

**DAILY PICTURES AND POLITICAL VISIBILITY: DISTINGUISHING MODES OF
WORK AND MODES OF REPRESENTATION TOWARDS METHODS OF
POLITICAL VISIBILITY IN EDWARD SAID'S *AFTER THE LAST SKY***

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ABSTRACT

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This essay investigates Edward Said's construction of a method of representation towards a political visibility of Palestinians in *After the Last Sky*. I argue that *After the Last Sky* comes to articulate possible sites of representability, specifically in the relationship between "inside and outside," which Said critically engages through the changing and fragmented Palestinian landscape that Said argues has determined the representability or unrepresentability of the Palestinian. To understand Said's construction of representation towards a political visibility of Palestinians through Jean Mohr's photographs, I want to first begin to understand how Said imagines his ability to speak for the photographs from his particular position. For this, I draw from Antonio Gramsci, Gayatri Spivak, Michel Foucault and Walter Benjamin. Then, I investigate how Said narrates the material conditions of the photographs in relationship to his authoritative position. In order to do so, I must also situate *After the Last Sky* historically, both in the 1980's, when *After the Last Sky* was first written, (in belated response to the degenerating effects of the 1967 war), and in its publication in the wake of the first Intifada and the western backed Oslo Peace Process beginning in 1991. Finally, I focus on the interesting turn in Said's *After the Last Sky* to identify the Palestinian female laborer as a potential site of political resistance.

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INTRODUCTION: A START

When Edward Said first wrote *After the Last Sky* in collaboration with Swiss photographer Jean Mohr in 1986, he highlighted in his introduction the urgency for such a text to address the "urgent needs of the Palestinians *as a people*," an address that for many continued to be lacking in the prolific circulation of materials and images, which had skewed a global perception of the Palestinian experience and condition (Sky, 3). This is specifically true for Said and others after 1967 and the Six Days War, which accelerated the social and economic destruction of Palestinian society, despite popular Palestinian movements, namely the PLO, that promised to correct the ills imposed by Israel by representing the Palestinian people and their concerns in the political arena. However, as Said and others have pointed out, the call for Palestinian representation continues to be unanswered and unfulfilled in sustaining a permanent, representative presence of Palestinians in a global politic.

In what way can we create a theory of representation out of the Palestinian condition that will work to also represent "Palestinian Lives" in the public arena, specifically in a global politic? And, further, what form might such a theory of representation take that is distinguished from both immediate failures and temporary successes of passed forms that have not successfully alleviated Palestinians of the inequities they are collectively subjected to both within Israel and in other Arab countries? What figures and forms can be representative of Palestinians in the moment that *After the Last Sky* was written, and beyond? What real connection, if any, can such a form have to the facts of Palestinian reality in order to posit a real awareness about the conditions in which Palestinians live?

To understand Said's construction of representation towards a political visibility of Palestinians through Jean Mohr's photographs, I want to first begin to understand how Said

imagines his ability to speak for the photographs from his particular position. For this, I draw from Antonio Gramsci, Gayatri Spivak, Michel Foucault and Walter Benjamin. Then, I investigate how Said narrates the material conditions of the photographs in relationship to his authoritative position. In order to do so, I must also situate *After the Last Sky* historically, both in the 1980's, when *After the Last Sky* was first written, (in belated response to the degenerating effects of the 1967 war), and in its publication in the wake of the first Intifada and the western backed Oslo Peace Process beginning in 1991. This context is important in that it helps us to understand the urgency for a representative theory that can be utilized in the case of Palestine amidst a socio-economic shift in Palestinian life that has been detrimental to a Palestinian working class during that time and until now.

I argue that *After the Last Sky* comes to articulate possible sites of representability, specifically in the relationship between "inside and outside," which Said critically engages through the changing and fragmented Palestinian landscape that Said argues has determined the representability or unrepresentability of the Palestinian. This changing landscape that Said narrates in terms of the outsider-insider dynamic ever-present in Palestinian experience corresponds with Said's attempt to capture the "private" in Palestinian daily life and extend those sites of privacy through publically recognizable forms, specifically through a relationship between the photograph and text. Arguably, what emerges from Said's orchestration between narrative and photograph mapped onto this insider-outsider dynamic are specific locations where it seems that these forms accumulate around very specific collective experiences. For Said, these are the sites of "repetition" that he narrates. Further, Said identifies these sites of relation in such a way as to draw attention to their ability to be representative of a Palestinian condition, and ultimately, as potential sites for political visibility.

What we see in *After the Last Sky* is a focused reading of lived conditions shared across the scattered locations of Palestinians in Israel, the occupied territories and surrounding Arab countries. By constructing the text in this way, Said can "read" and "interpret" Jean Mohr's photographs from his now outsider position through personal narrative. The task Said builds for himself is one that connects the personal account of his experience, an explanation for the consequences of the Palestinian diaspora, and the facts of Palestinian daily life that seem to be captured by the photographs, what Said identifies as his connection to the private realm of Palestinian life across multiple locations. In doing so, Said can draw attention to the sites of repetition, a tendency for experiences to emerge across Said's interpretive mode. Arguably, it is the historical context in which *After the Last Sky* is written that lends to the effectiveness of this narrative form such that a clear relationship between interpretation and experience, private Palestinian life and public global politic can be read and extended beyond the borders and policies that impose a restriction on the representability of Palestinian experience, specifically in the acceleration of Palestinian socio-economic decline since 1967.

Finally, I want to focus on the interesting turn in Said's *After the Last Sky* to identify the Palestinian female laborer as a potential site of political resistance through the repetition of the figure of the Palestinian female laborer in Said's analysis of Palestinian experience. Through Said's text, the Palestinian female laborer emerges as a representative figure that is more closely related to the reality of Palestinian life than public figures that have claimed the ability to speak for, or be representative of Palestinians generally. I also want to investigate how Said reads this figure out of the fragmented context he constructs as a theory of representation for Palestinians. Does Said posit the figure of the female laborer differently than previous conceptions of the woman as national signifier? Prior to this section, I attempt to provide a context for *After the Last*

Sky that draws attention to the historical conditions that inform Said's tendency towards the repeated issue of worker's rights amongst Palestinians in Israel and in other Arab countries, specifically after 1967, when a recognizable proletarianization of female Palestinian laborers emerged.

CHAPTER 1: SAID'S DIVIDED "I"

When the PLO emerged in the 1960's, the hope for a successful pan-Arab nationalism was already deteriorating so that inception of the PLO as a popular movement came at the heels of the failures of Pan-Arabism in a changing global political and economic climate that tended towards individual state nationalisms and Islamist programs (Shuster, 1). Individuals like Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, and the Palestinian Yasser Arafat, quickly became leading popular figures of these movements respectively and popular representatives for the people towards national liberation. Truly, the global political and economic climate of the 1960's made the popularization and decline of such movements and their leaders possible. The question of Palestine, specifically, should be included in considerations of decolonization taking place during this time and in theories of representation that emerge in this period.

As Raja Khalidi writes, "the Palestinian national liberation movement at its inception was an integral part of the anti-colonial struggle and the establishment of a just world order," a new world order that was socialist in character and in opposition to the capitalist imperial power structure that continued to dominate and stunt non-Western countries (1). *Even* Palestine, as Aijaz Ahmad writes in his, *In Theory*, where the dynamic of decolonization was "contained and reversed," it was "the intensification of this colonial reality, combined with the forces released by the Algerian war, which gave Arab nationalism its essential energy, for two decades or more" (18). For Ahmad, it is also true that, a realization of the colonial aspect of the Israeli reality, would also later emphasize the "full exhaustion of the nationalism of the Arab national bourgeoisie," a point upon which both Ahmad and Edward Said would agree and which I indirectly return to when I address Said's characterization of the intellectual class of which he is a part.

It is significant that Edward Said praises Yasser Arafat in *After the Last Sky*, on these terms. He acknowledges the ability of Arafat to speak for the Palestinians in a way that no other individual could during this time. A *genius of mediation*, Said writes, for Arafat's unique ability to gather the dispersed local history of the Palestinian and to represent that history publically in such a way that the Palestinian is known and recognized in the public sphere and in a global politic and economy (91, 121). Although Said will eventually distance himself from the PLO and criticize Yasser Arafat in his 1999 introduction of *After the Last Sky*, this uniqueness of ability to represent is a point of contention for Said. That individuals of a particular class come to be celebrated as authorities of public representation, (and that specific material conditions allow for that "unique" ability to be representative), is an important dynamic specific to the character of the national liberation movement at this time. Theories of representation emerged to re-address concerns of representation and subjectivity towards an analysis of the possibility of political and structural change, a transition in popular modes of thinking about the individual in relation to mechanisms of power, from structuralism to post-structuralism, with the works of theorists like Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault becoming prominent in the later half of the decade.

Indeed, this acknowledgement of Arafat's unique ability to "represent" was widespread, at least through the second intifada, when many grew critical of the PLO and therefore Arafat, for their inability to be positively consequential in political negotiations on behalf of Palestinians (*Sky*, ix, 121). Correspondingly, criticism grew for the PLO's complicity in the Western-backed "peace process," which seemed to continuously ignore the economic and political inequities that existed (and continue to exist) between Israel and Palestine, always seemingly reinforcing the claims of the so-called democratic state of Israel to Palestinian lands through the non-

enforcement of international policies and the ignorance of local policies in the name of national security (Roy, 366).

Thus, the years of hopefulness that had inspired the PLO to popular stature were short lived and in the case of Palestine, a complete disaster. The demise of such popular movements and disillusionment about national liberation set in through the failures of organizations like the PLO to deliver promises of land, rights, and freedoms for the Palestinians, and in direct relation to whether it was thought that the PLO was able to be representative of Palestinian demands, specifically the rights and demands of a rapidly enlarging Palestinian poor or unemployed working class within Israel and the occupied territories. This is in addition to the increasing number of dispossessed Palestinians forced into the borderlands of neighboring countries, namely Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt that were historically part of a agriculturally based working class (Tamari, 33). A transition in the type of labor Palestinians were involved in is also attributable to the significant confiscation of land that occurred in 1967, which should be emphasized, as Said does, in the context of the emergence of popular forms of resistance and those individuals and organizations that emerged as leaders in that resistance. For Said, the question of how to better "represent" a Palestinian condition is at the fore of his analysis in *After the Last Sky*.

In her essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak*, Gayatri Spivak problematizes how the third-world subject is represented and, she emphasizes the role that the intellectual has had in productions of representation in Western discourse that has gone unrecognized by these intellectuals in their material productions. This is a project, I will argue, similar to that of Edward Said's in *After the Last Sky*, what Said will call the "responsibilization" of the intellectual towards an articulation of the relations between discourse and politics, a goal that Spivak will credit to Said's work, i.e.

"the critic's institutional responsibility" (280). By again re-addressing the problems with the terms of representation and subjectivity in post-structuralist theory, namely, that of Deleuze and Foucault, and by being critical of the position of the first world intellectual in the perpetuation of a "complicit discourse," Spivak suggests that distinctions need to be made between types of representation, types of oppression and types of subjectivity, which require a return and re-analysis of Marx's works.

According to Spivak's reading of Marx, the subject is intensely divided and this division is the very condition of possibility for subjectivity. In part, this division arises from Spivak's insistence on two senses of representation that need to be distinguished as they are in her reading of Marx. The first sense of representation, political representation, or *vertreten*, is representation as "speaking for" the people in politics and the law. As quoted from Marx's essay, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, "The political influence of the small class proprietors therefore finds its last expression in the executive force subordinating society to itself" or, as Spivak describes, the "hero" or "representative" acts as a substitution for the peasantry who finds its "'bearer' in a 'representative' who appears to work in another's interest" (276-277). The second sense of representation, *darstellen*, or "re-present," "the role of aesthetics in philosophy," is the way in which an object is interpreted and transformed in its function, specifically the individual subject. The conflation of these distinct modes of representation is the fundamental problem with a Foucauldian and Deleuzian reading of representation and mechanisms of power, which leads us to assume that beyond *representation* exists a space, beyond a *last sky* so-to-speak, where "oppressed subjects can speak, act and know *for themselves*," an assumption which is both essentialist and utopian for Spivak, and which ignores and perpetuates the privileged position of the intellectual (276).

For Foucault, who influences Said's work a great deal, the primary concern with Marxist ideological theory is that, in focusing on class interests and power, Marxisms tend to reduce the relationship between knowledge and power. In Foucault's view, the subject is produced *in* discourse, and thus, representation must be understood in terms of the production of knowledge in discourse within a particular episteme, that is, specific to a particular historical, cultural moment (Foucault, *History of Sexuality*). Against a Marxist conception of history, then, Foucault characterizes history through an archeology of knowledge, such that subjects of a particular discourse differ between epistemes, without necessary continuity between them. So, even though there may have been similar behaviors or interactions over the course of several historical periods, ultimately, identification by such behaviors comes into existence within a specific historical period and can be said to characterize the culture of that episteme.

One of Spivak's criticisms of Foucault is that Foucault conflates the "subject" and the "individual" when he suggests that, although individuals may be differentiated based on class, race, sexual orientation, etc, they do not have meaning until they come *into* certain positions constructed by discourse, that is, until they have willingly *subjected* themselves to the roles imposed by the relation between power and knowledge (*History of Sexuality*, Foucault). Both Foucault (and Deleuze) "will not entertain a constitutive contradiction," Spivak asserts, "in the name of desire, they reintroduce the undivided subject into the discourse of power" (274). In her emphasis on distinctions between terms, at stake for Spivak is the possibility of their relation and thus, the very possibility for insurrectionary action. Although *vertreten* and *darstellen* are *related* for Spivak, they are ultimately discontinuous in that the relationship between them is, according to Marx, based on a dislocation between desires and interests, as Spivak writes, "the contrast, say, between proxy and portrait" (276).

This is arguably also Said's point of departure from Foucault. In *Orientalism*, Said writes, "Unlike Michel Foucault, to whose work I am greatly indebted, I do believe in the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise collective anonymous body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism" (50). It is true that Said borrows the concepts of archeology, genealogy, and most readily, the notion of discourse to address the "limits of action" in relation to mechanisms of power, such that *Orientalism* could not be written without the concept of discourse to identify Orientalism as limiting *thought and action* regarding the Orient. However, Said asserts, "this is not to say that Orientalism unilaterally determines what can be said about the Orient, but that it is the whole network of *interests* inevitably brought to bear on (and therefore always involved in) any occasion when that peculiar entity "the Orient" is in question" (3, emphasis mine). In order for Foucault to posit general "epistemological" shifts in Europe in distinct units of time, Foucault must abandon notions of materiality and of interests that are a necessary part of history. In doing so, "Foucault's imagination of power is largely with rather than against it," Said writes, "his interest in domination was critical but not finally as contestatory or as oppositional as on the surface it seems to be" (*Imagination of Power*, 242). For Said, a diversion exists in Foucault's work, (especially Foucault's late writings), that doesn't allow for a real theorization of the relationship between history, the production of knowledge and the possibility for social change. As Said asserts in *Culture and Imperialism*, "Foucault's work moves further and further away from serious consideration of social wholes, focusing instead upon the *individual* as dissolved in an ineluctably advancing 'microphysics of power' that it is hopeless to resist" (278, emphasis mine).

For Said, a real distinction between levels of oppression and senses of representation must be considered in order to posit a theory of representation that addresses Palestinian

concerns in relation to a global political economy, and his own ability to "re-present" Palestinian life through Jean Mohr's photographs, with some sense of "community" or collectivity. This is a facet of the concept of "exile" for Said, such that exile is at once a struggle against erasure, a condition that Palestinians can experience on different levels, but nevertheless experience in some form or degree from disparate geographic locations in relation to a global economy, and also, the stateless, dispossessed and de-centered form that exile takes in "abrupt shifts," that is, in person and position, from outside to inside and vice versa, from "I" to "you" to "we" to "they" to "us" (6). So, in *After the Last Sky*, Said imagines a theory of representation through an amalgamation of forms, the "essentially unconventional, hybrid, and fragmentary forms of expression," accumulated in the present moment, which allows Said to engage with a "double vision." This double vision is the condition of his conception of exile, similar to a notion of an inherently divided "self" that is mobilized in Gayatri Spivak's reading of Marx (6). This is a way for Said to emphasize relationships between modes of representation while acknowledging distinctions between representations and, at the same time, considering his role and position in the production of representations *now*. As Said writes, "this is not an objective book." A text aimed at a re-evaluation of subjectivity itself, "it is a *personal* rendering of the Palestinians as a dispersed national community - acting, acted upon, proud, tender, miserable, funny, indomitable, ironic, paranoid, defensive, assertive, attractive, compelling" from Said's divided position as an "exile," both inside and outside a notion of Palestinian experience (6, emphasis mine).

Said often associates the "outside" or, a specialized "exterior," with "exile," but this position is also clearly classed, such that Said *can* claim to speak for the "mute" photographs from this exterior space. Arguably, Said wants to complicate his own divided position in relation to a Palestinian condition to posit an alternative way to perceive representation through the

relationship between representation in the political sense, and "re"-presentation. As an academic, Said taught at Columbia University, and enjoyed a certain success in comparative literature amongst academic circles that, with the publication of *Orientalism* in 1986, quickly inspired changes in the way many disciplines have thought about East and West relations. Specifically, this work complicated the notion of representing others. The reputation Said enjoyed in the academy also extended to his reputation in politics and public involvement with many institutions and organizations including the Palestinian Authority. An independent member of the PNC from 1977 to 1991, and as personal advisor to Yasser Arafat and the PLO, Said related the concerns he aimed to address in his scholarship to those public concerns around the question of Palestine.

Yet, despite the numerous awards, public lectures and political orientations that comprise Said's "public" identity, Said continuously expressed a very personal struggle with a notion of exile, migrancy, and self-denial. For Said, perhaps this is the point, that the two seemingly contradictory aspects of his personal experience, being both a Western academic and a Palestinian Arab, formulates a certain position, deemed "outside" of the geographic location of historic Palestine, but also "inside" based on a shared Palestinianess, an experience of being Palestinian that is based on a hegemonic denial of the Palestinian, the Palestinian's exclusion from global political recognition. He is able to speak for the Palestinians in the photographs from his particular position as a Western intellectual *and* as a Palestinian, and it seems Said is necessarily self-critical of his role in that process in his attempt to construct an "unreconciled book." Said writes, "[a book] in which the contradictions and antinomies of our lives and experiences remain as they are, assembled neither (I hope) into neat wholes nor into sentimental ruminations about the past" (xi). Said is both an "insider" and an "outsider," so-to-speak, and this

internal contradiction is the site from which Said can extend the narrative to relate Palestinian experiences from the outside in a way that is useful.

The best example of Said's reliance on a notion of a divided self is his repeated return to the contradiction inherent in his name, "Edward" and "Said," which appears in much of Said's work in some relevant capacity, most notably in *Out of Place*. In *Out of Place*, Said writes about his "split" of self: "The split between 'Edward' (or, as I was soon to become, 'Said'), my public, outer self, and the loose, irresponsible fantasy-ridden churning metamorphoses of my private, inner life was very marked. Later the eruptions from my inner self grew not only more frequent but also less possible to control" (137). The two positions that Said can take in the form of "I" are irreconcilable for Said, but it is the differentiation between "inside" and "outside," "private" and "public," that grants the private with a particularly powerful insurrectionary charge. As Yifen Beus argues, "It is this paradox that makes him the insider looking from the outside with a detached distance that causes his nostalgia to be a clear reflection of a lost past...Salman Rushdie likens this writing from outside to broken mirrors--each broken piece functions like a complete whole, that is also part of the surroundings it reflects" (Beus, 217). The "juxtaposition between subjectivity and objectivity" constructs the self, Said's "I" as a process of constant becoming. Expanded, Said's "I" allows for a similar investigation of the subjectivity and objectivity of Jean Mohr's photographs such that "exile" can be complicated and conveyed, the much "that is invisible and entirely special to us" without sacrificing the diversity in private Palestinian experience in the production of Palestinian representations. At least, this is the task Said attempts to take on.

At the base of *After the Last Sky* is this personal relation, a private struggle that Said wants to relate to a public, political reality of Palestinian experience, and one that he can claim to

share with other Palestinians, yet be too distant from to claim this experience as his own. Indeed for Said, they, the photographs, cannot speak without being subjected to already dominant and still dominating social, political, cultural and historical pressures that will influence the representation so that, "the way 'we' experience ourselves, the way 'you' sense that others look at you, the way, in your solitude, you feel the distance between where 'you' and where 'they' are" gets lost in allocations of these Palestinian images to immediate statelessness, dispossession, de-centrality the moment they are left to the public eye for interpretation. The Palestinians of Jean Mohr's photographs can be said to be subaltern in that they are not just oppressed, but they also do not have access to hegemonic power. The photograph, as such provides an experience of the Palestinian experience, so to speak, that ultimately risks being apolitical. Said charges his narrative with authority, which he derives from his insider-outsider relation in order to posit better, or, more insurrectionary modes of representing Palestinians politically, an attempt to ensure the insurrectionary action of the photograph by recognizing the divisions inherent in the system of social, economic and political relations, which the Palestinian is, and arguably always has been, a part of.

The notion of "outside" from Said's perspective is complicated, but can be partly articulated by Said's assertion that the "concrete experience" of Palestinians is inaccessible for him in particular, such that he must distinguish between his position and that of the Palestinians in these photographs as irretrievably *distant* from one another. He writes, "but what a distance now actually separates me from the concreteness of that life. How easily traveled the photographs make it seem, and how possible to suspend the barriers keeping me from the scenes they portray" (18). The distance from the actual land that Said experiences in his personal

account is likened to a sense of exile, an exclusion from the life depicted in the photographs, a particular experience of Palestine bordered by the photograph itself.

It is also true that this distance refers to a relationship between an irretrievable past and a certain, depreciated Palestinian condition in the present articulated primarily in socio-economic terms, the current "visible" material facts of Palestinian life evident in the photographs themselves. In the place of a "missing something," (the physical and conceptual discontinuity that Said claims is characteristic of exile and therefore of Palestinian life), "are superimposed new realities. Plane travel and phone conversations nourish and connect the *fortunate*; the symbols of a universal pop culture enshroud the *vulnerable*" (23, emphasis mine). What Said alludes to here, is a relation between his classed position and that of the Palestinians in Jean Mohr's photos, between the fortunate and the vulnerable. This difference is related through Said, the narrative voice struggling with a personal figurative division that is related to "real" socio-economic and geographic divisions similar to Spivak's theorization of an "(im)possible necessity" through the work of Jacques Derrida. This struggle, or responsibilization (for Said) of the intellectual, the critic, the academic is "a persistent dredging operation" evident in Spivak's articulation of the "native informant," "a name for that mark of expulsion from the name of Man -- a mark crossing out the impossibility for ethical relation." (6). I see this relation expanded on page 28 and 29 regarding the eggplants of Battir, the caption to the left of Said's narrative, opposite the page of the photograph, reads "Gaza, 1979. Farm using refugee labor." The passage is worth quoting at length here:

Today when I recall the tiresome paeans to Battiris, or when in London and Paris I see the same Jaffa oranges or Gaza vegetables grown in the bayarat ('orchards') and the fields of my youth, but now marketed by Israeli export companies, the contrast between the inarticulate rich *thereness* of what we once knew and the systematic

export of the produce into the hungry mouths of Europe strikes me with its unkind political message. The land and the peasants are bound together through the work whose products seems always to have consumption elsewhere. This observation holds force not just because the Carmel boxes and the carefully wrapped eggplants are emblems of that power that rules the sprawling fertility and enduring human labor of Palestine, but also because the discontinuity between me, out here, and the actuality there is so much more compelling now than my receding memories and experiences of Palestine (28).

I will return to the "unkind political message" in relation to Palestinian work in more detail later, but here, the power of this passage comes from the relations Said makes between his personal experience, the physical and conceptual distance from Palestine and Palestinian life, and the global economic system of relations that comes to define the "politic" that the Palestinians are both exploited by, but excluded from participation in. In situating himself "out here," Said finds a moment in which he can articulate what seems like a space for mobilization in relation to "the actuality [in] there." An acknowledgement of his location and thus his inexplicit participation in "the hungry mouths of Europe" is evident in this passage, while at the same time, allows the possibility for creating the relation to Palestinian work on the "inside," the possibility for an "ethical relation," so-to-speak, between different forms of representation actively engaged in this passage.

Antonio Gramsci alludes to a similar distinction, which he names between the "public and the private" or "personal," in his discussion of the formation of the intellectual as a class in order to collapse them under a "new intellectualism." In *The Intellectuals*, Gramsci writes:

The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, "permanent persuader" and not just a simple orator (but superior at the same time to the abstract mathematical spirit), from technique-as-work one proceeds to technique-as-science and to the

humanistic conception of history, without which one remains "specialized" and does not become "directive" (specialized and political) (10).

Here, Gramsci emphasizes that all activities of man have intellectual capacity, but not all men function as intellectuals in society. The specific conditions and specific social relations that one is a part of determine one's function in society. Further, all human activity has some form of intellectual activity, such that "homo faber cannot be separated from homo sapiens" (9). According to Gramsci a new intellectualism must recognize the way that any technical education is tied to industrial labor, a fundamental conception of a relationship between the public and the private, the "exterior" and "participation in practical life," so that we can both distinguish between the activities of intellectuals and also understand their relationship to one another in order to be "directive," or, promote new class formations.

Spivak too does not want to deny the relationship between distinct forms of representation, oppression and subjectivity, but she does want to suggest that they are not interchangeable. To do so is to maintain a series of oppressing consequences including a conflation of the "concrete experience" of the individual and the "concrete experience" of the intellectual, which the intellectual is then able to convey while "diagnosing the episteme" (275). For Spivak, "such a declaration helps only the intellectual anxious to prove that intellectual labor is just like manual labor" (275). Rather than focus on the "intrinsic nature of intellectual activities," we should focus on the "general social relations" that determine one's socially recognized place in society (Gramsci, 9). Said considers these distinctions between his personal narrative, which contains within it contesting public and private modes of identification, the daily and repetitious activities of Palestinians currently (which Said describes as mechanized

work or labor), and the political or "public" sphere that the Palestinian has been excluded from in order to express their modes of relation.

Arguably, *After the Last Sky* posits an answer to the issue of representation through its expansion of the relationship between public and private in terms of "inside" and "outside," to tackle the locations where political representations and constructions of community have ultimately failed to address Palestinian concerns, primarily citizenship, land ownership rights and labor rights. Ultimately, a theory of representation that addresses the complexities of relation between the pronouns *you, we, us, I, they* must be grappled with in Said's text in order to approach the integration of public and private realities in terms of their locations, the ways they confirm imposed "inside" and "outside" distinctions in order to collapse them into an authoritative narrative. In order to do so, Said identifies the way that different "outsider" positions relate to one another through "insider" experiences of the material "outside." In other words, while "outside" positions differ based on geographic and class distinctions, Said's articulation of "inside" is based on the shared experience of imposed material conditions, a relationship between what is visible and not visible in Jean Mohr's photographs. This narrative construction aims to contend with a mechanically reproduced image of the Palestinian as "fighters, terrorists, and lawless pariahs" or the "helpless, miserable-looking refugee" that are devoid of *Palestinian lives* in international public perception.

As John Hawley writes, the combination of written word and photograph aims at a theorization of Said's "self-perception," which connects a personal struggle to the public Palestinian struggle for self-determination. Hawley's neat summation of Said's project in *After the Last Sky* is reinforced by Said himself in his analysis of John Berger's *Another Way of Telling*, a project that Hawley will suggest inspired Said to collaborate with Jean Mohr. In *Bursts*

of Meaning (1982), Said identifies the unanswered questions left by Berger's work with Jean Mohr: "Can one really undertake aesthetic or intellectual projects in the private sector, so to speak, and then launch from there directly into politics;" and, "what to do? What of the future?" a question Hawley reads as one of oppositional politics (Hawley, 205).

CHAPTER 2: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

For Said, John Berger's work deserves credit for its attempt at disrupting "master narratives that impose an artificial linearity on time" (206). Through Walter Benjamin's analysis of aesthetics and mechanical reproduction of art in modernity, Berger's presentation of Jean Mohr's photographs aims to disjoin a cultural and more specifically, Eurocentric history by letting the photographs speak for themselves. Although Said will argue that the photographs cannot speak, and thus must be spoken for, Said credits Berger (and Benjamin) for a theorization of the power of the photograph to be "insurrectionary." For Berger, however, this insurrectionary action has a location, a more personal, family based-site that must be acknowledged in any notion of representation. Berger writes:

Revolutionary actions find their expression in what is called "private life"...And so, hundreds of millions of photographs, fragile images, often carried next to the heart or placed by the side of the bed are used to refer to that which historical time has no right to destroy (*Way of Telling*, 105).

Walter Benjamin engages Berger towards this notion of the private, specifically, Benjamin's treatment of photography and portraiture, which I will return to shortly. Said ultimately agrees with Berger's emphasis on the "private" as a site with revolutionary potential, but he wants to press the issue of representation further, with greater acknowledgement of the institutional structures that limit the photographs' ability to speak from its origin, its original experience of transmission from scene to camera to photographic imprint, and is perhaps closer to Benjamin than Berger in this regard. For Said, the photograph's mobility and accessibility is an issue because of the way that photographs of this kind can, (and have been), depoliticized, devoid of context and removed from history when on display.

Indeed, Said was partially inspired to write *After the Last Sky*, when at the United Nations Conference on the "Question of Palestine" in Geneva, the photographs of Jean Mohr were

allowed to be displayed, but were not allowed to be accompanied by writing. "No legends, no explanations" could accompany the exhibit of photographs due to objections made by (principally Arab) UN member states (*Sky*, 3). Each photograph, on its own, is decontextualized, removed from the material conditions that produced it. We only know that these are Palestinian photos, because Said tells us this is so. In some sense, Said imagines himself embracing the role that is socially determined for him in order to produce a directive narrative that present the photographs responsibly, in so much as he can contextualize them for an international public from a particularly privileged intellectual position. In his attempt to render Palestinian lives subjectively, at a great distance from Palestine itself" Said relies on a distinction between public and private, that relates the personal to the public, to provide a connection between explanations of private experience to the facts of public recognizability and vice versa (*Sky*, vii).

How does Said narrate the "outside" and "inside" of Jean Mohr's photographs to include a notion of the invisible of Palestinian experience? How does he come to distinguish a notion of shared experience, "exile," from the material conditions that are visible in the photographs? The insider-outsider relation as narrated by Said seems similar to Benjamin's repeated "textual exposure" of portraits, which acknowledges a paradox in the photograph itself, both with and without presence, distant and close, belated and too early. Benjamin's treatment of early portraiture is interesting in that Benjamin formulates the portrait as both a site of the destruction of aura and also a site of its last appearance. Benjamin writes, "in the fleeting expression of a human face, the aura beckons from early photographs for the last time" (248; 485). Carolyn Duttlinger reassesses Benjamin's aura through photography when she suggests that in Benjamin's analysis of portraits, a tension is created between presence and absence through the relation

between Benjamin, the observer and narrator of the photograph and the photograph's object, the focus of the photo (2). Portraiture is ultimately bourgeois for Benjamin, such that the aura associated with the portrait is attributing aesthetic value to the portrait's object, contained and attributed to the presence of the portrait itself. Portraiture comes to be the remnant of an earlier aesthetic mode, and desire to know the person behind the portrait is evident in the making and maintaining of the portrait itself. Portraiture then, represents a shift from this earlier aesthetic mode to that of photography.

The photograph is distinguished from the portrait because it is political, its mass mode of production is associated with a proletarianization, and can be regarded collectively to reveal the influence social and economic institutions and current class relations. Benjamin's narration of portraiture charges photography with potential political valency when, as Duttlinger argues, he mediates between different genres in his narration of portraits to capture a notion of the fleeting aura of the photograph through narrative, "between literary and photographic criticism as well as between theory and autobiography, thus blurring the boundaries between reflection and recollection, between photography as historical testimony and its appropriation into literature" (1). So, while photography, as a medium of mechanical reproduction, contributes to the destruction of aura, the photograph, as a reproduction, makes its image mobile and widely accessible, without specific location or knowable presence of the object of the photograph and provides a mode for the articulation of a working class consciousness.

In Said's treatment of photography in *After the Last Sky* both what is lacking, the aura, or momentous, "original" presence, of the individuals in the photographs, and the material presence visible in the photograph are important to address in order to move towards the articulation of current living conditions amongst a Palestinian working class, conditions that can be identified

and narrated according to Said towards a notion of Palestinian community *now*. Arguably, similar to Benjamin, Said does not want to mourn the loss of aura, but rather focus on the current material conditions and the way in which the mechanical reproducibility of the photographs can help to theorize resistance. It seems for Said, an articulation of his own personal outsider-insider relationship to Palestine allows for the possibility of relating to fellow Palestinians who are also geographically "outsiders," excluded from Palestinian lands and who are politically "outsiders," not recognized as Palestinians under a Palestinian national identity. What Said can identify through the photographs then, are the material conditions of Palestinian life evident in the mobile photographs. These conditions are shared across Said's "outsiders," in that Palestinian experience with "modern technology" is visible and recognizable in the photographs, and, however varied, allow for the emergence of certain repeated tropes shared amongst Palestinians. These sites of "repeatability" come to be sites of revolutionary potential, for Said, or, sites where collectivities can be formed despite a lack of geographic continuity, the solidity of a particular geographic location to ground the photographs in.

Chapter one, *States*, begins by locating the reader "outside." We find ourselves mingling in the eyes of a bride and groom, and a small band of family members, women at the side of the bride, and men on the side of the groom. The bride and groom are costumed in what Said will call "uncomfortable" European garb. There is the overbearing presence of a Mercedes in the foreground of the photograph, at the lower left hand corner. The *D for Deutschland* is prominent on the bumper near the center of the image at the feet of the wedding procession, reminding us of the European presence that is materialized in Palestinian daily life "the Universal taxi...a symbol of modern technology domesticated, of the intrusion of the West into traditional life, of illicit trade" (11). Said introduces this photograph as representative of the amalgamated reality of a

Palestinian "outside," "Caught in the meager, anonymous space outside a drab Arab city, outside a refugee camp, outside the crushing time of one disaster after another, a wedding party stands, surprised, sad, slightly uncomfortable" (11). This accumulation of foreign-made materials in Palestinian lived experience seems to be what dislocates the photo to the viewer, such that there is evidence of a circulation of materials that seem to accumulate in the photograph, both dislocating, in the sense that there seems to be no clear markers of where the wedding is being held in the photo, and, "hemmed in," the narrow street and the presence of the procession at the center of the photo seems as though there is no where to move, except forward and out, towards the camera.

So, a paradox similar to the contradictions Said emphasizes in his own private-public experience is emphasized at the outset of *After the Last Sky*, one of mobility and insecurity that defines the "State" that titles Said's first chapter. Said argues that the photographs of Palestinians contemporary to *After the Last Sky*, and definitely those photos of Jean Mohr, both include and make visible this "fact" of Palestinian life that is one that inevitably involves a form of exclusion and muting when the Palestinian photograph as such is circulated publically, which Said also associates with the trope of "outside" in his narrative analysis. This is "the transience and impermanence that our [Palestinian] visibility expresses" that always maintains the possibility for subjection to constant movement that is nevertheless restrained and regulated by forces acted on the Palestinian, circulated through Palestinian populations, and even over-present in Palestinian daily life to a sense of mundane, normalized, "all-purpose conveyance" of "the markings of a force and violence that is not yours," i.e. the familiar Mercedes at the fore of the photo. (11-12).

The house, the family, and the work of Palestinians begins Said's narrative of the location of the private, with specific emphasis on the instability of their literal geographic locations that seems characteristically Palestinian in this moment for Said. A notion of Palestinianess is articulated through "Palestinian work" that seems to maintain Palestinian identity without the unifying presence of specifically Palestinian national borders, and Said reads the way that Palestinian identity materializes in the photographs taken on the "inside," literally inside Palestinian spaces. The sustained repetition and consistency of Palestinian daily activities secures a concept of "place" without contiguous land boundaries recognized as Palestinian to tie this dailyness to. This articulation of Palestinian daily action seems to be what is absent, or in the process of being removed from the narrative that excludes Palestinians from a global politic, but the photograph testifies to a Palestinian "ecology" for Said, "that is neither symbolic nor representative in some hokey nationalist way; rather, we are presented addressing our world as a secular place, without nostalgia for a lost transcendence" (*Sky*, 146).

For Said, this "private" or "inside" perspective is not something that he constructs. Rather, a version of a Palestinian "inside" is present in each photograph, and Said's project is to draw attention to what these "insides" share, and ways that the daily lives of Palestinians are affected by social and institutional power structures, and yet, how Palestinians are positioned "outside" of political influence. This is the "unkind political message" that Said draws our attention to when he reflects on the way that the global political and economic climate materializes for Palestinians, specifically in Palestinian labor conditions and yet, chapter two, "Interiors," focuses on "repeating familiar patterns to the point where repetition itself becomes more important than what is being repeated" (56). From a fascination with body-building, karate and boxing amongst Palestinian youth, to rituals of hospitality "designed to be excessive," the act

of repetition, Said argues, insists public recognition, a kind of "assertiveness" that is also characteristic of the "inside" Said identifies. This constant self-assertion through repetition is visible in the photographs as well: "Too many places at the table; too many pictures; too many objects; too much food," Said narrates, "a tendency toward disproportion and repetition" that he is also guilty of (60). For Said, this peculiar trend towards excess and repetition is also a link between the "interior" and "exterior," such that it expresses "exile" for Said, being "outside" *and* "inside," a position from which these connections can be made and re-presented.

It is also true that this emphasis on repetition allows for Said to make a connection to the worker's struggle in the subsequent chapters of *After the Last Sky*, especially in the third chapter, *Emergence*. The mechanization of work in Palestinian daily life comes to be a site of potential political resistance through Said's theorization of representation. This emphasis works especially well in correspondence with Said's goal of including Palestinians in the historical narrative towards "modernization," a history that often favors Israel in a process of democratization, necessarily leaving the Palestinian out. Through the photograph, Said wants to insist the Palestinian peasant is more than what he can initially make of her, "archetypal," "mute," "without politics, or historical detail or development" (91). Rather, Said imagines his reading of these photographs of a working class as both a re-presentation of the Palestinian peasant into the historical development of global capitalism, and a tapping into a force or reserve, "building up out of a long, intense history, frustrated and angry about the present, desperately worried about the future" (91).

In *Emergence*, Said thus taps into the specific problem of narrating photographs of the peasantry. As Said writes, "the unadorned fact that they show working people of the peasant class is constantly compromised by bits of prose floating across their surfaces" (92).

Photographic representations of the working class has been complicit in producing Palestinian labor as alienated labor, "as Marx called it, work done by people who have little control of either the product of their labor or their own laboring capacity" (93). The complete absence of a record of organized Palestinian labor written by Palestinians is countered by Said's insistence on the reproducibility of such images against the continuance of these working conditions without any real criticism or method to mobilize Palestinian workers towards positive change. Arguably, a shift in Palestinian labor after 1967 corresponds with Said's position on representation. The turn to the Palestinian female laborer as a site of potential collectivization and resistance, not through armed struggle in the literal sense, but through what Said insists is a constant re-producing of self. He narrates, "but for the first time in our history, one can see Palestinians as Palestinians in a sense *producing themselves* as they go about their work in a new environment of Palestinian self-consciousness affecting everyone...for the first time in its history, Zionism's policy of detail and its dramatic self-protection are faltering, and appear totally inadequate to account for the Palestinian presence" (108).

CHAPTER 3: PALESTINIAN WORK IN CONTEXT

When Israelis flew 200 fighter jets into Egypt on June 5th, 1967, a certain sentiment towards Israel had already been growing in the region. Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt had closed Aqaba to shipping, ordered the UN out of the Sinai and situated a military offensive in the Sinai facing Israel in response to Soviet information that suggested that an Israeli attack of Syria was imminent (Shuster, 2). Underestimating Israel's military capabilities proved fatal for Nasser, and within six days, Israel had systematically gained East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Sinai, Gaza and the Golan Heights, in what has been correctly characterized by historians as transformative of Israel's presence and authority in state and international politics (Shuster, 2).

For Palestinians in these regions, the confiscation of these lands meant a brutal disruption in the grounds vital to their livelihoods, one that was rooted deeply in the cultivation of the land. As Said writes, "A significant segment of Arab Palestinian history has been made up of peasant farming and agricultural life" such that, through the nineteenth century rural settlement accounted for at least 65 percent of Palestine under British colonial rule (Sky, 88). After 1967, a significant proletarianization of the rural working class was evident, a process that some will argue began with the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, however, I would agree with Sara Roy and others, that 1967 marks a recognizable shift and acceleration of a process of proletarianization of the Palestinian working class, followed by a subsequent institutionalization of policies to limit movement and increase land fragmentation to regulate and restrict Palestinian workers in Israel to specific sectors. The policies towards Palestinians and the confiscated lands by Israel after 1967 will eventually become institutionalized with the Oslo Accords and thus, a brief context for this period is important for understanding the shift in Palestinian labor that

occurs after the Six Days War, and the subsequent and aggressive worsening of Palestinian economic development in the years following.

As Sara Roy rightly asserts in her Spring 2004 article, *The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict and Palestinian Socio-Economic Decline*, "a common misconception is that the current crisis is a product of the last three years," since the second intifada began (366). An extension of the historical narrative through the socio-economic effects of Israeli policies directly affiliated with land and migration policies specifically, changes the relationship between the facts of Palestinian reality and the current explanations that circulate to explain the Palestinian condition. Although Roy will argue that the present state of Palestinian life is primarily linked to the institutionalization of land and migration policies during the Oslo "peace process" from September 1993-September 2000 in order to emphasize that "the peace process did not aim to dismantle the structure of the Israeli occupation, but rather to maintain and strengthen it in a different form," she would agree that past conditions, specifically those post-1967, will essentially differ from present conditions "not in structure and substance but in scale and degree" (366). Two persistent tendencies of Israeli policy towards Palestinians become institutionalized during the Oslo Accords: 1) closure, the Israeli imposed restrictions on the free movement of Palestinian goods, labor and people across internal and external borders and within Gaza and the West Bank; and, 2) Territorial Fragmentation, the demarcation of Palestinian land into geographically noncontiguous areas with both exit and entry closely monitored by Israeli authorities (367). These ultimately shaped and regulated the movement of labor, goods, and people through both Israeli and non-Israeli controlled territory and were responsible for the acceleration of the shift in economic and demographic distribution in the occupied territories amongst Palestinians. Ultimately, Palestinians in these regions faced compulsory transition in

the type of work that was available to them, based on the change in resources and access available to Palestinian farmers.

Amel Samed and others have noted the significant, characteristically gendered, proletarianization of Palestinian labor post-1967. According to Samed, "as late as 1963, 64% of the Arab female labor force was still engaged in subsistence agricultural production, compared to 34% of the male labor force and 12% of the Jewish female labor force" (164). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, between 1968 and 1976, the West Bank transitioned from over half of the total Palestinian labor force involved in agricultural production to only about 26.1 percent by 1976. The integration of the occupied territories post-1967 created a problem of surplus female labor, which pressed women into the industrial workforce within Israel proper and stimulated targeted recruitment of this surplus labor by major companies within Israel. Samed notes, "A typical example of such recruitment is the large Gibour nylon textile plant which, by 1973, employed more than 1,000 northern West Bank women" (165).

It is easy to use these historical facts generally, to posit the peasant or the Palestinian *Fallah* as national signifier, a trope that has arguably been abused and oversimplified during this period specifically. Ted Swedenburg similarly argues that the Palestinian peasant has been used as a signifier for a national movement with middle-class leadership such that, "The figure of the *fallah* is employed not to rally an actual peasantry to the national cause, but to constitute a unified people-nation and endow it with authentic history and culture" (19). The Palestinian peasant then, has achieved a kind of mythical quality and as such has been mobilized in a national discourse that accentuates a disjunction between "the peasant as nationalist signifier and the peasant as historical agent" (19). As Swedenburg continues, "The *fallah* is able to serve as signifier that unites and mobilizes by virtue of the fact that it dissimulates past and present

differences within the national movement, in the interests of a leadership with particular class interests" (19). For Swedenburg, there are two distinct levels of claiming the *fallah* as national signifier: the first, in the literal sense, of the existence of a very large, and growing Palestinian peasantry, which one can claim to be a part of based on occupation and economic status; and, the second, metaphorically speaking, the claim that one is part of a larger, unifying entity, "the Palestinian people." The symbolic construct of the Palestinian peasant, when limited to the internal socio-economic dynamics of Palestinian society under mainstream nationalism, is limiting in that it doesn't consider the way that distinct relationships to differing conceptions of the Palestinian peasantry can also be related, as Palestinian labor is in actuality differentiated post-1967, extending beyond the internal issue of Palestinian labor within Israel and the occupied territories.

For example, the events of 1967 also perpetuated the compulsory migration of Palestinians to the neighboring Gulf, when, as Salim Tamari writes, "under Jordanian rule, the state sector, the army, and work opportunities in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States" drew Palestinian villagers to seek work opportunities outside of Israeli occupied territory (33). According to Said, "today, of the estimated 4.5 million Palestinians, 1.83 million (40.7 percent) are still in some part of historical Palestine, and 2.665 million (59.3 percent) are elsewhere," the biggest concentration of those "elsewhere," are in the Arab world, namely Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (115). For Said, a serious consideration of this "other" work force in relation to the workforce of the "interior" is urgent.

In his treatment of the photographs of Palestinian workers both "inside" and "outside," Said points out the figure of the female laborer specifically, both in the photographs of the peasantry and in the photographs of Palestinian workers who have achieved a more "educated"

class status since their exile. Although Said has been criticized for his unwillingness to consider women in his literary and political analyses, as though, perhaps, the women's struggle were completely inaccessible to him, I would argue that Said must acknowledge the role that women have had in articulating the role of Palestinians in the anti-colonial struggle both then, and now. The question becomes, for Said, "how to see the woman's predicament: Is she subordinated and victimized principally because she is a woman in Arab, Muslim society, or because she is Palestinian?" (*Sky*, 78). The urgency to draw attention to the need for a new method of representation through the "woman's negation" or silencing in the case of Palestine, and in relation to Palestinian dispossession, is a difficult, but important aspect of this text that should not be ignored. As Said interestingly argues, these aspects are necessary to consider in order to "help constitute our present situation" (78).

For Said, "Mohr's photographs of Palestinians at work or at study, for example, reveals the intensity and seriousness at odds with the episodic and storyless nature of the photographs" (145). A regular "attention" and "alertness" to the work tasks in Jean Mohr's photographs communicates a way of Palestinians "re-presenting" themselves outside of the confinements of their subjugated condition. As Said and others suggest, "most Palestinian workers under Israeli jurisdiction today are concentrated in the very lowest segment of the wage-earning classes...all located within what has been called the secondary, or labor-intensive labor market," and approximately 70 percent of the Arab work force travels to work in Jewish locales, 90 percent between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five (98). Work, then, has become a reminder of the power structure that maintains and yet binds the Palestinian to an economic system in which he is subjugated. And, the particular "viciousness" of land and migration policies since 1967 that

aimed to limit and regulate Palestinian movement and labor alerts Said to an important point, "How is it that we appear so overwhelmingly threatening to everyone?" (110).

Again, a consideration of Palestinian work emerges from the photographs, but now, Said argues, we must consider both Palestinian labor, as it is exploited on the "inside" and Palestinian intellectuals, a class of Palestinians that have been formulated on the "outside," that is, an educated, working class that has gained class mobility in "exile," similar to Said himself. The focus on the woman laborer allows for the possibility of a kind of historical continuity, one that seems closely linked to the historical facts of socio-economic change in Palestinian communities since 1967.

On page 80, Said highlights the female laborer as matriarch against the image of the young girl worker in the bottom photograph who, equally solitary in the photograph, seems overwhelmed by the materials surrounding her. The character "Farah," in Said's aside to Michel Khleifi's film, *The Fertile Memory*, becomes the center of Said's narrative. Her method of work, again a focus on methods of detail and repetition, gives an impression of a condition that seems true in Said's considerations of Palestinian life, so much so, in fact, that Said claims "a peculiar respect" for "the almost frighteningly concrete expenditure of energy" that "sustains life in ways that are just below the threshold of consciousness" (79). As a character, Farah comes to replace "the male character of Palestinian nationalism," which here seems especially limited and limiting once Farah's character is considered as an alternative. "The matriarch" comes to replace "the falah" in Said's representation of the worker's connection to the land. The presence of the older women in both photographs on 80 and 81 insist a sturdier, solid female characterization that commands recognition. This recognition comes from the method of her "work," represented by Said as "against logic," a contradiction in the claims made in a state of exile by this character,

such that "the discrepancies between symbol and reality remain" (81). The "rocklike" woman in the bottom right photograph characterizes a certain "stubbornness" that is familiar to Said, and us, in its "here I stand" quality, similar to that of icons like Gamal Abdel Nasser, and perhaps disappointingly so. The "aesthetic" quality of this kind of female figure acts to insist "solidity and durability" that past, male political figures have failed to continue, and as Said argues, "we realize that what we see on the screen or in any picture representing the solidity of Palestinians in the interior, is only that, a utopian image making possible a connection between Palestinian individuals and Palestinian land" (82).

The other character in Khleifi's film, Sahar, is equally ironic and, yet, describes another female figure used to be representative of the Palestinian condition. Sahar is a younger, "more self-aware," educated generation, representative of alienation both internally and externally, from politics and from sexual fulfillment (83). She describes herself as militant, and suppressed both politically, "as a nationalist, by the structure of Israeli power holding the West Bank; as a divorced, working woman, by the conventions of the predominantly Muslim and traditional community of Nablus" (83).

Ultimately, both of these figures fall short for Said, and he praises Khaleifi's work for not succumbing to the exploitation of these female figures as national signifiers. Rather, according to Said, Khaleifi resists the oversimplification of his characters, by giving these female characters expression within daily life, and to accentuate the irony in the positions of these characters based in a Palestinian reality rather than "italicize" a more militant or more oppressed position that would seem readily identifiable with mainstream nationalism, on the one-hand the Palestinian activism associated by "tire-burning, or rock throwing," and on the other-hand, "the helpless, miserable refugee."

These representations are juxtaposed with Said's reading of a contemporary, diversified Palestinian workforce, which again attempts to give women expression through the photographs of Jean Mohr. Palestinian women seem to articulate movement and a sense of mobility despite "the debilitating confinements of their real situation with an immediacy that is surprisingly strong" (145). Through a focus on local attentions of Palestinians within a living "dailiness," Said sees the potential for breaks with a much larger "text," "the unendingly unbroken narrative of U.S./ Israeli power" (144). The photographs on 145 and 146 are of working Palestinian women in the laboratory, working with patients in a doctor's office and attending to the details of their present situation. These women are central to the photographs, again, commanding the scene, but the re-presentation that Said argues emerges from these photographs differs from prior "symbols" of nationalist struggle through the female figure. Said concludes in the chapter *Past and Future*:

Small-mindedness? The limited efforts of a limited people? I do not believe so. Mohr's photographs here are evidence of a Palestinian ecology that is neither symbolic nor representative in some hokey nationalist way; rather, we are presented addressing our world as a secular place, without nostalgia for a lost transcendence. Here are the people doing their utmost to address the everyday material world with purpose and grit. Consider these photographs, then, not as evidence of triviality, but as scenes of people who, in having left behind some untellable trauma, some offstage catastrophe (*nakba*), now respond directly to the task at hand with an unmistakable determination that I have come to recognize as irreducibly Palestinian (147).

Finally, Said considers "return" through the instantiation of a constantly produced present, a self, a mode of identification, understood in terms of its inherent contradictions and the irony of the material world that consumes it and is consumed by it. Here, Said's insistence on the particular

strength of this mode of representation through the acknowledgement of distinctions in its many facets, is also a call to pursue representation in this way. I would say, for Said, it is the best we can do within the system of relations we are a part of, and yet, is also a way to work out a Palestinian presence where a significant absence of the Palestinian has been at work for so long. Said, arguably, is in agreement with Mahmoud Darwish's poem, from *Reflections on Exile*, which Said quotes at length on page 150. Darwish calls for us to "take me wherever you are-- Take me wherever you are," which Said insists as a motion towards "fragments over wholes. Restless nomadic activity over the settlements of held territory. Criticism over resignation... Attention, alertness, focus" (150). This is a kind of "tactical secularism" that Said exposes through his method of representation and the mobilized sites of that representation, not necessarily tied to the concreteness of place, but rather to a concreteness in human activity against previous conceptions of nationalism.

CONCLUSION: ANOTHER START

The point of positing a method of representation the way that Said does, is to address the questions Said poses early in the text: "When did we become 'a people'? When did we stop being one? Are we in the process of becoming one? What do those big questions have to do with our relationships with each other and with others?" (34). Structurally, Said turns from a discussion of *States*, a focus on exteriors, to the chapter *Interiors*, the two chapters working together to create a sense of method with regard to forms of representation. The point being, for Said, to mobilize a method of representation that creates a space for the possibility of collective resistance out of differing, seemingly contesting positions, classes, and forms in line with the current condition of Palestinian life, despite a lack of unified place. The subsequent chapters, *Emergence*, and *Past and Future*, target the Palestinian working class, and specifically, the women of the Palestinian working class photographed by Jean Mohr, as a site of collectivization and thus a place to articulate resistance by acknowledging their historical development in processes of capitalist accumulation, and by suggesting a momentous relationship between the intellectual "outside" and a working class "inside" in the production of representations. The call to attend to present work and "address the everyday material world with purpose and grit" is in actuality, for Said, already taking place, and in some sense, it is the intellectual's responsibility to join that process (146). Doing so seems to bring about a different sense of community through alternative forms of representation *in History*, but not *with History*. I think *After the Last Sky* acts as a beginning, a beginning of understanding what it means to *be there*, and yet not accounted for politically, and therefore, a call to find ways to circulate "unprecedented knowledge" using the forms of representation that Said claims can be mobilized to both "represent and re-present." The questions that remain are: Can we 'put on' knowledge adequate to the power that has entered and

dislocated our lives so unalterably in this century? Can we see what we are?" (159). Finally, we must take on the task of being self-critical enough to ask ourselves, "Have we really seen what we have seen?" so as to move forward, beyond a focus on completeness and consistency and towards the acknowledgement of useful expression in Palestinian actuality, that is, according to Said, "the way we cross over from one place to another... in exile and constantly on the move" (164). Said imagines the possibility of "forceful address" from moments of "provisional success," and arguably, it is an approach worth returning to given that Palestinians, still, have yet to *see* or be *seen* in a way that addresses the major inequities Palestinians, and many others, continue to experience globally.

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