form political allegiances with the subjects portrayed in reaching out and touching these precarious lives in the creation of a new kind of citizenship through the image. It is these relations, mobilised by the image, that are paramount to this research.

Language and Gift Economy

In making the film the spoken word assumed far greater importance than was initially intended. It became clear through the process of translating and transcribing the conversations that the dialogue spoken in the vernacular was as rich and multilayered as the visual images I had initially positioned as the main carrier of meaning. The vernacular, the everyday and the commonplace are activated in the film as intensive, layered, profound, existential and political, articulating the myriad losses of land, economy, identity, history and social relations that permeate the lives of the participants. For Jacques Ranciére politics is the moment when a given identity is transformed from the prior distribution of the sensible into an identity that is heterogeneous in its make up. Through the process of translation the nuances and heterogeneity of life under the Occupation materialises in the hardened gritty realities of the everyday, revealing how the multiple layers of the political situation penetrate

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[474] Butler, *Precarious Lives*, p. 42.

every aspect of life.

Working with Arabic, of which I have a very limited grasp, meant that I had to work with a number of translators in transcribing over 25,000 words from audio recordings. With no budget, I have relied on the gift economy that has been a feature of this entire research, particularly in post-production, and through which new relationships and networks have emerged.

Benefits of this Research

This research has engaged with the conversations around artist moving image, documentary and ethnographic practices in bestowing visibility to the quarry workers as well as engaging in the conundrums of representing Palestine. Although a single work of art may not be able to address the conditions of violence on the ground, it can, as Demos suggests, 'transform the visual field of politics [and its] current distribution of life into zones of legality and exception … by extending visibility to those [who live within the shadows] of globalization'.[475]

White Oil cannot be corralled into a specific genre of film. However it does contribute to continuing debates around documentary and artist moving image, engaging with the interstices and dynamics of a number of genres and fields with ethnographic methodologies, and playing an important role in making visible the quarries and the operations of power at work in Palestine. The most important aspect of this research is not what kind of film *White Oil* is but what connections and relations it makes possible, the worlds that it traverses in reaching out and touching people.

The choice of single screen format was a strategic decision intended to ensure that the film is not restricted to the white cube gallery space but is experienced like a cinema film, asking the viewer to commit to a specific viewing time. It is also possible to argue

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[475] Demos, 'Moving Images of Globalisation', p. 13.

that the single screen form in the public arena of the cinema or film screening entails the viewers rubbing shoulders and engaging in a ritualised communal experience, with the audience committing to being present for a period of time together in the screening space.

Other forms of viewing, such as the multiple screen installation, can limit audiences to those versed in the reading of multiple images, fragmented narratives and certain modes of legibility and metaphoricity that the white cube gallery space provides. Outside of this context, given its single screen form, there are far greater possibilities for *White Oil* being shown in different arenas such as artist run spaces, cinemas, galleries, adjunct screenings to specific events, film festivals, community centres, or university lecture theatres that may not be equipped for installing complex multi screen works. Circulation of the film is extremely important because of the political nature of the work. With an audience present in a space at a scheduled place and time for the screening, organising discussions with the filmmaker or another critical voice also becomes part of the event of the single screen screening.

In May 2013 *White Oil* premièred at the Palestine Film Festival at the Barbican in London. In the Q&A with the Palestinian architect Yara Sharif it became apparent that the audience was composed of people from different backgrounds: artists, filmmakers, architects, activists and those with a general interest in Palestine. The director of Architectural Research at University of Westminster, Lindsay Bremner, attended the screening and has included *White Oil* in her research about geoarchitecture.[476] In June 2013 the film was screened at the *Filmhaus* in Nuremberg as part of a symposium that I organised around culture production in Palestine, Egypt and Jordan at the Academy of Fine Art, Nuremberg. Artists, curators and researchers Yazid Anani, Oraib Toukan, Sarah Rifky and myself explored the ways in which artists both critique and create culture as well as arts' capacity to shift perspectives of a place and culture. The focus was on community, locality, participatory arts' practices and institutional critique

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[476] Geoarchitecture, *White Oil* (2013) <http://geoarchitecture.wordpress.com/2013/05/06/white-oil/> [accessed 27 September 2013].

within the Middle East, as well as on how art mobilises other discourses and resists and challenges power structures that determine how space and place is organised. Yazid Anani's presentation addressed urban transformations and the politics of visual art in Palestine, focusing on architecture as a barometer for understanding the current urban transformation of Ramallah and neoliberal aesthetics. Subsequent to the Q&A about *White Oil* with Anani, he incorporated into his presentation the effects of the Occupation on the more rural areas of the West Bank and the changing lines, contours and colours of the landscape that are a consequence of the quarries and settlements. Anani remarked that *White Oil* contributes to cultural production and discourses around Palestine in new ways by showing the invisible effects of the Occupation, of which the quarries are part.[477]

In April 2014, *White Oil* was screened in the OPT at Campus in Camps, Diheisheh Refugee, Bethlehem, Dar Annadwa Cultural Centre, Bethlehem, Birzeit University Museum, Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre, Ramallah, Riwaq, Centre for Architectural Conservation, Ramallah and the Educational Bookshop and Al Mamal Foundation, East Jerusalem. As part of the screenings a number of discussions and conversations were generated that acknowledged the sensitivity of the question of the quarries as a livelihood for many Palestinians but also as a destructive force in terms of the environmental damage caused and the health risks for the local population. This triggered a dialogue with architects, teachers, activists, policy makers, conservationists and cultural organisations about potential solutions and interventions that might be possible in the future in changing policies around quarrying in Palestine, including the reclaiming of a disused quarry as a social space.

Recently Al Jazzera English requested a screener of the film. This film is clearly not edited for television broadcast, however what is important is that the issues at stake within the film are pertinent to many. This project has also been included in a

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[477] Yazid Anani, Culture Production in Palestine, Egypt and Jordan symposium, Academy of Fine Art, Nuremberg, 2013.

multimedia web platform called *World of Matter* (*WoM*),[478] which brings together contributions from a range of interdisciplinary artists and researchers engaging with the global ecologies of resource exploitation (stone, fossil, mineral, maritime, agricultural) and the complex ecologies of which they are a part. *WoM* takes the form of an open access web-based archive providing a visual resource for educational purposes, activist work, research and generally raising public awareness. All of the projects included have resulted from extensive field research and are brought together by making connections between different actors, territories and ideas, including issues relating to the extraction of raw resources in the Amazon basin, Indian cotton farmers, the water ecologies of the Nile, the fisheries in the Dutch polders, the mining culture in the Brazilian Minas Gerais, among many others. The projects are not shown as entire films as they correspond to clusters that have been created in relation to the different themes, concepts and conversations each project activates.

Although *White Oil* is a complete work in its single screen form, I have welcomed the opportunity to contribute to *WoM*. To meet the needs of the *WoM* website the research material from *White Oil* has been reformatted into shorter video and audio clips, images, texts and diagrams. This has given me the opportunity to include material that was not used in the 65-minute version of *White Oil*. For example, an audio interview with the Stone and Marble Union in Bethlehem that is expositional in form, relaying the judicial and legal issues around Israel's expropriation of the stone and how it and many other products from Palestine are re-labelled as 'made in Israel' at the ports of Haifa and Ashdod. In an interview with a grandmother who lives in the town of Jama'een, now truncated between a quarry and a settlement, she describes the effects of the dust on her health and her inability to leave the house, lamenting the destruction of the fig, orange and olive groves she used to frolic in during her youth. *WoM* provides a framework to engage with the issues around the stone in a wider context in regard to globalisation. It makes visible the issues at stake to an audience that is not specifically concerned with Palestine but with the wider issues around

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[478] http://www.worldofmatter.net [accessed 12 May, 2014)

labour and the expropriation of raw materials globally.[479]

Social Relations

Although the results of this research are still to some extent unknown, with modes of circulation still to be determined, it is to be hoped that the film will take on a life of its own beyond this PhD and my own investment in it.

What has emerged from the project is the importance of the fabric of relationships and social bonds in establishing and maintaining the exchange of life experiences. It is these social bonds that Israel has attempted to break by constructing concrete borders in the form of illegal settlements, checkpoints and the Separation Wall, and by the expropriation of raw material from the quarries.

My challenge has been to reconstruct the worlds of Ramzi and the Birzeit Brothers and the 'conditions' of Palestine through the materialisation of the film. *White Oil* sets in motion the issues at stake, the destruction of social bonds and environmental catastrophe of the quarries, referencing the circuits and intractability of Palestine's tragic history. The lives of the Birzeit Brothers and Ramzi are contextualised through the various tractions of living in an Occupied land that is independent of both laws and norms. In *White Oil* voices emerge from the void and our corporeal vulnerabilities through which the 'in-betweenness' of 'social life and ethics are empirically worked out'.[480]

Of all of the various dynamics and processes that have been engaged in throughout this research – industry, geopolitics, the camera, the materiality of the film, ethnography, the role of the artist, activism, documentary and artist moving image –

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[479] Although in this research, and in the formative years before the PhD, my practice focused on Palestine and Israel, future film and video projects are likely to explore the relationship between the human and natural world, sustainability and the extinction of species, and the exploitation and expropriation of raw materials in other parts of the world.

[480] Biehl and Locke, 'Deleuze and the Anthropology of Becoming', p. 324.

what has emerged as the primary valence is the importance and relevance of social relations.

Relationships have the potential to resolve the issues of spectatorship for the audience – not absolutely, since the screen is still the screen, but it is nonetheless clear that the camera and the hand holding it are embedded 'within' and committed to what is seen on screen, and absolutely not voyeuristic or objectifying. Under no circumstances are the clichés of 'representation' repeated in the making of the film, and as such (it is to be hoped) the viewer habituated to this type of representation will find the film challenging. For this type of filmmaking, landscape, gaze and a shared distribution of sense emerge not out of a specific methodology or mode of seeing but through long term and multiple encounters with a people and a place.

It may not be immediately clear to the viewer the risks that have been taken through these encounters in a society living under Occupation (in particular my role in questioning my own prejudices and privileges), nor the considerable risks taken by my co-participants by entering into a dialogue with a stranger in their workplaces and talking openly about their lives and experiences. At stake for the participants were not simply the niceties of social discourse (although these are essential even in an Occupied territory) but their livelihoods and personal safety in a place racked with unrest and suspicion, and under constant surveillance by the Occupying Force. This is why the stringent anthropological and ethical rules set by the University of Creative Arts were not only followed but also exceeded.[481]

However what is apparent is that a powerless society can speak to the forces of power dominating a people and their land through the collective act of filmmaking – there is no 'auteur' here. Our encounters with the other in the construction of social relations are where the geopolitical struggle takes place and constitutes the political praxis of this research.

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[481] See Appendix 3 for consent and release forms.

It is not possible, however, to separate social relations, the audience, production and post-production, images, narrative and sound from one another. It is in the way these different factors overlap in conjunctive and disjunctive relations with each other, questioning what constitutes the social sphere, that art becomes political. For an art that promotes only the issues and problems of certain social or political circumstances is as ineffective as a form of politics that is solely concerned with the regulating of existing problematic fields.[482]

In this research project I have had the opportunity to explore – as an artist, activist, ethnographer and researcher – how I can best contribute to the struggles of the Palestinian people. In the process, my own life has been transformed and affected by my encounters in Palestine. Social relations and dialogue with others have become as much part of my métier as the image, included relations with the quarry workers, security guards, trade unionists, teachers, students, artists, architects, curators, translators and all those who made this research possible, as well as the extended networks that have resulted. The latter include friends and colleagues in Palestine as well those living in the UK and elsewhere in the Diaspora. These social relations are the hidden treasure that been unearthed and brought to light, and in some way made, through the process of writing this thesis and the production of the film *White Oil*.

In its concern with new types of collectives *White Oil* may contribute to a forging of new social relations, allegiances and becomings. My hope is that those who watch the film will feel a sense of obligation and solidarity with the issues at stake and might join those of us who are compelled towards justice in not only making visible these precarious lives but in the creation and forging of new political subjectivities.

Finally, this research has been about the stranger who wanders into a territory that she finds herself bound to by friendship, justice and the weight of a history that has torn so many apart.

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[482] Christian Holler, 'How Not to be Governed – On Defining the Positions of Political and Socially Critical Art', in *The Artist as Public Intellectual?* ed. Stephen Schmidt-Wuffen (Schlebrugg, 2008), pp. 105–125 (p. 121).

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Women and the Struggle

Over the last seven decades Palestinian women have played a central role in both militant and non-militant activism in the struggle for the liberation of Palestine. In the 1960s the Palestine Film Unit (PFU) was founded, led by a woman called Sulafa Jadallah, along with Mustapha Abu Ali and Hani Johariyyeh. The PFU documented the Palestinian revolutionary movement throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, mobilising film as a call to arms in the liberation struggle. It attempted to show a different side of the Palestinian struggle and to present the Palestinians as combatants rather than simply refugees. The unit's films drew inspiration from different global cinematic movements such as social realism, neo-realism, the French new wave and the New York underground, and were supported by many leading filmmakers at the time including Jean-Luc Godard, Jean-Pierre Gorin, Jean Genet, Chris Marker, Julio García Espinosa, Santiago Alvarez, Kôji Wakamatsu and Masao Adachi.[483]

The Ramallah-based Palestinian filmmaker Mohanad Yaqubi is currently in production making a film called *Off Frame*, a history of militant cinema, to be completed in 2014, that documents, archives and interrogates the role of the PFU historically, as well as examining its legacy today. Yaqubi recently discovered 30,000 feet of film negative in Rome that was smuggled out of Beirut in 1977 by the PFU and subsequently disappeared for years, thought to have been lost. The footage and the story behind it will be included in Yaqubi's feature film debut, including interviews with former PFU members, most of whom have been living in exile in Beirut and Amman since the unit was disbanded. In conversation with Mohanad Yaqubi and Sheyma Buali, Yaqubi says of the Palestine Film Unit :

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[483] Mohanad Yaqubi in conversation with Sheyma Buali, 'A Militant Cinema' (Ibraaz, 2012) <http://www.ibraaz.org/interviews/16> [accessed 12 September 2013].

Its aim was to document everyday life and the extraordinary events that occurred regularly in Palestine during this time. The camera became a tool in this struggle for nationhood, a way for Palestinians to show the realities of the struggle and to take control of their own image, one that was being torn apart by Israel's systematic erasure of a culture and people.[484]

The West projects a homogenised image and view of women's rights and visibility within Palestine. Palestinian women freedom fighters (known as *munadelat*) and activists have been a central part of the armed struggle and of non-violent struggles against Israeli colonialism and military occupation, as well as part of Palestinian parliamentary structures.[485] Nahla Abdo argues in her paper, 'Palestinian *Munadelat*: Between Western Representation and Lived Reality',[486] that Western discourses have continued to 'Orientalize and racialize Palestinians by de-contextualizing and de-historicizing them, while simultaneously upholding their colonizer/occupiers as superior beings who maintain liberationist and democratizing values'.[487] Abdo goes on say that Palestinian women have been stripped of any contextual or historical background and depicted as inhuman 'suicide bombers' who resort to acts of violence for personal/cultural reasons. She cites a number of western writers such as Andrea Dworkin and Barbara Victor who have described Palestinian women's role in activism and armed struggle as a consequence of being uneducated, powerless and controlled by their men. In fact the very opposite is true.[488] Palestinian resistance movements

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[484] Ibid.

[485] Nahla Abdo, 'Palestian Munadelat: Between Western Representation and Lived Reality', in *Think Palestine*, ed. Ronit Lentin (London and New York: Zed Books, 2008), pp. 173–188 (p. 173).

[486] Ibid., p. 173.

[487] Ibid.

[488] We have only to look at Leila Khaled, once a leading member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and known as the 'poster girl' of Palestinian militancy, who is currently a member of the Palestinian National Council. Hanan Ashwari, a legislator, activist and scholar, as well as a protégé and later colleague and close friend of the late Edward Said, was an important leader during the First Intifada. Ashrawi is currently head of the Palestine Liberation Organisation department of culture and information and serves on the advisory board of several international and local organisations including the World Bank Middle East and North Africa (MENA), United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), and the International Human Rights Council. In 1974, Ashwari founded the Birzeit University Legal Aid Committee and Human Rights Action Project, and was the official spokesperson for the Palestinian Delegation to the Middle East peace process in 1993. She was the first women to be elected to the Palestinian National Council and has since been elected numerous times. In 1998 she founded MIFTAH, the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy, whose aim is to promote human rights, democracy and dialogue based on the free exchange of information and pro-active policy development. See Sarah K. Horsely, *Hanan Ashrawi*

have empowered many women in Palestine and changed their roles and relationship to Palestinian society from previously inhabiting only the private domestic space to increasingly positioning themselves within the public and political domain.[489]

Abdo argues that many women who have taken part in the armed struggle have been highly educated, are not married and have chosen a life outside of the structure of the family in order to follow their political convictions. Contrary to Orientalist representations of these women, they are also highly respected in their society both by women and men.[490] This has meant that a feminist reading of Palestinian women is not straightforward. In Palestine today there are many women who hold prestigious positions within their workplaces as well as partaking in family life, neither one excluding the other. There are of course still many traditional set ups, as in the West, where women take on responsibility for the household and raising children. Contrary to common opinion, Palestinians are also one of the most highly educated communities in the Arab world and contribute to all sectors of intellectual life.[491]

Mediating Relations

In my first meeting with Ramzi I was accompanied by a friend, Issa Freij, a Palestinian cinematographer and editor who works with a number of local and international media and news companies. Equally moved by our encounter with Ramzi, Issa's response validated my own very visceral reaction to both Ramzi and the quarries. Aware that 'what we see is how we see', and of the partiality of my vision, informed by

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(Fembio, 2008) <http://www.fembio.org/english/biography.php/woman/biography/hanan-ashrawi> [accessed 26 July 2013]. Ashrawi was a founding member of the Third Way Party with Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, established in 2005 and presenting itself as an alternative to the two party system of Hamas and Fatah. See <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67025/robert-m-danin/a-third-way-to-palestine> [accessed 21 May 2014].

[489] Abdo, 'Palestian Munadelat', pp. 173–176

[490] Ibid.

[491] As I have mentioned previously, visual arts have become a powerful voice for political agency, with many of these voices emanating from Palestinian Women: Yara Sharif, Emily Jacir, Jumana Manna, Jumana Emil Aboud, Raeda Saadeh, Noor Aboud, Ruanne Abou-Rahme, Dima Hourani, Nida Nawad, Nahed Awwad, Anne Marie Jacir, Oriab Toukan, Larissa Sansour, Mona Hatoum, Sandi Hilal, Buthina Canaan Khoury, Minou Norouzi, Shurab Harb, Mervat Essa, Rana Bishara, and Rula Halawani, to name just some.

being a western Jewish woman who might be over-emoting the poignancy of our encounter with Ramzi, I was in danger of not validating sufficiently my emotive, sensory and intellectual responses. As Edward Said established in his seminal book *Orientalism* in 1978, the traveller projects onto his destination preconceived notions he has already heard or read about, his view of the place and its inhabitants mediated by these representations. Self-conscious about my gaze and orientalist discourse, this was just one of a number of occasions where my perceptions were tested out. It was important at all times to question the way I was framing what I saw and heard as well as how I was being framed in my struggle to find a critical distance. As Diane Smyth remarks, 'universal perspectives do not reflect the shared humanity of a photographer and subject, but actually privilege a western gaze'.[492]

Later, over dinner with Issa, both of us struggling to speak, still processing the power and intensity of our encounter, it emerged that we shared very similar responses to what we had just seen and heard. Ramzi had relayed to Issa in Arabic a number of details about the quarries that he was completely unaware of, although he considered himself to be someone extremely well-informed about most issues related to Palestine. Issa had become my barometer in mediating and helping me navigate my way through Palestine and he would continue to play a part in all the relationships that followed. In subsequent visits to the West Bank, as I became more familiar with the issues around the quarries, and my knowledge of Palestine generated through my encounters and field research deepened, I was able to engage and share in a more meaningful way with people. Stepping outside of the 'Ramallah bubble', and becoming more familiar with the effects of the Occupation in the rest of the West Bank also gave me more currency among the locals.

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[492] Diane Smyth, 'Humanising Photography'*,* Durham Centre for Advanced Photography Studies (organised in partnership with Autograph ABP, September 2009), pp. 25–27, also in *Philosophy of Photography*, 1:1 (March 2010), pp. 109–127 (p. 124).

Diary

Looking back at my diary entries from the early stages of the project, I was quite unstable and found reading and traversing the landscape very difficult in my first few visits to Palestine. It has taken many years to build friendships and learn how to live there and feel at home there. Due to health issues, in the interim period between my visit in November 2009 and my next visit in December 2010, I approached Ramzi through Issa Freij about writing a diary in which to record his observations of the quarry each night and to reflect on his own life. He wrote a number of entries over a period of a few months; however, when we next met he explained that he found the process of writing too depressing and that writing was a form he was not comfortable with. Ramzi confided in me that left alone with his thoughts and focusing on them in order to write became too unbearable, but that sharing them through talking and storytelling helped him work through certain experiences and thoughts. I also kept an erratic dairy during this research. My diary entry on the 1 September 2010 reflects on Ramzi's diary entries:

> Ramzi might have geological and geographical relations with the quarries through which he understands Palestine. However the diary has risks, and I need to stay open to what kind of issues and relations unravel through the process of him writing the diary and my correspondence with him. Stay open to the effect of making work. The entanglement is much more delicate – don't steam roll through this by dropping huge ideologies and political discourses on the material.

> Ramzi's first diary entries speak about the pain and humiliation that he feels as a Palestinian. He gives brief historical accounts of Palestine referring to the British Mandate, the forming of the State of Israel and the Oslo accord. He describes the structures of capitalism and the affects of neo-liberalism on his society by rendering Palestinians passive and helpless in relation to the Occupation. He touches very little on the quarry in these first few entries. He uses a question to start many of the paragraphs asking to whom he is writing and what they may know about the history of Palestine and whether he should write about himself or his people. I have recently responded in a letter where I ask him to continue writing the diary. In the letter I give him no direction but I do share with him my family background and that I am Jewish. I go on to say why and how I became involved with 'The question of Palestine,' and that I know a great deal about the history of Palestine. It will be interesting to see how he responds to this information and also if he does continues to write the diary whether the content and form will differ.

Once Ramzi and I had become more familiar with each other and a trust had built up, I started to visit him on my own. There was always another security guard within the vicinity staying in another portakabin. Sometimes Ramzi would be sleeping in a very small space, not more than two metres square: a lookout post surrounded with windows overlooking the quarry. Our meetings there were more awkward and I felt like an intruder although he was always welcoming. He loved to talk. The television would be on and Ramzi himself always seemed much more on edge and depressed when in this space. He complained that it was dirty and the other security guards did not look after this space properly. But it was hard to see how anyone could be comfortable here in a space that was so exposed due to the expanse of the windows towering down on the quarry and the darkness of the night ominous and foreboding. We recorded very little here although I did film the outside of the space from a metal balcony that runs around the sides of the room.

Through my conversations with Ramzi I started to map other quarries that I would try and film at. My choices were made on the basis of a number of different factors: the quarries that would give a visual sense of their diversity, quarries that predominantly produce aggregate, and quarries that were excavating large boulders of limestone. It was also important that the quarries should delineate an aspect of the spatial dynamics of the West Bank in both their position and proximity to residential areas. Limiting where I was going to film was also important, as there are hundreds of quarries in both the North and South of Palestine. One way of imposing limits was to select quarries that were in the immediate vicinity of Ramallah. As I was also teaching at the academy, which funded my trips to Palestine, I had to manage my time efficiently. However, I visited the quarries in Jama'een, a two hour drive from Ramallah, because they are renowned for producing very high quality limestone. The limestone in different regions of the West Bank has varying densities and this determines how, and if, the stone excavated can be used in construction, as well as the porosity of the stone to water. Jama'een is a small town in Area C, under Israeli security and administration, and is surrounded by quarries. It was the imposing and dramatic scale of these quarries that was so overwhelming, as well as the labyrinth of

quarries that weaved their way through the hillsides and into towns and villages undermining the foundations on which many of the houses are built.

Language

Although Ramzi speaks relatively good English I was aware that his expression was stilted by not speaking in his mother tongue. It was also important that the participants spoke Arabic in the film as the use or command of a language is an indicator of one's relationship to the language of one's home culture. In the colonial context, mastery of the coloniser's language indicates the acceptance of the qualities and characteristics of colonial society. The psychiatrist, writer and philosopher Franz Fanon writes, 'To speak means to … assume a culture, to support the weight of the civilization.'[493] English may be perceived by many to be the universal language of the global world enabling the exchange of economies and culture, but it is also the language of imperialism and colonialism and its imprint and dominating power is still pervasive in the form of Empire. English, or rather American English, is also the language used at the negotiating table between Israel, Palestine and the US, where Israel's colonisation of the West Bank and beyond has never been contested, given America's bias and support of Israel as an ally and a western face in the Middle East.[494]

Although Faris, who conducts the last interview on my behalf is fifteen years younger than Ramzi, they immediately felt at ease with each other, finding family connections. I

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[493] Franz, Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), pp. 17–18.

[494] As is well known the Negev desert in Israel is used as a military training base by the USA. The Urban Warfare Training Center is a mock city located in Israel's Tze'elim military base in the Negev. Built by the United States Army Corps of Engineers and funded largely through US military aid, the 7.4-square-mile generic city consists of modules that can be reconfigured by mission planners to represent specific towns. Known as Baladia City – the Arabic word balad means village – it is used by the Israel Defense Forces as well as by the US Army to prepare soldiers for urban warfare. The simulated city includes shops, a grand mosque, a hospital, a Kasbah quarter, and a cemetery that doubles as a soccer field, depending on the scenario. The facility is equipped with an audio system that simulates helicopters, mortar rounds, and prayer calls. During training exercises, Arabic music is played in the background. The Israeli photographer, Shai Kremer, has produced panoramic photographs of the base capturing the haunting artifice of this simulated desert town as part of a larger body of work focusing on the impact of Israel's ongoing military engagement with the natural landscape. Shai Kremer, 'Infected Landscape', <http://www.shaikremer.com/il.html> [accessed 4 July, 2013].

had given careful thought and consideration to whom I felt Ramzi would both respect and feel comfortable with. It was important that it was someone who was good at listening and who would be able to identify with Ramzi and his personal struggles. Although they were from different social strata they shared similar experiences of living under the Occupation.

Ramzi was always insistent that it was necessary for me to make the film in order to show how the quarries were destroying the West Bank. Isolated from the social fabric of Palestine because of his long working hours, with both a day job as a plumber and his night shift as a security guard, the camera and my questions created a forum in which he was able to express and vent many of his frustrations in relation to Palestine's tragic history, the ongoing politicide, and the increasing denigration of his community. As someone who spends a great deal of time watching television cooped up in a portakabin five nights a week, the camera was a device that Ramzi appeared completely comfortable with. In fact he performed for the camera without ever flinching, and was often aware of the penetration of his gaze and his words.

In the first Intifada during 1980s, Ramzi had participated in research with two American visual anthropologists in the making of a film on graffiti. The project compared graffiti in the refugee camps in Palestine to Latino and Black neighbourhoods (ghettos) in the USA. What became clear while working with Ramzi was that he perceived *White Oil* in the same vein, as a document of his home and culture. An intensely 'political beast', Ramzi engaged with the project beyond his own circumstances and as a platform to narrate the complex social and political strata of the quarries and Palestine. However, his sense of impotence in relation to the future of Palestine was ever present and is expressed in numerous ways in the film. His prevailing sense of grief and lost time is always an undercurrent.

On my last evening with Ramzi in June 2011, I presented him with a book, *Hassan Everywhere* by the late Palestinian artist Hassan Hourani, as a gesture of friendship.[495] The book contains drawings accompanied by short texts in which Hassan's friends are the birds, bees, fishes and fearful beasts in a world where his home is everywhere. I hope the book will inspire Ramzi to once more take pride in his community and the extraordinary people who are creatively exploring the emotional and psychological effects of living under Occupation as well as finding ways to challenge and resist it.

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[495] Hassan Hourani, *Hassam Everywhere* (A.M. Qattan Foundation, 2006). Hassan Hourani is the late brother of Khaled Hourani, director of the IAAP. Hassan drowned at sea with his nephew, in Jaffa, Tel Aviv, in 2003.

APPENDIX 2

Birzeit Brothers

I first encountered the BBrothers in 2009. Two of the brothers were working for a short period for the Babour family, who own two quarries in Birzeit and a stone-cutting factory. One of the largest suppliers of stone in Palestine, the Babour family also sell a considerable amount of stone to Israel. In the initial stages of this project a colleague at IAAP had contacted the family on my behalf to arrange a visit to their quarries. I spent a day filming at the Babour quarry. Throughout the day the two BBrothers extended their hospitably by offering me tea and coffee and then later in the evening I visited their campsite where they requested I take photograph of them. Communication was, however, limited as I do not speak Arabic and they do not speak English. Later in the evening Fir Babour, the son of the owner, invited me for drinks in a local bar near Birzeit where I questioned him on, among other things, why the BBrothers were staying overnight in a metal shipping container in the quarry. He was very dismissive of their position and when I asked whether as an employer of the BBrothers he could provide alternative accommodation his response was, 'These people, they are used to this.' In 2011 the manager from the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) accompanied me to Barbour's stone-cutting factory where I also filmed. The conditions of work were quite extraordinary and it was clear that the relationship between the Babour family and their workers was very exploitative. The union manager insisted that we also visit the Babour family home, a gated property that resembled a small palace rather than a house. He was keen to show me the prosperity and wealth that was being accumulated on the back of the workers' long hours, poor working conditions and low wages, and which was representative of the increasing divide in Palestine between the wealthy and the poor.

It was in this context that I first got to know the BBrothers and subsequently made contact with them again in 2010 visiting them on a number of occasions before obtaining their permission to film with them in 2011. At this point they were excavating stone from their own quarry and no longer working for Babour.

Initially I had intended – with some reservation, as I am reticent about imposing constructs when filming and prefer to work with contingencies – to visit the BBrothers at the quarry with two strategies in mind:

a) Accompanying the brothers from the quarry at Birzeit to their home in Hebron where I would film and record sound in their home environment with their families.

b) Positioning the camera in or on the metal shipping container looking out onto the quarry to record the sunset and sunrise over the quarry. The idea was to use the same methodology to record the sun setting and rising over a construction site in West Jerusalem to show the stone being configured into architecture structures in Israel to expose the very different spatial dynamics of these two landscapes.

What actually occurred in the course of visiting the BBrothers with my student at the time, Khaled Jarrer, was that the first evening the sunset was not red enough and I abandoned the shot with the intention of returning on another evening. Instead we spent the evening talking and drinking tea and coffee around the fire. Other things started to occur and I started to see differently, observing the brothers' dynamics with each other and the visitors to the campfire.

The objects and home-grown feel that had been created around the fire and the metal shipping container, mobile phones used as radios and music devices, lights, the sage sown by the BBrothers around the campsite for tea, became my source of interest. In this setting they were very animated and the openness of the night sky together with the warmth of the spring evening created a very congenial atmosphere. However

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there were also clear tensions and problems concerning their livelihood that were being aired and discussed, and that Khaled revealed to me later. This also became clearer over the subsequent evenings we spent together.

Around their campfire a night, where the brothers sleep five nights a week, the spatial dynamics of the West Bank are revealed. The conversations are fragmented and mediated through Khaled, who assisted in creating a dialogue with the brothers, and, importantly, enabling me as a western women to enter this very gendered space. This was not just because Khaled is a Palestinian man and a Muslim. He is also a filmmaker using documentary strategies and has developed great skills in communicating with people, having the capacity to make them feel very comfortable around him. Khaled's background in the army, and as a bodyguard to Arafat for many years in the Palestinian Presidential Guard, also plays a part in his ability to quickly fit in and form strong relationship in very male environments. Lastly, although educated and now living in Ramallah, he is originally from Jenin, a small town in the North of the West Bank. The Birzeit Brothers are from a small town near Hebron in the south, and they shared many jokes about the differences and similarities of small town life, which was a crucial unifying factor. If Khaled had been a Ramallite his relationship with the Brothers would have been quite different, posing the city dweller against the small town dweller.

In translating the conversation around the fire at night, the intricacy of the Birzeit Brothers' lives is disclosed as well as the problems they encounter: their families, life in the quarry, their hopes and aspirations, education, debt, the problem of diesel, land that is off limits because of the settlements and the different zoning restrictions (outlined in Chapter One), the quarries around their home town near Hebron devastating the landscape there too, the impact of the Occupation on their movements and ability to work, the checkpoints and the Separation Wall, and the lack of other job opportunities in the West Bank. For example, the younger brother Mohammad studied archaeology at Birzeit University but is unable to find work as an archaeologist or in any related field such as tourism and so for a period worked with

his brothers in the quarry. Other discussions are about the stone, its value and the hardship of making a livelihood from the stone because they have few machines with which to excavate it.

Each of the brothers responded very differently to the camera and my presence. Mohammad shied away from the camera but never asked for it to be turned off or that I stop filming. Ahmed the security guard seemed much less aware of my presence – often preoccupied and nervous in his disposition. Alaa, who worked with the BBrothers, was in his element in front of the camera. A natural performer, he was the jester of the group, always very verbal and at times flirtatious both with the camera and myself. Gassan the older brother shared many of Ramzi's traits. He was stoic, serious and thoughtful and treated the camera as tool that he could use to impart the gravity of their situation.

> *Gassan:* The land is first and foremost my livelihood, I work the land. We have four to
> five families and if you don't mind me saying we all live off this land. Even
> though all the machines have stopped, we still come from Hebron to look
> after them.

Filming with the BBrothers while not speaking or understanding Arabic was also in many ways very liberating. Khaled acted as mediator, posing questions in Arabic when conversations naturally ran dry or drifted in directions that were too obscure. He would occasionally recount what was being discussed. This freed me from trying to follow the language and actual words spoken and allowed me to concentrate on looking, seeing and observing. I was able to follow the conversation and dynamics of the group in an intuitive way through gestures, glances, feelings and movements. Filming with the BBrothers, my emotions and senses were intensely engaged, either by looking with the camera and composing shots, moving the camera and loitering, watching to see what might develop, or just looking with the camera passive. Taking breaks was important, and I would sit with the group drinking home-grown sage tea or simply watching the fire. Filming was an intensely slow pensive process and these

breaks were vital in allowing processing time, as was huddling around the fire with the rest of the group and managing my energy during evenings that lasted five to six hours, often after a long day shooting elsewhere. I never hurried or rushed to catch something as more often than not I could foresee what might occur in the next moment by being very present. As I was not looking for something, there was no pre-emptive image that I was trying to capture or discover. Instead I relied on chance and contingency, presence and seeing, as the vital components in filming in this situation.

Over a period of four weeks different events unfolded. One evening a group of Israeli soldiers appeared in the quarry below, which was an unexpected and dramatic moment. The brothers huddled together next to the metal shipping container watching as the soldiers confronted Ahmed the security guard in the quarry; they articulated feelings of anger and fear, often disguised through humour. I moved my camera into the shipping container and filmed the scene with the soldiers from the open doorway. The brothers encouraged me to film; they too knew the powers of a camera in a situation of crisis. As Avi Mograbi notes,

> Sometimes it makes [the soldiers] more polite, maybe they will be a little nicer. The power is in your pocket; you can almost blackmail everyone into behaving better… There is no such thing as a transparent camera and I don't want to be part of the charade that there can be; I am here, and my presence influences what the people I film do.[496]

On many occasions Ahmed is referred to by the BBrothers in signalling the level of fear and humiliation that Palestinians feel on coming into contact with Israeli soldiers. Although the script below has not been included in the final edit of the film, it exemplifies the complexity of the emotions that are experiences by Palestinians when encountering Israeli soldiers:

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[496] Mitchell Miller, Interview with Avi Morgarbi, *Cineaste Cineaste*, 32:3 (Summer 2007) <http://www.cineaste.com/articles/voices-within-the-siege.htm> [accessed 5 July 2013].

Alaa:	Shame on you for changing your trousers! Shame on you…
Gassan:	Shame on you! Man…It's an army pair of trousers.
Ahmed:	Well, if they see the stamp on it, they'd think it's from the Israeli army. They'd arrest me.
Gasan:	But they have serial numbers, they can check it and know if it's stolen or something, and check where it came from…
Alaa:	Imagine this situation, just imagine it: What if Ahmed were driving along in the car, and then he meets the Israeli soldiers suddenly, and they asked him to stop. Imagine that, he'd just lose control! He'd just mix up the brakes and the accelerator and bang into them!
Ahmed:	Well maybe I'll decide I was going to die anyway, close my eyes, and just speed into them…
Samir:	Well, you might get shocked and lose control…
Alaa:	Yeah, you would get a shock, wouldn't you? A real shock.

Towards the end of my visit to Palestine in April 2011 I visited the brothers alone in the daylight hours. They were busy and preoccupied with a machine they had been awaiting for weeks. They hoped that the machine would restore their livelihood by cutting the tracks of the caterpillar making them narrower. This they hoped would prevent the tracks from picking up small stones that had been slowing it down and bringing work to a halt. They had invited me to come and film but it was an extremely precarious and difficult situation to film in. I was not able to get close to the BBrothers because it was too dangerous and they were also very tense, as they were highly invested in restoring their livelihood that had been on hold for weeks. However there was something else that made filming uncomfortable: it was apparent what a huge emollient Khaled had been in assisting with filming with the BBrothers at night, and the distance between us was very apparent on this day.

Consent and Release Forms

Ethics Committee

Consent Form

Project title: 'White Oil,' excavations and the disappearance of the West Bank

Data Controller: Name Judy Price, PhD researcher, University for the Creative Arts

Supervisors: Kerstin Mey, Conor Kelly, Ori Gersht

Participant Name:

Participant Location: West Bank, Palestine

- I the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in the research and film **'White Oil, excavations and the Disappearance of the West Bank'** a practice-based research project using moving image, sound and photography focusing on the quarries within the West Bank, Palestine.

- I have read and understood the Information Sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the researcher/film maker of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study and film, and of what I will be expected to do. I have

- been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and film and have understood the advice and information given as a result.

- I agree to comply with any instructions given to me during the study and to co-operate fully with the investigator.

- I understand that as a participant I will grant Judy Price access at all times of day and night over a one month period in April 2011 and a one-month period in September 2011.

- I understand faces, bodies and parts of the body may appear in the film, however these appearances will not disclose any names and any reflection of a character will not be central to the film.

- I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study and film on the understanding that my anonymity is preserved.

- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the film at any time without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.

- I acknowledge that my participation in the film I shall not receive any reimbursement, payment or rewards.

- I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

Name of volunteer ....

(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed ....

Date ....

Name of witness ....

(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed ....

Date ....

Name of researcher/person taking consent ....

(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed ....

Date ....

CONTRIBUTORS RELEASE FORM

TITLE OF FILM: WHITE OIL

NAME OF FILMMAKER: JUDY PRICE

ADDRESS:

56 PENDERYN WAY, LONDON, N7 0EW, UNITED KINGDOM

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:

ADDRESS:

DATE OF FILMING: 31 March > 31 April 2011

I hereby agree that the copyright and all other rights in respect of my contribution are hereby assigned to **Judy Price**. I agree that the film **White Oil** that I have contributed to may be exhibited in all media and formats. This may include public screenings and broadcast screenings. **Judy Price** may without further consent use the film material recorded to publicise the film *White Oil* in all media and formats.

I hereby agree that my performance in title is not for any payment or deferred payment. However that if the film **White Oil** is purchased then 2% of what ever is received shall be paid to the contributor.

Signature (Participant/contributor) _____

Print Name _____

Signature (Artist/Filmmaker) _____

Print Name _____

Date _____