Decolonizing [in the] future: scenes of Palestinian temporality

Nayrouz Abu Hatoum

Check for updates

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Decolonizing [in the] future: scenes of Palestinian temporality

Nayrouz Abu Hatoum

Sociology and Anthropology, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

This article is published as part of the Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography special issue 'Palestinian Futures Anticipation, Imagination, Embodiments', edited by Mikko Joronen, Helga Tawil-Souri, Merav Amir & Mark Griffiths.

ABSTRACT
In this paper, I examine different treatments of the future in Palestine through four scenes. I argue that the four scenes offer a reorientation of Palestinian temporality, in which there exists a multiplicity of temporal orderings of the past and the future. I situated Palestinian futures as imagined and communicated by Palestinian artists against the hegemonic narrative of a futurity that single out the path to statehood as the ultimate future for Palestine. I show that despite the violence that the Israeli state inflicts on Palestinian daily life, which affects their ability to imagine something else outside the immediate everyday, Palestinian struggle for liberation is always already future-oriented. The four scenes suggest that the future for Palestinians resides in the working of the imaginative in which the future might evoke a past or haunt the present. Thus, when read closely, Palestinian temporality can be viewed as cyclical, not linear. In Aamer Hlehel's play, the past haunts the future, while in Hadeel's Assali's letter the past describes the liberated future. The continuous loss is enfolded into future traces in the form of memory in Samar Hazboun's work, and in the form of evidence, or daleel- in Jawad's Al Malhi's work.

Surely the everyday is a refuge from history, even from time itself. And alongside power, history and time are those things that most violate the everyday. (Nancy Ries 2002, 743)

Introduction

In this article, I show that for Palestinians, the everyday is not a refuge from history, or time. The everyday is repeatedly violated by the Israeli settler-colonial and military regimes dispossessing Palestinians from a (healthy) relationship with a future. The difficulty to envision a future of Palestine was articulated by Palestinian artists I spoke with nearly a decade ago during my fieldwork. One artist, Mohamed Badarne, attributed the short-life expectancy of most Palestinian art to the inability of producing a long-term vision that could carry a message into the future, as if the future was inhospitable to the idea of Palestine. While he was understandably frustrated by what he called a lack of vision (Abu Hatoum 2017), when I look back at these conversations nearly 10 years later, I read his frustration as undoubtedly tied to the same conversations I am developing in this article. Namely, the fraught relations

---

Palestinians, who are subjected to daily Israeli state violence, have to time and, the focus of this article: the future.[1] When the everyday is subsumed by political (spatial, material, or symbolic) violence, the future oscillates in people's imagination between hope and suspicion.[2] In a virtual discussion on the Palestinian Future, Yara Hawari (2020), a Palestinian fellow at Al-Shabaka-The Palestinian Policy Network, clarifies the relationship between the future and the everyday in Palestine:

> It is hard for Palestinians to think about the future, and I think there are many reasons for that, one of them is [that] the daily struggle is so difficult, especially for many Palestinians in particularly precarious situations, whether in refugee camps or in the land of Palestine. Just getting by day to day takes priority. [..] This is part of the settler-colonial process to bog Palestinians down with the sheer struggle staying alive and existing so they cannot resist this wider structure […].

As Hawari (2020) articulated, the difficulty in imagining or predicting what Palestine's future holds, rests on the way in which everyday struggle for existence overwhelms Palestinians' ability to imagine futures. Indeed, the settler-colonial assault on Palestinian lives is succinctly described by Hoda El Shakry as 'inhabit[ing] the skin of the everyday' (2021, 675). Such violence has long-term and replicating effects on Palestinians' sense of time, space and imagination, vision or future (Griffiths and Joronen 2021). In other words, through the everyday, Israel controls Palestinian temporality and insidiously attempts at corrupting and gaslighting Palestinian relationship with time. Thus, the future for Palestinians becomes an imaginative space where suspicion and hope coalesce. An abundance of critical scholarship has demonstrated this tension (Griffiths and Joronen 2021; Stamatopoulou-Robbins 2020; Tawil-Souri 2017; Peteet 2018). For example, the 1948 Nakba, resulting in the displacement and dispossession of majority of Palestinians from their land and the destruction of their villages, marks out one of the central ruptures of Palestinian temporality (Sa'di and Abu-Lugbod 2007; Abdo and Masalha 2018; Hawari 2018). The Nakba also created a shared point of reference for Palestinian narrative (Hawari 2018), as well as a 'shared death', as Hajja Halima Hassan described (Jayyusi 2018, 88). The sharedness of the Nakba as a point of departure in Palestinian narratives and as an event of continuous death (end), reify the cyclical contingency of Palestinian temporality. The Nakba becomes what Shaira Vadasaria (Vadasaria 2018) refers to as an 'active psychic archive that contours' (144) Palestinian sense of temporality. Palestinians often utter the sentiment that the Nakba is a continuous event. The claim of the continuity of the Nakba is corroborated by the continuous violence of the Israeli settler-colonial regime in Palestine.

The Israeli spatial and bureaucratic control of Palestinian everyday lives and realities shatters Palestinian temporality into fragments. Mark Griffiths and Joronen (2021) argue that Israeli governments create daily conditions of uncertainties that render, not only the future, but also the present as uninhabitable. For example, a notice of house demolition in the near future could render the home in the present as 'unhomely' space (2021, 2), and may affect the decision of a couple to have offspring or stay put under these threatening conditions (7). Relatedly, Israel's denial of Palestinian refugees' right of return and the fortification of its borders so that refugees do not simply cross back to their lands and homes, has created a protracted state of dreaming-for-return for many Palestinians (Peteet 2005; Allan 2014; Sayigh 2015). Waiting for a future in suspension (Seikaly 2019) becomes a defining element of Palestinian temporality (Wick 2011; J. Peteet 2018). Waiting for a return is one, and waiting for a solution to the current state of affairs is another. No less important is the everyday forms of waiting for tangible Israeli permits: to pass a checkpoint (Hammami 2015; Tawil-Souri 2017), to build, to work, to visit loved ones, or for family unification (Abu Hatoum 2020; Naamneh, al-Botmeh, and Salameh 2018). Palestinians also feel the crushing moments of waiting for the release of those imprisoned in Israeli jails, or for the return of bodies of the dead, held hostage by Israeli authorities (Daher-Nashif 2020; Wahbe 2020).

Waiting is one form in which time is utilized conspicuously to disorient Palestinians' spatial and temporal sensibilities. Waiting, however, is not an idle practice; *it is a struggle with time through time*. Catherine Brun (2015) reminds us that waiting in protracted displacement (as in the case of refugees) is an active practice that is produced through agency and the work of imagination for a better future which carries potential, hope or certainty (El-Shaarawi 2015). Under these

conditions, refugees also evoke the past (prior to displacements or wars) as a better time/space to feed the fantasy of a better future. In other words, to make uncertainty in the present meaningful, bearable, and livable, the future is imagined as carrying changes (Brun 2015).

In this article, I foreground the future as the rubric through which one facet of Palestinian temporality can be examined. I read Palestinian cultural productions as a site of ethnographic inquiry into Palestinian futurity that animate both imaginative and phenomenological understanding of time. Palestinian future, I show, does not follow a linear progression towards a telos of a nation state, instead it is one that is imbricated with the present and the past resembling a structure of cyclical time. In other words, *a* future for Palestine and Palestinians is contingent on past and present collective worldings, and it is also contingent on the working of the imaginative. As Yara Hawari (2020) reminds us, there are stubborn efforts of imagining and working towards a future for Palestine:

> Palestinians have been engaging in collective imagining in all their fragments for a long time. There are many different Palestinian groups that imagine return, or what it would look like to rebuild Palestinian villages that were destroyed in 1948. There are other imaginations of the political mandate of what a one state might look like […].

I take Hawari's articulation of the relationship between future imagination and present everyday life as a point of departure to argue that Palestinian imagination of the future is interwoven into the fabric of the everyday and the ordinary rather than in the jargon of statist-solutions that the Palestinian Authority or the international community continuously evokes. By 'everyday' I refer to the repetitive rhythms of life that ordinary people perform or are governed by. While the everyday is imbricated with survival forms of living, which Palestinians are unwillingly coerced to get used to in order to get by the violence of the everyday (Allen 2008), I show that Palestinians formulate a cautious and *uneventful* imagination (and relation) with the future.

In the following sections, I analyse four ethnographic scenes (Das 2012; Stevenson 2019). The first two scenes grow out of an archive of ethnographic research I conducted in Palestine (primarily Jerusalem, Ramallah and Bethlehem) from 2012 to 2019. I centre conversations with two artists, Jawad Al Malhi and Samar Hazboun, whose art and personal journey speak to the phenomenological experience of the future as animated through the working of time and colonial spatial violence. The third scene engages with a speculative play titled *The Country Can Contain Everyone* (البلاد تتّسع للجميع) written in Arabic by Aamer Hlehel (2018). The fourth explores a letter titled *Postcard from a liberated Gaza* set in 2024 by Hadeel Assali (2020). The four scenes share a common practice of repurposing the past as a compass that directs the way into imagined futures. They also share a rejection of centreing the state as an constitutive figure in the Palestinian future, counter to the present nationalist discourse that hinges on the promise of a Palestinian state. Put differently, the four scenes suggest that the idea of the future is much more tethered to the ways in which the everyday is inhabited and generated in the present than to an imagined collective national *maseer* – or destiny, generated by a collective national telos. Finally, the scenes illustrate the intricate relationship time has to place in Palestinian imagination. The four scenes diverge in their relationship to uncertainty, offering a varying scale of hope and despair. Scenes one and two, from my conversations with artists Jawad Al Malhi and Samar Hazboun, and scene four, *Postcard from a liberated Gaza* by anthropologists and filmmaker Hadeel Assali, place a strong emphasis on the working of sharing memory and leaving traces for the future generation. Conversely, scene three, Aamer Hlehel's navigating the present of the future in the aftermath of a post-Zionist reality, leaves less space for a shared dreaming of the future, rather the future is locked in the haunting of the present settler-colonial reality (Medak-Saltzman 2015). Inspired by Indigenous, Black and Brown feminist theorizing in which alternative and speculative political imaginations are epistemic sites for and of ethnographic knowledge production (McKittrick 2006; Hunt 2018; Siepak 2020; Fujikane 2021),[3] I present and engage with the four scenes as sites of ethnographic investigation into Palestinian futures.

Historical traces of Palestinian futures

Before I proceed to examine the selected ethnographic scenes in this article, it is important to map the work of imagination onto a larger structure of Palestinian organizing in Palestine and in exile. The labour of imagining and envisioning futures for Palestine can be found in different forms of organizing and of community building. When looking at the past century, one can trace a rich history of Palestinian imaginaries of the future gaining popularity before the Nakba in the form of dreaming of sovereignty and demanding it from British colonial rule (Barakat 2018; 2019) and mobilizing around liberation struggles. This continued after the Nakba under the Israeli settler-colonial regime (Sayigh 1983; Khalidi 2006; Darweish and Rigby 2015; Khalidi 2020). One can therefore read the history of struggle for liberation in Palestine as ever-oriented towards a future (story or structure). This mode of future-oriented mobilizing and organizing created eventful political and popular-political projects in Palestine and in exile. At times competing, and at others, co-existing. Their projects sought liberation in a myriad of ways: advocacy, music, art, agriculture, protests or political planning which was oriented towards the nation-state; while others upheld the dream of freedom or return. Examples of this include past and present movements and activities like the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Lovers' Songs Band (firqat aghani al a'ashiqeen), Popular Struggle Coordination Committees, Al-Awda- the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, the Palestinian Political Prisoners Movement, the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions Movement, and Decolonizing Architecture Art and Research. The list is simply too long to name. What is evident from reading the history of Palestinian struggle is that as long as Palestinians are living in a continuous Nakba, understood as a structure and an everyday occurrence and not a singular event (Salamanca et al. 2012; Hawari 2018). And as long as the struggle is that of a liberation from the present state, the future will always define Palestinian temporality. In more recent times, Palestinians in Palestine and in exile increased their demands to return. For example, the Marches of Return not only operates at the representational level in demanding visibility for refugees, but they are also performative forms of enacting the return and attending to the potential of return (Järvi 2021). Visits to villages, as Tiina Järvi (2021) shows, reshapes Palestinian conceptualization of their landscape not relegating it only in the past (as in destroyed villages) but in a future imminent return (e.g. moving to live in destroyed villages, as in the case of Iqrith). Put differently, knowing that achieving the right of return is a long-term process, Palestinians perform future return in the present through visiting, planning, marching and moving to live in the destroyed villages (Järvi 2021). A more recent form of visiting and attending to Palestinian geography is taking place in the digital realm. Meryem Kamil (2020) examines the role of Aljazeera's English virtual tours of Al-Aqsa mosque and The Udna video of imagining of return to Mi'ar, a Palestinian village that was destroyed in 1948, as forms of digital access to the intimate spaces of Palestine in an act of decolonial futurity. Indeed, while most national struggles require some form of dreaming of an alternate state, the Palestinian struggle for liberation from the settler-colonial condition requires intense forms of imagination of the future of the everyday. This spans from envisionings of resurrected villages, cities, streets, or landscapes, to new rhythms of mobility that are not stifled by segregation or military obstacles.

On a different note from the examples presented above which are characterized by the structures of community organizing and movement building, in the past decade, Palestinian artists and writers have started rigorously to engage with the future of Palestine through speculative fiction. The most renowned of these projects are Larissa Sansour's futuristic, sci-fi, utopian and dystopian works, *In the Future They Ate From the Finest Porcelain* (2016), *The Nation Estate* (2012), and *A Space Exodus* (2009). Sansour's work employs visual techniques in the form of short films and immersive art installations. A recently published collection of futuristic short stories on Palestine titled 'Palestine +100: Stories From a Century after the Nakba' edited by Basma Ghalayini (2019), features a collection of speculative and sci-fi narratives that imagines Palestinian futures. Another current publication on speculative fiction is Ibtisam Azem's (2019) *The Book of Disappearance*, which takes

place in the future in which Palestinians disappear from Palestine and become ghostly figures who haunt Israel's collective psyche. Finally, the newest addition to the line-up is an art collection by Palestinian arts collective Lifta. The book *Future Palestine* (2020) draws on visual, poetic, and experimental works by Palestinian artists, poets or writers. While Sansour's work might hint to some attachment to statehood, it is done through sarcasm in which the future state is laughable or dysfunctional, spatially and politically. And, nearly all these recent artistic expressions mentioned above shy away from featuring the state as the star of Palestinians' future.

   In this article, I narrow my rubric of selection of the scenes of the speculative fiction since they are not confined by realistic speculation of the future. In fact, they entertain not only the imaginable in the scenario of Palestinian future but also the unimaginable. Additionally, my interest in non-statist, non-national and non-spectacular forms of imagining the Palestinian future is not an invitation to abandon national and political forward-looking or forward-dreaming of a national destiny of Palestinian self-determination. Rather, it is an invitation to find the future in its intimate and ordinary forms. Similar to Veena Das's (2007) work in which she connects the urgency in sensationalizing the temporality of the everyday ordinary, albeit in the context of investigating the past, I offer a reading in which representation of imagined Palestinian future hinges on an examination of the ordinary ways in which Palestinian lives are lived.[4] In other words, I anchor the uneventful in the present everyday as the grounds on which the future is set from.

Methodology in/of uncertainty

My initial thoughts on writing this paper began prior to the COVID19 pandemic timeline; however, the research and the writing coincided with the pandemic. This meant that due to lockdown regulations, I could not travel and conduct more fieldwork in Palestine. The global pandemic has invited uncertainty in all aspects of everyday life as drastic measures have been taken by governments and municipalities to contain the spread of the Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). As a Palestinian, the crisis and existing in pandemic conditions did not present me with a radically new reality. For many Palestinians- and more specifically in the occupied Palestinian territories, curfews, checkpoints, limited access to medical services, restrictions on mobility and inability to travel in and out of Palestine has been a daily reality well before the pandemic. The pandemic extended and reaffirmed the risks and uncertainty which Palestinians already live through in their everyday. Indeed, researching and writing under lockdown regulations amid the pandemic was a limiting, isolating, and confining practice. While pandemic regulations increasingly forced anthropologists (or social scientists at large) to create new forms of engaging with the field and with people, like conducting digital ethnography or interviews through the internet via Skype or Zoom, I chose to revisit and analyse my own archive of already existing material as ethnographic scenes that respond to the theoretical questions which concern this paper.

   At the start of the lockdown, I surrendered to slowing down and to staying put in my apartment. My annual visits to Palestine for research and for family visits were suspended. The lockdown seemed to slow time down as did the rhythm and movements of the everyday. A month into lockdown when the use of Zoom and the migration of events in the virtual became one of the few tools of communicating and connecting, I felt as if time collapsed into a vanishing point, between one meeting and another, with no time spent on travel, I stopped experiencing the feeling associated with the motion of time. These experiences, while still fresh and at present still living in it at the time of the writing, have required me to shift my understanding of ethnographic events or spaces. I have been confronted with the following questions: When access to the field is not permitted, what then constitutes an ethnographic site? Can I visit an ethnographic site through reading a fictional text? And, can imagination, mine, or others', be an anthropological site for epistemological inquiry? If so, how can one research ethnographic scenes extracted from texts while avoiding a naive return to armchair anthropology, which fails to satisfy the practice of rigorous and lengthy fieldwork and engagement with people? Indeed, there is a form of intimacy that can only be created while being in

a physical location and getting to know it through multiple sensory engagements and over a long period of time. While it is difficult to imagine an anthropological research that is not generated by being present with and being in the field, it is, nonetheless, the quintessential Palestinian experience of researching Palestine from afar or with limited access.[5]

Relatedly, my concern on how to explore the future in Palestine while living through an unusual pandemic time became enmeshed with the very topic of the research itself- the future. How, then, does anthropological methodology open itself to uncertainty? Perhaps this question is ever so relevant to the present pandemic reality. As anthropologists, we rely heavily on fieldwork and participant observation as a grounding methodology; it is the inheritance of Bronisław Malinowski's that has been haunting our practice and identity for a century now. Hayder Al-Mohammad (2011) reminds us that anthropological methods, like fieldwork and participant observation, have promised not only acquisition and performance of knowledge but also a mode of being-in-the-world, which Al-Mohammad claims resulted in 'discursive and epistemic deadlocks' (121). I turn to Al-Mohammad's argument because I find that his critique of anthropological methodology forces anthropologists to rethink their performance and practice during fieldwork, and attending to his critiques now in particular is ever so relevant during COVID19 lockdown regulations and the restrictions imposed on travel or on social gatherings. Let us pause on two points that he makes in his article (2011) and which inspired a configuration of my methodology here. The first critique relates to the conundrum in studying the unknowable through material means- that unknowable element that anthropological methodology assures becomes answerable through being in the field; the second questions the value of *certainty* attributed to knowledge in the field. In other words, he refuses the premise that foregrounds participant observation which dictates that being in the field and doing what interlocutors do is a reliable form of knowing the field and its interlocutors. Building on his critique, I argue that being in the field might not get me very far in my pursuit of exploring the unknowable – i.e. future. Thus, while the future is unknowable, it is indubitably imaginable. The future is this metaphysical world that Al-Mohammad warns us from attempting to know through being in – and embodying – the field. What can be traced in seeking epistemologies of the future is found in the realm of imagination.

Attending to Wittgenstein, Al-Mohammad (2011, 131) reminds us that '"certainty" is not investigable empirically' nor phenomenologically. And, if Wittgenstein considers what is known as always predicated on conditions or grounds that cannot be known, then anthropologists' ever-sought quest to get to the 'subsoil' of the forms of life of the social world (131) is an unattainable task. Al-Mohammad gives the example in which anthropologists may get information from interlocutors about the mechanics or prescriptive of cultural practices, but they may not get answers as to how interlocutors acquired this knowledge. In short, Al-Mohammad's critique of the attachment anthropologists have to fieldwork and more specifically to the equating of being-in-the-field as a way of embodying the others' insight or world views, leads to epistemological gaps. These gaps become particularly evident when anthropologists rely on being present (in and with their bodies) amongst a people to understand metaphysical worlds. Therefore, to challenge W. H. R. Rivers' instructions from the 1912 edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, in which he stated 'the abstract should always be approached through the concrete' (W. H. R. Rivers in Pandian 2019, 19), in the following, I will pursue the assumption that, methodologically, the abstract *may not* always be approached through the concrete. Indeed, Palestinian anthropologists who cannot visit Palestine due to Israeli restrictions or access areas under Israeli governance, have to resort to alternative methodologies. Digital ethnographies or connecting through the internet is often the only recourse. To put it simply, to imagine capacity beyond that of people who have the privilege (pre-Covid19 and now in Covid19) and ease to move in and out of Israeli border regulations, means taking up a more generous read to think about how the ethnographic abstract might actually be understood as containing the concrete.[6]

In the following section, by turning to four ethnographic scenes, straddling the so-called real and the imaginary I consider how artistic interventions of Palestinian futures are brought to life as

ordinary and familiar scenes – as a *déjà vu*. In an effort to capture the complexity of Palestinian epistemologies, I merge the experiential and the imaginary in tracing Palestinian futures. To put it differently, to examine Palestinian forms of being in the world or otherwise imagining the world, blended methods may render intelligible – or knowable, some contradictions or ambiguity in Palestinians' imagination of the future. If the future cannot be grafted through residual evidence in the present or past, then it does invite us to imagine it into being.

Scene 1: The spatial formation of the future

In 2012, artist Samar Hazboun exhibited a photography project about the Israeli constructed Wall in Al Walajeh village, near her hometown, Bethlehem, in the southern West Bank. Inspired by conversations with her family and neighbours about the Wall in Bethlehem, Hazboun created a series of staged photographs near the Wall to show how spatial confinement instigated for Palestinians an intergenerational sense of grief and future melancholic loss. The photographs illuminated the relationship between time and space as manifested through intergenerational memories. The English title of the installation was *Before the Wall* which communicated the double meaning of the word 'before': in a temporal sense as *earlier*, and in a spatial sense as *in front of*. In one photograph, Hazboun placed women dressed in black, and children, dressed in white, in front of the Wall near an unfinished segment of the construction. The scene was staged to address how the spatial force of the Wall shifted Palestinian inhabitants of the Bethlehem area's relationship to their landscapes and more importantly to time. Prior to my conversation with Hazboun, I had visited Al Walajeh and met with some of the dwellers whose lands were confiscated and home spaces were fragmented because of the Wall's construction. It was clear for many Palestinians and some Israeli activists against the Wall that the Israeli Defence Ministry has intentionally kept some portions of the Wall unfinished, particularly in the southern region of the West Bank, like in Hebron district. I was told that Palestinians enter Israel through these unfinished segments seeking work, under the soldiers' watch. In Al Walajeh the case was different. In 2011, Palestinians appealed to the Israeli High Court of Justice against the route of the Wall resulting in delays in the constructions. The appeal was rejected.

When I spoke with Hazboun about her work in 2013, that segment of the Wall had yet to be built. It took another year for its completion. In that near future, when the photograph project was conducted, Palestinians were resisting the construction of the Wall fearing the worst, when finished. And indeed, that fear, then, arrived. Hazboun explained to me that in the future, the children in the photographs will only know a spatial reality of a Wall while their parents will have a memory of a different landscape, the view of terrasses hills and mountains of Bethlehem region. This is why the women in her photographs wore black in an act of mourning to gesture to a future in which these lands, landscape and the memories they carry will turn to a far nostalgia and an old tale that the children, who symbolize the new generation, will only hear about from their parents in lamentation. Today, nine years later, the dreaded future has arrived, and the Wall entirely dominates the landscape of Al Walajeh and Bethlehem region, and entraps their inhabitants. Roughly, every Palestinian who was born in Palestine after construction of the Wall in 2003 only knows a Walled reality of their cities, villages, or landscape.

The confinement that the Wall created, though undoubtedly a physical one, is more significantly a temporal one. To put it another way, the spatial violence that the Wall brought to Palestinians' sense of spatial orientation (Bishara 2015) or connection and access to their lands has distorted their relation to time, and more specifically to the future. For example, this came up a lot in my conversation with many Palestinians who expressed how their daily commute between different West Bank cities – and, more significantly between the West Bank and Jerusalem – was affected drastically after the Wall's construction (Abu Hatoum 2017, 2020). The Wall, like the checkpoints, dominates Palestinian temporality. Also, like the checkpoints, the Wall was framed by Israeli

governments as a temporary security structure that will be removed once a political agreement with Palestinians is reached.

The intricate relationship that space has with time in Palestine can be best illustrated when examining the ways in which the Israeli state operationalizes space and time in dominating Palestinians' everyday. In her research on 'checkpoint time', Helga Tawil-Souri (2017) argues that checkpoints exist in space and time as they have temporal mechanisms through which they limit and permit Palestinians to work, visit families, access healthcare, transport or travel, all within specific time slots. Checkpoints also subject Palestinians to limited speed of time, forcing them to face slowness, uncertainties, and indefinite waiting; in other words, they suspend time for Palestinians (Tawil-Souri 2017). Less visibly but more critically for my argument, if examined through its role of constructing Palestinians' sense and memory of their lands/landscapes, the Wall is intrinsically a temporal structure. As Hazboun's photographic project suggested, since some people had lived in a landscape without a Wall and others live and will live in a reality in which the Wall replaces the landscape, there exists a multiplicity of temporal relationality with the landscape. Those who lived in a world before the Wall, might live with nostalgia for a past landscape that is Wall-less, and those who know only life *in* Wall, are forever living in the sorrow filled shadows of the older generation's nostalgia.

Before the Wall was conceptualized by the provocation of the future as a temporality of loss, in which the future inevitably carries accumulated losses of lands and landscapes. The segment of the Wall featured in her photographs is sealed today, leaving the event of photography – the event of staging these photographs, lingering beyond the photographic moment itself (Azoulay 2011) and becoming a melancholic nostalgia that rubs off from older generations to younger ones. Likewise, the opening in the Wall symbolized the settler-colonial frontier of future expansions and enclosures. This opening also signals the settler-colonial frontier of time, where the domination of Palestinian temporality is generated through coalescing past, present and future into a protracted vanishing landscapes. If 'checkpoint time' offers us a glimpse into the future, as Tawil-Souri (2017) aptly argued, in *Before the Wall*, I argue, the Wall's temporality offers us, not only a peek into foreseen futures, but also a framework through which we understand the structure of the Wall as a settler-colonial frontier of time, in which Palestinians' future under Israeli settler-colonialism is always made to be robbed through spatial practices of confinement and land annexation.

Scene 2: In the future's past there was a Palestine

In the summer of 2019, I visited an exhibit at the Palestinian Museum titled 'Intimate Terrain: Representation of a Disappearing Landscape', curated by Tina Sherwell. Amongst some of the works that explored the landscape in Palestine was that of Jerusalem-based artist Jawad Al Malhi. Al Malhi's work showcased a panoramic view of Shuafat Refugee camp in Jerusalem as seen from the Israeli settlement nearby. Al Malhi's family became refugees in 1948 and after their displacement, they lived in the camp. Over the course of his life, Al Malhi witnessed the expansion of the camp into a concentrated urban space built haphazardly with little foresight of planning or durable infrastructure. He also witnessed the rapid population growth which made the space of the camp extremely crowded and overpopulated. The camp was confined to limited territory and was heavily surveilled by the Israeli military. There was a military checkpoint that monitored Palestinian access of cars in and outside the camp, making the daily morning rush to leave the camp for work or to drop the children at their school, an anxiety inducing act. Despite living surrounded by his family, the dense space of the camp and the military confinement and surveillance of the space suffocated Al Malhi's everyday. Fortunately, being an artist enabled him and his family to partake in different projects internationally and, hence, occasionally get a brief respite from the daily stresses of living under constant military rule. In 2003, Israel initiated the construction of the Wall in the West Bank, and Shuafat refugee camp became surrounded by the Wall and with the tightening of the military checkpoint regime, Palestinians access to Jerusalem became even more limited (Abu Hatoum 2021).

The Wall overpowered the landscape of the camp, and this was reflected in some of Al Malhi's photography.

I had heard about Al Malhi's work elsewhere and saw his work exhibited in Toronto in 2015 at the Agha Khan Museum. Following my visit to 'Intimate Terrain' in 2019, I was able to interview Al Malhi and hear more about his journey as an artist and his thought process in producing his work. The conversation with him soon became a reflection on his past work as read from the present – or more precisely, it became about the past's future, or how the future was seen from his past. Palestine, for Al Malhi, when examined through a historical lens, was always in the process of becoming. While this 'becoming' invites a future-oriented imagination, it can be traced or measured only when looking back in time:

> I think what protected us as Palestinians and our relationship to each other is the aspiration to build a nation. But, for me the real accomplishment is not that there *is* a Palestine (*fee falastine*) but that there *has become* a Palestine (*saar fee falastine*) because we were prohibited from the idea of Palestine, like the banning of our symbols and flags by the Israeli regime. The fact that we *made* Palestine is the real accomplishment.

The becoming and making of Palestine cannot only be limited to the notion of place-making or nation-building, rather it is a form of worlding in which social and cultural collectivity has been made readily accessible for Palestinians to relate to, pass on, and render into a worldview or a way of being in the world. This *becoming* in its past progressive tense, is a crucial motif that figures in Al Malhi's thought process and work. The present for Al Malhi is situated in a historical trajectory of the past's future: *there has become* or *there was* a Palestine. Even though the most direct translation of *saar fee falastine* is 'Palestine came into being', a gesture that might require us to look back and read the present as the past's future, an interpretive reading of Al Malhi's words invites a cautious understand of the way Palestinian temporality operates: Will Palestine remain after it was made? Or, can the idea of *saar fee falastine* only be grasped as a past telos?

I want to offer an answer to these questions by highlighting the role of ideas and imagination in keeping the process of becoming forever unfolding and growing. The maintenance of the idea of Palestine is being stubbornly produced through art, literature, popular resistance, and political discourses (Said 1992; Burris 2019). However, the wound of losing Palestine inflected by a threat that could interrupt this *becoming* of Palestine (Hochberg 2021),[7] prevails in Al Malhi's philosophy of artistic practice. In his words:

> I then began producing art so I can create witnesses who see, interpret, or continue the conversation about my art. I do not want to play the role of a director and reproduce or reconceptualize the events, I leave my work to those who will come after me so they can say: 'once upon a time there were Palestinians'. This way the future generation does not say 'they did not leave us with *dala'el* (plural for daleel, which means traces, evidence, signs, or guiding directions). Through my art, I want to at least leave a *daleel*'.

> N: So following your line of thoughts, are you working in the present to leave traces for a future scenario in which Palestine ceases to exist?

> Jawad Al Malhi: You know, twenty years ago, my partner came up with an idea to create a museum project called 'There was a Palestine'. I had a heated conversation with her in which I accused academics for being too pessimistic in their thinking, and that I spend so many sleepless nights working to make sure that it will remain in the future. But today I can see how it is hard to maintain this attachment. Still, even though I traveled and lived in many cities all over the world, I always returned to Palestine, and sometimes it does not make sense, it is hard to come back and live in this reality.

Al Malhi's response suggested that the future has already been located in the past. Indeed, it is daunting to know how comforting it felt to resolve those 'sleepless nights' and let the future be imagined as a celebration of a passing past. Even more troubling, in Al Malhi's past, the possibility of a future disappearance of Palestine existed alongside the burdened embodiment of 'sleepless nights working to make sure [Palestine]' remains in the future as in an habitable time and place, and not as an artefact, a souvenir or a memory.

Scene 3: Return to the familiar futures

The Country Can Contain Everyone (2018), is a theatre play by Palestinian playwriter and actor Aamer Hlehel. It was published in the Arabic edition of *Journal of Palestine Studies* on Palestinian futures. In the play, Hlehel describes a scenario of Palestinian return that takes place after Palestinians and Israelis reach a form of reconciliation. The return is presented as a mundane bureaucratic quagmire inside a government office. The future scenario takes place in what is hinted to be a post-Zionist scenario, a new configuration of a single nation state called: *Palestine-Israel.* In this new reality, Palestinian refugees who fled outside the 1948 borders have the right to come back to their villages and be given government housing. Hlehel's scenario of return is burdened with the bureaucracy of identity cards, form fillings, and a labyrinth of convoluted procedures. In other words, Palestinian return is not depicted as a glorified or heroic one. Instead, it takes place through a quarrel between a Palestinian young man who wishes to return to his village and a Palestinian and an Israeli government employee who must follow the protocol of the new state. Under these current policies, this return is only granted to those who were expelled out of the 1948 borders and not to those who were internally displaced. The imagined glorified return becomes obscured by the minute details of the mundane. If return for Palestinians is imagined as a quest, a dream, a chant, a painting, a march, or a political strategy, in *The Country Can Contain Everyone*, the return embodies an antithesis to all that. It becomes yet another visit to a government office, the display of documents and identity cards, and an unpleasant encounter with the crudeness of bureaucracy, which many Palestinians experience or are familiar with and in Israeli governments' offices or military posts and checkpoints.

The play centres on the encounter between three characters, Jamal, a Palestinian engineer, a Palestinian woman clerk, who has no name in the text and only referred to as a clerk – *mouwaẓafa*, and Sammy, the office manager who is Jewish. The conversation between Jamal and the mouwaẓafa at the beginning of their encounter sets the context for the following scenes. We witness the mouwaẓafa who demonstrates internalized inferiority complex of being an Arab-Palestinian, likely inherited from the previous political order. From the conversation between Jamal and the mouwaẓafa on Jamal's honeymoon plans, we know that the scene is taking place in the near future, possibly five years from now. I pause on this scene to draw attention to a few key elements. First, the significance of this ordinary conversation is that it provides an understanding of 'future time'. Second, it gestures to the hauntings of racism that Palestinians experienced under the previous Israeli regime. Jamal presents his case to secure an apartment in Safourieh, his village in the Galilee that he wishes to return to. When the mouwaẓafa realizes that Jamal is living in Nazareth, which means he is an internally displaced refugee, she is obliged to tell him of this being an impossible task. She explains that while there is an existing agreement for displaced Palestinians to exercise their right to return to their place of origin in historic Palestine in addition to which the new state would also provide housing for the returnee in their villages of origin. Since most of the abandoned villages were destroyed by the 'Zionist state' (as she called it), the new state had developed new housing projects on the lands of those villages to settle the indigenous people in them. However, all that to say that Jamal was not eligible since the agreement only outlined these terms for refugees who were expelled outside the Israeli state borders (the 1947 cease-fire line) but not for those internally displaced.

Jamal declared that this is unjust. It makes no sense, he said, that his cousin who is a refugee in Lebanon is entitled to return and settle in his own village while he is not entitled to return to his own village because his father took refuge in a near city within the border of the Israeli state even though Israel displaced him and his uncle from the same home. The mouwaẓafa interrupted and insisted that he refer to Israel by the 'Zionist state', signalling to the dramatic change that this reconciliation brought into the new regime that promises to shed Zionism out of its structure. In other words, Israel before the agreement was foregrounded on Zionism, and Israel in the new Israel/Palestine state is birthed as *not* Zionist. Jamal tells her that he cannot accept this decision and cuts

her off abruptly, raising his voice and demanding to speak to the manager. The mouwaẓafa calls Sammy. Realizing that Sammy is Jewish, Jamal remarks that it is unfortunate that a Jewish person will solve the issue and not his Palestinian assistant. The mouwaẓafa responded by stating that there is no difference between Jews and Arabs now. The Prime Minister is an Arab. Jamal is unconvinced by this persistent claim that the new state offers a radically different set of social or political changes. The mouwaẓafa insists that in the new structure, Jews and Arabs hold equal political power in the state. When Sammy shows up, Jamal bursts with an emotional story in an attempt to explain to him how hard it is not to be able to return to his father's village and how all his life and his father's life they insisted on seeking return to their village. Sammy commiserates and then suggests an alternative. He tells Jamal that a few Jewish residents of the Jewish settlement, Tzipori, that sits on Safourieh lands, have expressed their desire to leave their settlement and move to Tel Aviv, in fear of living near Arabs. Avoiding any conflicts, the state hid these complaints from the Jewish public, and decided to give these Jewish settlement homes to Arabs. Sammy ends his suggestion by asking whether Jamal would want to sign his name on the waitlist for receiving abandoned settlement homes? Jamal responds angrily: 'do you want me to live in a settlement that was built on my family's land?' (2018: 96) Sammy replied that it will not be a settlement anymore, it would be considered Safourieh lands. And so, he continued, if Jamal decided to live there he would achieve his right to return, and if Jews in Tzipori protested 'the state will find a solution, after all, Tel Aviv will always be there' (96).

Jamal's insistence on remaining on his family lands and rejection to the idea of replacing these lands with another, illustrates how Palestinians ground future returns to places on which they lived and thrived in the past. In other words, Hlehel's play illustrates how Palestinian temporality is closely connected to indigenous affiliation with the lands, while Israeli temporality is loosely attached to settlement spaces which are always replaceable. Hlehel's imagined future for Palestine is built on the accumulation of traces from pre-existing settler-colonial and indigenous structural dynamics. Jamal, a Palestinian who is internally displaced and whose existence is configured in the Israeli regime as a 'present absentee', demands in the new regime, post-reconciliation, a reaffirmation of his presence through abolishing the legal category of 'present absentee'. Yet, his protest is not recognized by the new state configuration. Instead, Jamal might remain a 'present absentee', and even more so, he might inhabit a settler home risking a slippage into the destabilizing grounds of the settler category. Put differently, while the settler-native category might seem to have dissolved in the new state, it remains to haunt spaces even when their settler dwellers leave. Jamal is attached to his lands, which in turn becomes a form of attachment to indigeneity. Sammy, however, insists that Tzipori is no longer a settlement by virtue of changing the governing regime. Therefore, he implies that if Jamal takes over a home in the Jewish settlement home, the home ceases to exist as a settlement. While through bureaucratic mechanism, the designation of settlement is so easily explained away as undone, the haunting logic of Zionism is not.

Indeed, in the play, the new state is depicted as post-Zionist. It draws or resembles old structures, but it does not account for or acknowledge these old structures in the hopes to gesture towards a decolonized world order. Instead, the grammar of race, ethnicity, and religion is exposed by Hlehel to have been reincarnated in the post-Zionist condition. Representatives of the bureaucratic office, the clerk and Sammy refuse to see how old ethnic, racial or national grammar has seeped into the new world (Goeman 2014). Put simply, what Hlehel manifests in his play and through Jamal's character is the impossibilities of erasing traces of the past. The traces might always pull the future to the past. It is as if the Nakba will persist into the future. Since traces of the Nakba could come in faded or in invisible forms, they can only be identified by those who are stranded in the grey-zone, borderline or frontier of legality or bureaucracy of settler-colonialism. Indeed, readers are invited to be suspicious of *de-Zionization* (Mamdani 2020, 255)[8] of the settler-colonial regime, as it limits Palestinian quest for decolonization.

Scene 4: The future is made from past memory

In the year 2024, Hadeel Assali writes a postcard from Gaza to her lover in New York. The writing of the letter takes place shortly after the liberation of Palestine from Zionist colonization. The liberation is manifested through multiple scenes described in the letter: the borders are opened after two decades of siege, visitors are able to visit Gaza and people from Gaza are able to leave, and lands that were colonized are now repatriated to their refugee owners who bring life back to them. These scenes are revealed to the readers through conversations with Palestinian elders who describe life after liberation through evocations of life in Gaza prior to Israeli colonization and military violence. The future is piecemealed from past memories.

I argue that scenes from the future liberation in Gaza are not spectacular or eventful in Assali's letter. The imagined future liberation is not concerned with the forms and structures of the state that governs the liberated populations, instead it focuses on the mundane, the occupation of an the everyday ordinary, in which liberation is almost already taken for granted or it has instantly become the norm by the people who are living in it. This future can only be grasped through banal acts like family visits, jokes and storytelling. Even more so, it is a future that demands us to watch it unfold as a memory from the past that only elders, who suffered the most throughout the years, can recognize. A return to memory is a form of return, or what Shaira Vadasaria (2018) calls 'a return to an inherited memory' (114) in which the 'return' might mean a re-calling of something as it primarily signals to the Palestinians refugees return to their lands and to a 'narrative […] of temporal ordering of the past; to life before the Nakba' (114). While such imagination of return might be provoked by a fantasy or a nostalgia to a past that resides in selective memory, it nonetheless speaks to the cyclical nature of Palestinians temporality.

At the centre of the letter is the idea of storytelling: an act that animates the spirit of liberation itself. While we learn that Assali was not in Gaza during the time of liberation and arrived only after it had taken place, she was able to readily identify changes since her previous visits, pre-liberation. It was Assali's family who were witnesses to the liberation and they were the ones who kept its stories and passed it on. The stories Assali is imagining to hear in the future carries the theme of resistance, which appears as if they can only be fully spoken of and revealed after liberation in the future. It also appears that these stories could only be told when resistance is not a mobilizing force of the everyday in Gaza. For example, the underground tunnels in Gaza, which are often hidden from sight above the ground and when spotted are targeted and bombed by the Israeli military, in Assalis' future, become a spectacle of tourist attraction where visitors are able to learn about the history of resistance in Palestine and more specifically in Gaza.

The time of the letter, written in the future, has another future; a future within a future. This other future is invited to readers' imagination when in Noor al-Huda, a family friend whom Assali seeks closeness with, expresses her worry about people, possibly outsiders, not learning from the past resistance and hence de-contextualize it or normalize it. In Noor's words: 'I know they have turned the tunnels and the resistance tours into entertainment, but I hope people get the lessons in case they need it for the future'.

In the past of Assali's imagined future, the Israeli settler army was ridiculed, and in the present of that future, as described in the letter, the settler is absent. The place of the Israeli settlers is, thus, vague. It is unclear if Israelis remain in Palestine, have disappeared, or their position as settlers have simply dissolved into something else (outside the dichotomy of settler-native). The ambiguity of the settler position perhaps suggests a future in which there is a parallel temporality (or parallel futures) in which Israelis inhabit. Ultimately, because of the history that Palestinians have rooted in the land, the possibility of future presence is intelligible and imaginable.

Conclusion: decolonizing Palestinian futures

In May 2021, a series of events escalating in Jerusalem sparked mass protests everywhere in Palestine including amongst Palestinian citizens of Israel. Sheikh Jarrah in particular became the site of

media focus, where a number of Palestinian families were ordered to evacuate their homes for Jewish settlers to take possession. Israeli state police forces and army arrested and shot Palestinians protestors in Palestinians cities inside Israel, Jerusalem and the West Bank. The Israeli army bombed Gaza and levelled some buildings resulting in deaths of some hundred Palestinians including women and children. Palestinians in every corner of the world protested the settler colonial attacks on Palestinians. They also took these protests to social media. A significant hashtag encapsulated the force of imagination and the visualization of such imagination in the form of an affective gesture for the future yet to come.

The <u>hashtag</u> (غرّد كأنها حرّة) 'gharred ka'anaha houra' in Arabic, translates to 'tweet as if it was free' populated social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. Palestinian social media content creators used this hashtag to describe an imaginative visit to Palestine in a specific scene or setting by using archival footage. For example, one Twitter user took an image of a pre-1948 train ticket from Beirut to Haifa and wrote 'I am taking the train to Haifa'. A trip that has not been possible since the Nakba when the borders with Lebanon were fortified and a return of such cannot be achieved by Palestinian refugees.

This tweet invited the future of liberated Palestine to be hosted in the present through activating the past. It is a tweet that gestures to the multiplicity of temporality in Palestinian imagination of liberation. People used archival images and animated these images from the past as if they were in the present, while that present is in fact, the desired future. The notion of 'as if it was free' generates an affective gesture, even if momentary, that requires the viewer/reader to react through inhabiting an affective reality in which Palestine is already free.

What made these archival provocations so powerful is the imaginative[9] spatial and temporal pull they created through using pre-existing historical sites and sights of a pre-Nakba temporality and the superimposition of them into the present as if it was the desired future of liberation. The future, then, is a return, a cyclical return, to a time in which the plight of the Nakba escaped history, as if it never happened, while paradoxically reinforcing the Nakba as the rupture of time that brought the future back.

In conclusion, in this paper, I explored different treatments of the future. I have argued for a reorientation of Palestinian temporality from a linear one, that originates with the Nakba, to a cyclical form of temporality in which there are multiple points of beginnings. I showed that there exists a multiplicity of temporal orderings of the future. I situated Palestinian futures as imagined and communicated by Palestinian artists against the hegemonic narrative of a futurity that single out the path to statehood as the ultimate future for Palestine. Relatedly, as I showed elsewhere (Abu Hatoum 2021), the post-Oslo promise of statehood for Palestinians has been exhaustively critiqued. Palestinians are less likely to envision a viable or functional independent state under Israeli settler-colonial conditions. How else, then, are Palestinians able to envision or imagine the future? While I do not have an answer to the question of where we should go from here, and what form of collective lives and societies we should construct as a people on our own lands. I can, however, bring scholarly attention to the work carried out by Palestinian artists who are consumed by the promise of the future in their collective imaginative productions. Indeed, all the scenes I have presented in this paper attend to a form of decolonial imagination of the future. Such decolonial articulations defy the linear progression towards a national telos in which pleas are made to the international community for a recognition of a state or for a formal progression towards decolonization. The four scenes suggest that the future in and for Palestinians does not exist at the frontier of time, in which the future is merely something to look forward to, but that it resides in the working of the imaginative in which the future might evoke a past or haunt the present. Thus when read closely, Palestinian temporality can be viewed as cyclical, not linear. The past haunts the future at times, like in Hlehel's work, and liberates the future in others, as in Assali's work. The presence of Palestinians' continuous Nakba, of displacements, and of shrinking spaces and landscapes is enfolded into traces in the form of memory, seen in Hazboun's work, and in the form of evidence or trace – *daleel* – in Al Malhi's work. These traces might always pull the future to the past. It is as if the past's memory (e.g. the Nakba) will persist into the future.

Through this paper, I invite and offer to read the future as it is animated in the everyday and in the ordinary of our familiar time. In living the everyday, the scenes illustrate, orient and gesture towards the future through relationships people cultivate with others and with their spaces. The task of this article was twofold. First, it showed that Israel's assault on Palestinian time produces spatial and visual domination over Palestinians' sense and vision of their own spaces and landscape, coalescing to invade the narrative of Palestinian future. Second, I showed that Palestinian futures rest on a familiar grammar of the past and present forms of Palestinian being. Building on these ethnographic scenes, I argued that decolonization of Palestinian future is found in a humble imagination of a future that rejects an attachment to statist telos or a state-oriented future. What makes the future inhabitable in the four scenes are Palestinians' celebrations of the daily joys of liberation from colonial rule, a memory of a thriving past – as watched from the future, and a subversion of a failed reconciliation. What stands out as a common thread in these scenes is an abandonment of a statist future, or a rejection of a future that is made legible only through the imagination of a Palestinian state. The scenes, while overlapping thematically, do not draw from a similar notion of a Palestinian future or temporality (as in sequences of events or speed of time). A common thread in all these textual and visual works is the centrality of the Palestinian presence in the future and the ambiguity of the place of the settlers. They conjure a different figure of the settler: Israelis do not simply disappear or dissolve, yet they are also not depicted as villains. Israelis are present in their absence and at others they are haunted and tormented by the Palestinian past. The future, as imagined in these scenes, is not linear in time nor is it a naive return to pre-settler-colonial times. In the future, time is borrowed from the past. The future is hesitantly depicted as a time which is pulled by the traces of the past, and it shall appear worldly and relatable as if it occurred in the past or is already lived in the present.

Notes

1. The inspirational pull to engage with Palestinian temporality in this article is derived from a workshop I participated in at Columbia University for Gil Z. Hochberg's (2021) forthcoming book *Becoming Palestine: Toward an Archival Imagination of the Future*. At the time of writing this article, the book had not been published yet. But the spirit of the argument and the risks I take in pushing the boundaries of my understanding of Palesitnian temporality and future is inspired by Gil Hochberg's work.
2. Everyday conditions of exile or settler-colonial violence have also shaped and triggered different forms and stages of Palestinian political resistance, most of which was and still is youth-led: the formation of the Fidayeen in the refugee camps in the late 1960s or throughout the first and second intifadas (Abu Samra and Qutami 2020), and more recently, in the Unity Intifada.
3. For example, in *Demonic Grounds* Katherine McKittrick (2006) incorporates Octavia Butler's fictional writing to foreground her research on Black women's spatial (and geographical) epistemologies.
4. Shaira Vadasaria (2018) makes a similar methodological turn as she examines Palestinian imaginative narratives as pulled from the everyday.
5. For many of my Palestinian friends who are scholars or artists, acquiring permits to visit Palestine for research is never a guaranteed process. While some may be able to fly to Ben Gurion airport, they may be refused entry and turned back. Even more so, it is a near impossibility for Palestinians or non-Palestinians scholars or artists to get a permit from Israel to enter the Gaza Strip.
6. As a Palestinian who holds Israeli citizenship, I have some access to spaces inside Israel and in the West Bank, that Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, or Palestinians in exile, have much limited access to.
7. Relatedly, Gil Hochberg (2021) uses the term *becoming* in her work to attend to the unlimited possibilities of imagination for Palestinian futures. Differently, through my conversation with Al Malhi, I follow his concept of *becoming* to gesture to a past process that remains unfinished or ongoing.
8. Mahmood Mamdani defines "de-Zionization" as foregrounded on the premise that Israel transforms into "a state for its all citizens", in which both Palestinian and Jewish identities are depoliticized (2020, 255).
9. In *Becoming Palestine: Toward an Archival Imagination of the Future*, Gil Hochberg (2021) closely examines the role of archival imagination in the formation of Palestinians' futures, in doing so she not only disturb the dichotomy of official and unofficial archives but also bring to life the ways in which archives are felt, lived, and made not to merely preserve a past but create futures.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References

Abu Hatoum, Nayrouz. 2017. "Framing Visual Politics: Photography of the Wall in Palestine." *Visual Anthropology Review* 33 (1): 18–27. doi:10.1111/var.12118.

Abu Hatoum, Nayrouz. 2021. "For 'a No-State yet to Come': Palestinian Urban Place-Making in Kufr Aqab, Jerusalem." *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* 4 (1): 85–108. doi:10.1177/2514848620943877.

Abdo, N., and N. Masalha. 2018. *An Oral History of the Palestinian Nakba*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Abu Samra, M., and L. Qutami. 2020. "Alterity Across Generations: A Comparative Analysis of the 1950s Jeel al-Thawra and the 2006 Palestinian Youth Movement." *Revue Des Mondes Musulmans et de La Méditerranée* 147 (October), doi:10.4000/remmm.14087.

Al-Mohammad, H. 2011. "Less Methodology More Epistemology Please: The Body, Metaphysics and 'Certainty'." *Critique of Anthropology* 31 (2): 121–138. doi:10.1177/0308275X11399973.

Allan, D. K. 2014. *Refugees of the Revolution: Experiences of Palestinian Exile*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Allen, L. 2008. "Getting by the Occupation: How Violence Became Normal During the Second Palestinian Intifada." *Cultural Anthropology* 23 (3): 453–487.

Assali, H. 2020. Postcard from a Liberated Gaza." *+972 Magazine*, December 25, 2020. https://www.972mag.com/postcard-from-a-liberated-gaza/.

Azem, I. 2019. *The Book of Disappearance*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.

Azoulay, Ariella. 2011. "Photography." *Mafte'akh* 2 (e): 65-80.

Barakat, R. 2018. "Writing/Righting Palestine Studies: Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Sovereignty and Resisting the Ghost(s) of History." *Settler Colonial Studies* 8 (3): 349–363. doi:10.1080/2201473X.2017.1300048.

Barakat, R. 2019. "Reading Palestinian Agency in Mandate History: The Narrative of the Buraq Revolt as Anti-Relational." *Contemporary Levant* 4 (1): 28–38. doi:10.1080/20581831.2019.1594617.

Bishara, A. 2015. "Driving While Palestinian in Israel and the West Bank: The Politics of Disorientation and the Routes of a Subaltern Knowledge." *American Ethnologist* 42 (1): 33–54. doi:10.1111/amet.12114.

Brun, C. 2015. "Active Waiting and Changing Hopes Toward a Time Perspective on Protracted Displacement." *Social Analysis* 59 (1): 19–37. doi:10.3167/sa.2015.590102.

Burris, G. A. 2019. *The Palestinian Idea: Film, Media, and the Radical Imagination. Insubordinate Spaces*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Daher-Nashif, S. 2020. "Colonial Management of Death: To Be or Not to Be Dead in Palestine." *Current Sociology*, doi:10.1177/0011392120948923.

Darweish, M., and A. Rigby. 2015. *Popular Protest in Palestine: The Uncertain Future of Unarmed Resistance*. London: Pluto Press. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ottawa/detail.action?docID=3440448.

Das, V. 2007. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent Into the Ordinary*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Das, V. 2012. "Ordinary Ethics." 133–149. doi:10.1002/9781118290620.ch8.

El-Shaarawi, N. 2015. "Living an Uncertain Future: Temporality, Uncertainty, and Well-Being among Iraqi Refugees in Egypt." *Social Analysis* 59 (1): 38–56. doi:10.3167/sa.2015.590103.

El Shakry, H. 2021. "Palestine and the Aesthetics of the Future Impossible." *Interventions* 23 (5): 669–690. doi:10.1080/1369801X.2021.1885471.

Fujikane, C. 2021. *Mapping Abundance for a Planetary Future. Mapping Abundance for a Planetary Future*. Duke University Press. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9781478021247/html.

Ghalayini, B. 2019. *Palestine +100: Stories from a Century After the Nakba*. Manchester: Comma Press.

Goeman, M. R. 2014. "Disrupting a Settler-Colonial Grammar of Place: The Visual Memoir of Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie." May. doi:10.1215/9780822376613-010.

Griffiths, M., and M. Joronen. 2021. "Governmentalizing Palestinian Futures: Uncertainty, Anticipation, Possibility." *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 0 (0): 1–15. doi:10.1080/04353684.2020.1871299.

Hammami, R. 2015. "On (Not) Suffering at the Checkpoint; Palestinian Narrative Strategies of Surviving Israel's Carceral Geography." *Borderlands E-Journal* 14 (1): 17.

Hawari, Y. 2018. "Palestine Sine Tempore?" *Rethinking History* 22 (2): 165–183. doi:10.1080/13642529.2018.1451075.

Hawari, Y. 2020. Progressive International Forum: Imagining a Palestinian Future." Online. *Progressive International*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vle1QIKTgSc.

Hlehel, A. 2018. "(مشهد مسرحي) البلاد تتسع للجميع [the Country Can Contain Everyone]." *Journal of Palestine Studies, [the Imagined Return]* 29 (116): 89–96 العودة المتخيلة.

Hochberg, G. Z. 2021. *Becoming Palestine: Toward an Archival Imagination of the Future*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Hunt, D. 2018. "'In Search of Our Better Selves': Totem Transfer Narratives and Indigenous Futurities." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 42 (1): 71–90. doi:10.17953/aicrj.42.1.hunt.

Järvi, T. 2021. "Demonstrating the Desired Future: Performative Dimensions of Internally Displaced Palestinians' Return Activities." *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 0 (0): 1–17. doi:10.1080/04353684.2021.1876524.

Jayyusi, L. 2018. "The Time of Small Returns: Affect and Resistance During the Nakba." In *An Oral History of the Palestinian Nakba*, edited by N. Abdo, and N. Masalha, 88–111. London, UK: Zed Books.

Kamil, M. 2020. "Postspatial, Postcolonial: Accessing Palestine in the Digital." *Social Text* 38 (3 (144)): 55–82. doi:10.1215/01642472-8352247.

Khalidi, R. 2006. *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Khalidi, R. 2020. *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

LIFTA. 2020. *LIFTA: Future Palestine*. Mexico City: Lifta Volumes.

Mamdani, M. 2020. *Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. doi:10.4159/9780674249998.

McKittrick, K. 2006. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle. Electronic Resource.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Medak-Saltzman, D. 2015. "Empire's Haunted Logics: Comparative Colonialisms and the Challenges of Incorporating Indigeneity." *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1 (2): 11–32.

Naamneh, H., R. al-Botmeh, and R. Salameh. 2018. Palestinian Everyday Life: Living within and without Legality." *Middle East Centre, LSE*, Middle East Centre report.

Pandian, A. 2019. *A Possible Anthropology: Methods for Uneasy Times*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Peteet, J. 2005. *Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Peteet, J. 2018. "Closure's Temporality: The Cultural Politics of Time and Waiting." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 117 (1): 43–64.

Ries, N. 2002. "Anthropology and the Everyday, from Comfort to Terror." *New Literary History* 33 (4): 725–742.

Sa'di, A. H., and L. Abu-Lugbod. 2007. *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*. Columbia University Press. doi:10.7312/sadi13578.

Said, E. W. 1992. *The Question of Palestine*. Vintage books edition. New York: Vintage Books.

Salamanca, O. J., M. Qato, K. Rabie, and S. Samour. 2012. "Past Is Present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine." *Settler Colonial Studies* 2 (1): 1–8.

Sayigh, R. 1983. "Women in Struggle: Palestine." *Third World Quarterly* 5 (4): 880–886.

Sayigh, R. 2015. "Oral History, Colonialist Dispossession, and the State: The Palestinian Case." *Settler Colonial Studies* 5 (3): 193–204. doi:10.1080/2201473X.2014.955945.

Seikaly, Sherene. 2019. "The Matter of Time." *The American Historical Review* 124 (5): 1681–88. doi:10.1093/ahr/rhz1138.

Siepak, J. 2020. "Dimensions of Decolonial Future in Contemporary Indigenous Specualtive Fiction: Louise Erdrich's 'Future Home of the Living God' and Rebecca Roanhorse's 'Trail of Lightning'." *Anglica An International Journal of English Studies* 29 (September): 57–74. doi:10.7311/0860-5734.29.1.04.

Stamatopoulou-Robbins, S. C. 2020. "Failure to Build: Sewage and the Choppy Temporality of Infrastructure in Palestine." *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, March, doi:10.1177/2514848620908193.

Stevenson, L. 2019. "What There Is to Fear: Scenes of Worldmaking and Unmaking in the Aftermaths of Violence." *Ethnos*, July, 1–18, doi:10.1080/00141844.2019.1636843.

Tawil-Souri, H. 2017. "Checkpoint Time." *Qui Parle* 26 (2): 383–422. doi:10.1215/10418385-4208442.

Vadasaria, S. 2018. *Temporalities of 'Return': Race, Representation and Decolonial Imaginings of Palestinian Refugee Life*. Toronto: York University.

Wahbe, R. M. 2020. "The Politics of Karameh: Palestinian Burial Rites Under the Gun." *Critique of Anthropology*, June, doi:10.1177/0308275X20929401.

Wick, L. 2011. "The Practice of Waiting Under Closure in Palestine." *City & Society* 23: 24–44.